

# **Mass Higher Education and the 2011 Student Movement in Chile: Material and Ideological Implications**

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## **Abstract**

This article analyses the material and ideological implications of a highly commodified mass higher education system on the 2011 students' mobilisations in Chile. Drawing upon quantitative and qualitative data, we show that the grievances denounced by the movement emerged from the differences in the process of socialisation/reproduction of intellectual labour among universities, which in turn correspond to forms of class exploitation. Moreover, we demonstrate that students' engagement in/with the movement varies across universities in accordance with the differentiation of these institutions along class and political cleavages. The article offers insights to understand why a sectoral conflict became the most significant challenge to the neoliberal consensus that has prevailed since the late-1980s.

Keywords: student movement – mass higher education – university – intellectual labour – cognitive capitalism – Chile

## 1. Introduction

Several scholars have suggested that the 2011 student movement is the most significant episode of protest to have occurred in Chile since the restoration of democracy (1990). Firstly, the magnitude of the mobilisations surpassed all previous similar episodes. There were numerous events of collective defiance, ranging from demonstrations to occupations that paralysed campuses and schools, while students took to the streets in major cities in their thousands almost every other week for several months. Protesters innovated in the contentious repertoires, thus forging alliances with other relevant actors, garnering overwhelming public opinion support. However, besides the unique characteristics of the movement, its significance is better appreciated when considering its consequences. The president's popularity plummeted, which was later confirmed by the poorest electoral performance in decades for a right-wing candidate in the next presidential elections. In turn, the centre-left coalition *Nueva Mayoría* (New Majority) embraced most of the demands of the student movement, including the claim for free education, transforming these proposals into the backbone of the programmatic platform of its candidate Michelle Bachelet. Besides winning the presidency, her coalition obtained the largest number of members of parliament for the centre-left since 1990. From a long-term perspective, the 2011 mobilisations accelerated the breakdown of the underlying pacts of the transition from a military to a civil regime in the late-1980s. Several symptoms confirm this observation, including growing dissatisfaction with the political parties and the appearance of new actors challenging their roles, a more influential civil society – including the revitalisation of workers struggles – and the strengthening of social preferences for redistributive policies. The consideration of the wider range of socio-political implications lends ground to the assertion that the 2011 student movement marks a turning point in Chile's recent history.

Why did a sectoral conflict end up having such nationwide consequences? Can we only explain the profound effects of these mobilisations by looking at their massiveness and immediate impacts? Are universities only the background of the protests, or do they play a rather structural role in this cycle of social conflict? In this article, we suggest that scholars should take a closer look at the dynamics of the massification of higher education (HE) and the political content that universities have injected to this process. Previous studies have pointed at factors such as the indebtedness and poor quality attributed to private education, the mismatch between expectations of social mobility and persistent inequality, accumulated social discontent, political cultures and the framing process carried out by a talented generation of leaders (e.g. Bellei et al, 2014; Fernández-Labbe, 2013; Fleet, 2011; Guzmán-Concha 2014; Mayol and Azócar, 2011; Sehnbruch and Donoso, 2011). While these authors have focused on important dimensions of these mobilisations, a closer consideration of the characteristics of the massification of the higher education system (HES) – including its internal differentiation and their social and political implications on the articulation of the student movement – still seems necessary.

In this article, we attempt to explain: (i) the differences in the politicisation of the grievances existing in the HES, which can be related to differences in the process of reproduction of intellectual labour – i.e. the socialisation of students as intellectual workers/professionals – across universities; and (ii) the differences in the composition of the movement, and particularly why students from public-oriented institutions participated more actively in the 2011 protests than their peers from private-mass institutions, despite the latter experienced more acutely the grievances denounced by students.

We describe the trajectory of the HES in Chile during the last four decades, focusing on the extreme privatisation, marketisation and commodification that determined the expansion of this system since the 1980s. During this process, the role of intellectual labour

in society broadened, with the service economy demanding a mass of polyvalent professionals in possession of academic credentials. Moreover, higher education institutions (HEIs) have become even more relevant due to the promise of upward mobility and the professional/middle class status that they are supposed to fulfil. When students denounced the economic/political interests preventing HEIs from delivering such promise, the generalisation of the movement was more likely given that these expectations are common to most students and their families, and especially to the first generation in HE.

Post-Marxist scholars have been concerned with the effects of massification on the ideological configuration of political conflict. They have looked at both the crisis of the university – subjected to increasing demands for access, quality, equality and technical knowledge – and the related transformation of the forms of class struggle in the wake of the generalisation of intellectual labour upon tendencies of unequal educational expansion. In fact, mass HE typically reproduces social stratification by means of separating a core of elite universities from the non-selective HEIs (Calhoun, 2006). Drawing upon these readings, we suggest that the 2011 episode in Chile can be interpreted in light of the transformation of the HES, which in turn reflects a larger transformation of the class structure. Chilean students denounced forms of domination and exploitation, which – ingrained in the inequality of mass HE – undermine the reproduction of intellectual labour and constrain its future worth. Furthermore, students called for the restitution of public education and the intervention of the state to *de-commodify* intellectual labour and ensure its meaningful socialisation. Therefore, students not only reacted to the material contradictions of massification but also to its ideological aspects, related to the public uses of knowledge and labour. A significant effect of massification is the dissemination of ideals of knowledge and professionalism across groups from non-elite backgrounds. These ideals provide intellectual labour with the subjective disposition of contributing to society by delivering value beyond pure economic transactions.

Thus, one of the ideological implications of a HES *for the masses* is that new social groups are exposed to normative ideals that can become issues of politicisation.

In section 2, we specify the theoretical framework, indicating our working hypotheses. In section 3, we introduce the transformation of the HES, explaining the processes of massification and marketisation from a long-term perspective. In section 4, we explain the system's material contradictions, grounding the analysis on available public statistics. In section 5, we describe the differences in the ideological socialisation of students, drawing upon original interviews with academics from different undergraduate programmes, supplemented with narrations of the leaders of the movement.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Industrial capitalism reproduced a workforce prepared to deliver value through undertaking material work, although since the crisis of Fordism the workforce has been mobilised away from the large industrial complexes to increasingly conducting immaterial work. This shift towards a post-industrial configuration of the relations of production vis-à-vis the expansion of immaterial work entails a number of changes in social stratification, patterns of class struggle and the making of the political conflict. The massification of HE and universities in particular protrudes at the core of these changes and thus should not be taken for granted. Drawing upon the perspective of post-Marxist scholars, the university is brought to the fore as an institution central to the organisation of capitalism, condensing the contradictions of contemporary societies while providing the political socialisation of students as immaterial/intellectual workers.

Habermas (1971) observed that students defended the university from the systemic pressures of power and money in the struggles of 1968. From his perspective, students were socialised as subcultures immune to the motivations of *economic compulsion* and the influx

of a *technocratic consciousness*. Given his conception of the university as an autonomous and unconstrained space for the reproduction of knowledge and its exemplary lifeforms (1987), it is this institution that provides the *lifeworld* for students' struggles. Later, Habermas (2004) broadened the perspective to the non-instrumental motivations of knowledge reproduction – technical control, mutual understanding and emancipation – which might subsequently also become normative ideals for intellectual labour. According to this approach, students would aim to preserve these normative ideals of intellectual labour from their reduction – or privatisation – to *systemic rewards*.

Scholars associated with the cognitive capitalism approach maintain a focus on the relation between the university and the politicisation of intellectual labour, as Habermas does, although now the relationship between the two is redefined by the declining presence of industrial work and the rise of the service sector. As explained by Moulier-Boutang (2012: 57), 'the new information technologies, of which the digital, the computer and the Internet are emblematic in the same way in which the coal mine, the steam engine, the loom and the railroad were emblematic of industrial capitalism'. Behind this epochal transformation, the massification of HE proves crucial for the diffusion of knowledge among workers. As a result, the productive process is now determined by the autonomy of immaterial/intellectual work, i.e. 'living knowledge', as a major source of value and innovation (Vercellone, 2007).

The autonomy – or preponderance – of living knowledge within the productive process has implications for the status and role of intellectual workers. Firstly, it implies that HE acquires an immediate productive role, meaning that it is no longer considered part of non-labour time, in such a way that students are regarded as workers who are reached by mechanisms of surplus extraction (exploitation) while studying. In turn, surplus extraction occurs from the arbitrary separation of the (exchange) value of labour from the meaningful intellectual activity. This is achieved by means of measurements such as university rankings,

league tables and other distinctions of academic prestige (De Angelis and Harvie, 2009), which are typically conceived to differentiate educational markets, producing artificial hierarchies of living knowledge in correspondence ‘to that of existing social classes’ (Vercellone, 2007: 25). At the same time, the political uses of intellectual labour are reaffirmed: the expansion and autonomy of intellectual labour entails the *excess* of living knowledge (Virno, 2004). Given the incorporation of non-labour times and broader forms of social cooperation – including education – into the productive process, the *excess* of living knowledge potentially produces surpluses of substantive political quality, which are directed to the enrichment of the public sphere. Hence, the *excess* of living knowledge holds the potential to mobilise students. While the political direction of such mobilisation is not predetermined, we suggest that the political socialisation of intellectual workers within universities decisively influences such outcomes.

As discussed, the massification of the university goes hand-in-hand with its imbrication into the process of the valorisation of capital, subsuming this institution under hitherto unacknowledged forms of exploitation of intellectual labour. Nonetheless, the mass university still retains its protest potential. Indeed, the capacity of social movements for critiquing is greater now due to the ‘enhanced role of secondary and university education’ (Boltanski, 2011: 21).

The ideological dimension of massification derives from the secularisation of the intellectual function, whereby increasing parts of the population are imbued by the cultures of disciplines and professions, thus becoming socialised as agents of living knowledge. Intellectual labour may thus follow diverse ends in conformity with the expectations of social mobility and professional status, as well as being motivated by normative ideals that potentially lead to its relative autonomy from economic interests and its politicisation towards a public role. On the other hand, the material dimension gravitates around the marketisation

of HE. The expectations and ideals attributed to intellectual labour are contradicted by the commodification of the latter, which includes the economic exploitation of students via the expansion of loans, the separation of the economic value of labour (the form of value) from the meaningful intellectual activity (use-value) and their fragmentation into hierarchies of *living knowledge*. These hierarchies result from the differentiation of universities in correspondence with patterns of social stratification (universities that serve different social constituencies).

By considering the unequal distribution of political interests and competences throughout the HES, we can understand the differences in movement participation across universities. Students in universities where intellectual labour is more materially constrained and subjected to exploitation (i.e. the most massified and marketised universities) did not massively engage in the mobilisations; rather, the movement was led by students from the public universities, who participate in the Confederation of Chilean Students (CONFECH) and accumulate a tradition of activism (Guzmán-Concha, 2012). Furthermore, participation also came from the most politicised private universities. Therefore, the mobilisations cannot be interpreted exclusively as a function of the economic inequality of the educational system or as a pure effect of material contradictions alone. The movement was especially successful in those institutions in which the reproduction of intellectual labour can adopt a politically-oriented form, i.e. where the use of knowledge enjoys more relative autonomy from instrumental and economic motivations. The generalisation of the movement resulted from defending the value of intellectual labour from the commodity form. The demand for free education is thus directed at expanding the opportunities for labour to be performed as a self-fulfilling activity, liberated from the pressures of being recovered as a private economic investment.

### **3. Massification and Marketisation of the Higher Education System**

The relation between massification and mobilisations in the HES precedes the episode of 2011. The University Reform of 1967-1973 mobilised the eight public universities existing in Chile at the time. During that period, university enrolment grew threefold, from 55,653 to 146,451 students (Brunner, 1986). Organised through assemblies and occupations, students – with the support of academics and staff – demanded the democratisation of university governance and measures to ensure access for the working class. The reform became increasingly articulated by the political left, in a process that can be interpreted (in a Garretonian fashion) as the entrance of the *central social movement* for the transformation/modernisation of society into the realm of the university (Fleet, 2004). It boosted an overall improvement of the universities' academic conditions, including the expansion and professionalisation of the academic personnel and the creation of disciplinary departments and research centres. The University Reform was interrupted in 1973 by the military coup.

Halting the politicisation brought about by the Reform became a major objective for the Dictatorship. For this purpose, the government ceased all major academic authorities and replaced them with military delegates, purged campuses from leftist activists and drastically reduced enrolment and public funding (Brunner, 1986). A new legislation was imposed in 1981, this time seeking to prevent the politicisation of universities through three main reforms (CRUCH, 1981): (a) the fragmentation of the public system by separating the state universities from their branch campuses; (b) the introduction of the principle of institutional *self-financing* by charging student fees – in compensation for a further reduction of state funding – and; (c) the creation of an educational market, through the incorporation of new private HEIs that compete with the public universities for student recruitment and public funding. Additionally, students were forbidden to participate in institutional governance. In

this new regime, the cycle of massification that followed no longer encountered members from different social classes sharing a single, public and de-commodified space. Instead, students were separated into different groups of status, in accordance with the selectivity of institutions and the trajectories/preferences of students. Furthermore, the transference of the economic cost of education from the state to the families has redefined the university experience in a utilitarian sense, as expected.

Given these changes, Brunner (1985) claimed that the Student Movement (singular with capital letters) was dead, replaced by a plurality of movements. By the singular Student Movement, he referred to students as the political actor who represented an emancipatory struggle within the university, connected to larger societal demands for more democracy and equality. By contrast, the student movements (in plural) lack such political direction. As massification separated students from dissimilar backgrounds into differentiated institutions, student politics diverged into a plurality of interest groups and discrete claims. As the identity of the Student Movement is broken, its capacity to articulate itself beyond the students from the public universities – already reduced to a particular interest group – is also undermined. In a way, one can say that Brunner’s prognosis remained valid until 2011, given that the students’ mobilisations up to that point only involved the traditional-public universities.

With the fragmentation of public HE, eight universities became 25. While the public ones were expected to provide elite education, the new private sector would undertake the massification of access. By 2011, 34 private universities were operating. Over time, several public universities located outside Santiago found themselves competing with the mass-private institutions and started to recruit students in a less selective manner. In turn, few private universities managed to occupy a niche in the social elite, alongside the most prestigious public institutions. Enrolment grew from 249,482 students in 1990 to 1,068,263 in 2011 (MINEDUC, 2014), representing an increase of the gross enrolment rate – total

enrolment divided by the population of 18-24 years olds – from 14 to 56 percent. Most of this expansion is attributable to the private universities, which grew from representing 15 percent of the university population in 1990 to 55 percent in 2011.

In 2011, 69 percent of students were the first generation of their families to participate in HE (Orellana, 2011). In turn, 84.5 percent of the cost of HE has been privatised, of which 83.7 percent has been assumed by the families alone (OECD, 2009). Therefore, the transition towards intellectual labour has been financed by students and their families, in a context in which HE credentials have become almost an obligation to escape the lack of recognition and economic uncertainty attached to material labour. It is little wonder that the expectations of thousands were hurt once Chilean universities were singled out as the most expensive – in relation to GNI – among the OECD countries (2009), while their quality was also called into question. The 2011 movement has thus been identified with these students of working-class origins, newcomers into HE and the middle classes, who widen the social base of the movement, bear most of the expectations and burden of the transition to intellectual labour and surpass the boundaries of traditional student politics (Ruiz, 2013).

Profit-making in universities and student indebtedness are two major issues that the movement has singled out as causes of the deteriorated conditions of the first generation in HE. Despite profit-making in universities being legally forbidden, it proliferated across the private-mass sector through indirect mechanisms like overpriced leases and services paid to the owners' related firms (Monckeberg, 2007), which explains the limited academic quality of these institutions. Student indebtedness soared with the introduction in 2006 of a semi-privatised loan scheme, which aimed to enable massive access to HEIs while creating markets for private providers, especially the banking system. This scheme resulted in an expensive loan and an inefficient policy. According to the World Bank (2011), the loan was 81 percent focalised for students from the poorest first three quintiles and mostly captured by

private for-profit HEIs. With a six percent interest rate, indebtedness rose to an average of 180 percent of students' projected annual income and monthly payments amounted up to 18 percent of wages for fifteen years: by comparison, the respective proportions for the UK are 40 and 2.9 percent. In addition, as HEIs tended to further increase their fees, the costs not covered by the loans – averaging 35 percent – had to be assumed by students alone.

The emergence of a mass movement in 2011 constituted a turning point from Brunner's assertion about mass HE dividing the student movement. Rather than preventing it, massification set the conditions for a movement with greater disruptive capacity. The marketisation of HE also contributed to this effect, extending grievances throughout the system (Somma, 2012). In the long run, the institutional regime imposed upon the HES in 1981 ended up provoking the kind of students' politicisation that it meant to prevent.

#### **4. Material Differentiation of the University System**

The distribution of universities across the elite-mass distinction differentiates institutions according to their material conditions. The selectivity of recruitment is a function of the score in the admission test (PSU), which is strongly correlated with students' family income (Contreras et al. 2007). Therefore, in practice, university selectivity segregates students according to their class origin. Data shows that 68 percent of the children of managers and professionals attended elite universities, whereas 61 percent of the children of the working class studied at the non-selective HEIs (Orellana, 2011).

Ideological differentiation results from the decentralisation of public HE and the new educational projects from the private institutions, reflecting the economic and/or political agendas of their owners and the dispositions of the student constituencies. The universities created during the 1980s had to be politically approved by the Dictatorship, thus explaining the predominance of conservative groups and commercial projects within the private sector.

In table 1, we represent these patterns of differentiation by combining the material and ideological dimensions. The vertical axis represents selectivity, using an average PSU score of 590 points as a threshold between elite and mass universities, whereas the horizontal axis represents the public or private ownership of universities. This results in four quadrants of public and private universities of either elite or mass access. It is noteworthy that the private-mass quadrant presents its own ideological differentiation between those institutions motivated by public-oriented projects (controlled by progressive Catholic movements – Jesuits and Salesians – academic organisations and NGOs) and those lacking such orientation, which are the majority in this sub-group.

**(INSERT TABLE 1 HERE)**

To observe the material contradictions of the system, we focus on three dimensions: input, academic conditions and student outputs. Regarding input, we report the PSU score and the proportion of students graduated from private schools (as a proxy of the degree of elitisation). The greater proportion (74 percent) of students from private schools attending group B is a clear indication of the segregation of the system and the elitisation of the private-conservative institutions, especially when only 7.3 percent of secondary students are enrolled in private schools (MINEDUC, 2012). By contrast, only 7 percent of the students in group E (public-regional institutions), come from private schools. The 20 percent of students from private schools in group A (public-traditional) is far below the figure for group B, yet remains the second largest among the five groups.

Regarding the academic conditions, we consider indicators of quality of academic departments, particularly the ratio of students per full-time PhD faculty and the ratio of academics hired per hour per full-time academic. By far the worst conditions are observed in

institutions belonging to group C (private, commercially-oriented). Here, the ratio of students per PhD faculty is more than twenty times higher than in group A, while the ratio of academics hired per hour per full-time academic is ten times higher. Universities in group D exhibit the second worst performance, although it is several times better than in group C. The exploitation of intellectual labour in private and commercially-oriented institutions (C) results from the surplus of social and public investment, which is not transferred to sustain the universities' academic quality, thus explaining the lack of proper academic departments, the precarisation of the academic profession and the consequential exclusion of the poorest students from the research function.

Regarding student outputs, we consider indicators of employability and incomes after graduation (excluding arts, health and sciences). While differences in employability are not very large (8 percent difference between groups A and B together and group C, from 86 to 76 percent, respectively), the contrasts between mass and elite are starker when considering incomes: the employed alumni from private-conservative universities (group B) earn on average 61 percent more than those from private, commercially-oriented universities (group C) four years after graduation. These differences show early trends of exchange-value attribution to intellectual labour based upon institutional differentiation.

## **5. Ideological Orientations and Participation in the Student Movement**

Here, we describe the modes of ideological differentiation for the five groups of universities previously identified. By exploring how intellectual labour is socialised into different material expectations, normative ideals and political motivations, we observed the affinity between such modes of institutional differentiation and the degrees of engagement in the 2011 mobilizations.

Extracts from eight anonymous interviews with academics, plus one higher education expert, illustrate the universities' 'ideological orientations'. The interviews are selected from a larger 'theoretically informed' sample of 29 interviews, conducted in 2011-2012 with academics from Administration, Education, Engineering, Law and Social Science, representing the identified groups of the university system. Information about the universities mobilised in 2011 is taken from CONFECH (2011d) and Movimiento Generación 80 (2011).

*(a) Public-Elite*

All of the student federations here are members of CONFECH and therefore led the mobilizations in 2011. The politicisation of the public-elite is inseparable from the fact that the political leadership of the country is formed there.

These universities respond to different 'owners' and have their respective academic cultures. The Catholic universities are controlled by the Church and exhibit a marked elitist propensity, e.g. the Pontificia Universidad Católica (PUC) recruits 66 percent of its students from private secondary schools, thus being the most elitist one in this group. According to an academic at this university, 'militant Catholics' engage students in activities like voluntary work, which – complementarily to their technological education – are fundamental for the formation of a 'Christian leadership':

'Students enter here with clear consciousness they belong to the intellectual elite of the country and will occupy important positions... many of the social initiatives undertaken [in the country] during the last years were led by alumni from this university'. (Anonymous interviewee, PUC, 2011)

In 2011, the PUC federation was led by a centre-left group that was committed to the mobilisation campaign. This engagement was crucial given that it incorporated a more conservative sector into the mobilisations, thus broadening the legitimacy of the movement altogether (Figueroa, 2013).

In turn, state universities are controlled by their academics, they recruit students in a more varied manner and the left predominates in their student federations. The main state university (Universidad de Chile) embraces the goal of academic excellence to such an extent that it has eclipsed the social mobility function traditionally attributed to state universities: its proportion of students from private schools (37.4 percent) is the second largest within the public-elite. However, the other state universities have preserved this role more distinctively. For an academic at the state-regional UFRO, his students – not from elite origin - develop political leadership – ‘decision making capacity’, in his words – because owing to their professional socialisation, which provides access to working with academics in projects of social impact and participating in student collectives:

‘When [students] assume a role in the direction of a political, social or educational organisation, they’ll be aware and concerned, on the one hand, with doing things right, being good teachers, working, delivering, that things have to work, have to be organised, and that they have to act rightly, honestly and with participation. On the other hand, they ought to have a concern for social change, for an integral education of their students, for working in community with their colleagues, knowing that they have to articulate knowledge and to recognise popular and indigenous knowledge’. (Anonymous, Education UFRO, 2012)

Such a political disposition would be in affinity with the massive engagement in the movement: ‘this is a university that has a lot of student mobilisations, and I think important directive cadres are formed thereby’.

Regarding CONFECH’s demand for free education, students made it clear that it was not an attempt to increase their private economic return from HE through the reduction of fees. In this vein, CONFECH responded to President Piñera’s statement about HE being ‘a consumers’ good’ (Cooperativa, 2011) by framing the concept of quality of HE under values of solidarity, tolerance and equality, which lead to the ‘formation of subjects, professionals, technicians and intellectuals of excellence, with critical capacity and professional ethics’ (CONFECH, 2011c). In one meeting of CONFECH, a student from the Universidad de Concepción from this group proclaimed: ‘professionals should work at the service of the people. The petit-bourgeois should give back to society’. Another student from the state-regional Universidad de Playa Ancha (group D) added: ‘free education in itself won’t change the model, but it’ll change the vision we have of society, how we want to build a different subject’ (CONFECH, 2011a).

### *(b) Private-Elite*

Universities here are oriented to serve the upper classes and exhibit organic links to major interest groups. This orientation is manifest in their pattern of spatial localisation, whereby their campuses are located in upper class neighbours of Santiago, isolated from the rest of the city. The spectre of owners includes conservative religious movements such as Opus Dei and Legionaries of Christ and corporations/foundations related to power networks, including the rightist party UDI, which predominates in the Universidad del Desarrollo (UDD). Since these institutions are not democratically governed and do not provide politicised spaces for

students, their political socialisation is circumscribed to the above-described range of relations.

In the aforementioned UDD, an insider's story reveals that in the days of rallies called by CONFECH, the direction of the university decided to organise recreational activities such as ski and snowboard contests displayed just within campus. In one of the few public statements about the movement, some students expressed that there was no reason to participate as the quality of education there was considered sufficient (Espinosa, 2014).

In another case, the Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez (UAI) – a business school committed to preserving the entrepreneurial guild as a relevant actor – was commented upon by an academic, who referred to the interest of his students towards the movement:

‘Although [students] don't go to the protests, the majority of them are aware about these issues, are conscious, and in many ways are in favour of reforms, but obviously they're not as radical as, for example, students from the Universidad Alberto Hurtado or ARCIS'. [Both universities classified under group D] (Anonymous interviewee, UAI, 2011)

Through seminars and discussions, education there builds upon the background of students, who – according to the academic – are used to dialogue, write, speak in English and travel. The sense of being forming the elite is self-evident, as classroom assignment transparently assumes the perspective of command: ‘If you were minister, what would you do in this situation? Who would be affected with your decision? What would be the unintended consequences?’ (Anonymous interviewee, UAI, 2011).

With the exception of two programmes of the Universidad Diego Portales that recruit students in a more pluralistic fashion – its proportion of private school's students (49 percent)

is below the average of this quadrant – none of these universities was mobilised in 2011. While the interest in the mobilisations seems to have been variable among students from this group – given that certain political leadership is being formed there – their reluctance to mobilise through strikes and/or occupations was rather constant, proving that their specific ideological orientations were not in affinity with those of the movement.

*(c) Private-Mass/Commercially-Oriented*

Predominantly owned by – or related to – for-profit corporations (such as Laureate International Universities and the Apollo Group), marketisation and profit extraction prevail at these universities. Nonetheless, aside from punctual exceptions – one branch campus of the Universidad Pedro de Valdivia and the infamous Universidad del Mar, which went bankrupt shortly thereafter – these universities were not mobilised during 2011. Students denounced the obstacles for mobilisation in these universities, including managerialism, norms inhibiting student unions and the separation of students across branch campuses (Arancibia, 2011). At the ideological level, these universities reproduce an instrumental and depoliticised relationship with knowledge, in accordance with the interests of their owners, the lack of academic departments and the expectations of social mobility attributed to students.

According to an academic from the Universidad Mayor, the hierarchical structure of the institution was functional to prevent the students' politicisation. She contrasted the situation of public universities for that matter, where academics might engage with the students' demands and subsequently be forced to cope with the occupations: 'I think within ten years from now, the so-called public universities are going to hell, because they're not really used to react with action, but with reflection'. Regarding the orientations of her programme and its connection to political dispositions –she summarised the whole affinity as 'micro-politics' – she stated:

‘This micro-politics should consist in encouraging personal responsibility, to take charge, so if you make the decision to go the protests, be responsible, assume that you’ll be hit and don’t say “oh, how bad the police, they hit me”. I believe that as long as... we’re responsible, we can change this world a bit’. (Anonymous interviewee, UMayor, 2011).

The orientation towards social mobility emphasises instrumental knowledge as the main motive of teaching, minimising the development of broader intellectual concerns and political interests. An academic from the Universidad de Las Américas commented as follows:

‘There’s a tension in an institution like this one, because of its owners, its structure, and the expectations of its public, which is to obtain a credential to improve their economic situation... Everything aims to an institution that doesn’t care for what we might call humanism, liberal arts, university formation in its purest sense. Everything aims to Bologna 4.0 injected directly into the vein, people for the market, who work well in companies, period!’ (Anonymous interviewee, UDLA, 2011)

Such an outcome of professionalisation is primarily based upon the transference of habits and codes that would compensate for the students’ socio-cultural background:

‘A basic civilising task is undertaken: we’re talking about people that most likely were the worst students from the worst schools, who don’t even know how to

talk. One is certain that if they're to have occupational success it is necessary to change the way they dress, the way they use their hair'. (Anonymous interviewee, UDLA, 2011)

According to an academic from the Universidad SEK, students enter the university bringing 'a very neoliberal logic... the logic of a consumer', who buys knowledge, has 'scarce levels of intellectual autonomy' and is not reflective about his/her own exclusion/exploitation as an inheritor of a working-class origin:

'Regarding class consciousness and acknowledging that problems are collective, they [students] practically don't have that. This is why these students didn't participate in the movement, because they thought it had nothing to do with them. After knowing these students, one wonders: why they not only stayed at the margins in terms of action, but also did so in terms of thought, they don't have a clue, don't read, and don't get involved'. (Anonymous interviewee, USEK, 2012)

Despite the fact that material grievances of the HES affect universities in this segment to a greater extent, the lack of students' mobilisation is explained by obstacles that – conditioned by the ideological orientations reproduced in these institutions – constrain the politicisation of intellectual labour there.

#### *(d) Private-Mass/Public-Oriented*

Universities in this group are more politicised, with some of them even being stigmatised for it. The cultural background of their students is not necessarily regarded as a handicap to be compensated for, but rather as grassroots knowledge relevant for their education as

professionals/intellectuals. An academic at the Universidad ARCIS describes the political expectations attached to his programme as the formation of *organic intellectuals*:

‘... to reconfigure the tribes fractured by the Dictatorship, restore their memory and give them the possibility to reconstruct their project. This school is formed in the perspective of forming cadres of *organic intellectuals*, who operate in the community, from a critical approach and oriented to produce subjectivity’.  
(Anonymous interviewee, UARCIS, 2011)

The occupation of a private university of this group – the Universidad Central – in April 2011 was the trigger for the mobilisations that year. Students attempted to stop the sale of 50 percent of this institution – held by democratically elected academic representatives – to an investment group connected to the Christian Democratic Party (Figueroa and Araya, 2011). Also in April, student federations from the private universities Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, ARCIS and UDP, together with the Universidad Central, joined the meetings of CONFECH to call for the first national protest. By June 2011, all the private universities from this group were mobilised.

The fact that these students joined the mobilisations served to validate the claims of the movement altogether, which otherwise would have been taken as coming from the usual privileged students from the traditional-public universities. The public vocation of students and academics from the private sector had to be recognised, despite the interests in control of their respective institutions. Consequently, during 2011, CONFECH decided to admit student federations from private universities within its organisation. An intervention by the delegate of the Universidad Central in one of the meetings of CONFECH evidenced the tensions associated with their incorporation, whereby students from this group D are outsiders from

the traditional-public universities yet their experience of the contradictions of mass HE is more extreme than that of their peers from the public sector:

‘Now we have the same opportunities of demands, it’s not understandable the logic of discriminating. The only difference we have with you is that [the U. Central] was created after 1981. The university is not for-profit, because it’s owned by its workers. ... In CONFECH, the citizens victimised by this system are discriminated: we weren’t asked if we wanted to pay for our education. You are seeing us as responsible; this discussion is embarrassing because this CONFECH doesn’t have the spirit that has been embodied by the students of the Universidad Central’. (CONFECH, 2011b)

José Joaquín Brunner – interviewed as an HE expert – observes that universities among this group have characteristics (also shared by those in group E) that distinguish them. The programmes offered by these institutions reserve a significant place for social sciences, education, humanities and arts, while their students generally have more political interest and carry the disposition of reproducing an *intermediate* intellectual leadership as part of a sense of professionalism. In his opinion, this group ‘ought to be understood as *new ideological apparatus*’. Although Brunner sees the SM as a creature of elite students, he admits that the intellectual influences inspiring students’ politicisation in this group served to generalise the movement altogether. Brunner, who also served as a major intellectual figure during the *Concertación* governments (1990-2010), recalled the notion of the *traditional* intellectual – which he represented – and its distance from the *organic* intellectual, which were supposed to be formed in the politicised universities from this group. With his tongue in cheek, he commented:

‘Then we have everyone in the streets and are terrified. What is this all about? Where did they come from? Where were they educated, if none of them were reading us! They were not reading us and they’ll never read us! And if they read us, they’ll say: “this is useless!”’ (Interview, 2011)

### *(e) Public-Mass*

This group of institutions shares with group A most of its orientations as public universities, and thus they were mobilised during 2011. The difference stems from the fact that market competition and insufficient public funding pushed the public-regional universities to become less selective. These universities subsequently differ from their elite counterparts in their orientation towards subordinated occupational positions, which is deemed more coherent with the lower socio-economic backgrounds of their students. According to an academic from the northern Universidad de Tarapacá:

‘People graduated from the PUC, because of their social origin, don’t have the ethical urgency we do. They’re not going to work with the poorest but with their own people, and might generate theoretically beautiful policy programmes, but that in practice everyone do whatever they want, provoking laughs among those who are actually doing the jobs. Not us, we’re in the first line, working with people, not with ideas and projects’. (Anonymous interviewee, UTA, 2011)

According to Giorgio Jackson (2013), and confirmed by another student leader, Francisco Figueroa, in an informal conversation in 2013, the student federations from this group held the most radicalised positions within CONFECH. Such radicalness did not go

unnoticed by the press (La Tercera, 2011), nor by the government, depicting an alleged division between the moderate and the ‘ultra’ extreme left (Figueroa, 2013).

## **6. Conclusion**

The massification of the HES in Chile implied the massive incorporation of students from working-class backgrounds, fostering a socio-economic transition from a society with a predominance of material labour to one in which intellectual labour has become the main option for social mobility. In particular, the 2011 movement stands as an example of social conflict that antagonised the forms of economic exploitation set upon educational markets. Moreover, students’ demands gravitated around the recognition of the public value of intellectual labour.

The 2011 movement denounced the commodification and marketisation of the university system and demanded free education as restitution for its public role. However, this orientation was stronger where universities enjoyed more latitude to socialise and reproduce intellectual labour closer to the conception of knowledge as being autonomous from economic interests and instrumental purposes. In this manner, mass HE implied differentiated effects – both material and ideological – on the articulation of the movement. The universities that more actively engaged in the movement in 2011 were those public universities that had accumulated a tradition of student activism and preserved a conception of the public uses of knowledge and labour, along with a group of private-mass universities that – in conformity to their respective institutional projects and the motivations of their students – provided a more politicised environment for intellectual socialisation. By contrast, the larger group of commercially-oriented private-mass universities prevented massive students’ politicisation because these institutions socialised their students within an instrumental framework that privileged goals of employability and social mobility. Finally,

the private-elite universities represent a different case, since elite leadership is reproduced there, although given the conservative orientations of these institutions none of them – but one punctual exception – participated in these mobilisations.

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**Table 1. Differentiation of the Chilean University System**

ELITE	
<p><b>(A) Public-Traditional</b></p> <p>Six State, two Catholic and two philanthropic regional foundations</p> <p>Enrolment: 155,627</p> <p>627 PSU (*)</p> <p>20% students from private secondary schools</p> <p>74 students per PhD faculty full-time (*)</p> <p>1.1 academics hired per hour per full-time academic (*)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">86% employability, first year after graduation</p> <p>£1,093 income, fourth year after graduation</p>	<p><b>(B) Private-Conservative</b></p> <p>Six universities owned by private foundations, conservative Catholic movements and corporations</p> <p>Enrolment: 45,286</p> <p>626 PSU (*)</p> <p>74% students from private secondary schools</p> <p>158 students per PhD faculty full-time (*)</p> <p>4.8 academics hired per hour per full-time academic (*)</p> <p>£1,281 income, fourth year after graduation</p>
MASS	
<p><b>(E) Public-Regional</b></p> <p>Ten State, four Catholic and one philanthropic foundation</p> <p>Enrolment: 127,252</p> <p>553 PSU (*)</p> <p>7% students from private secondary schools</p> <p>136 students per PhD faculty full-time (*)</p> <p>1.7 academics hired per hour per full-time academic (*)</p> <p>84% employability, first year after graduation</p> <p>£903 income, fourth year after graduation</p>	<p><b>(C) Private/Commercially-oriented</b></p> <p>23 universities predominantly owned by national and transnational corporations and investments groups</p> <p>Enrolment: 274,803</p> <p>500 PSU (*)</p> <p>12% students from private secondary schools</p> <p>1604 students per PhD faculty full-time (*)</p> <p>13.4 academics hired per hour per full-time academic (*)</p> <p>78% employability, first year after graduation</p> <p>£792 income, fourth year after graduation</p> <p><b>(D) Private/Public-oriented</b></p> <p>Five universities owned by corporations, NGOs, academic organisations and progressive Catholic movements</p> <p>Enrolment: 28,640</p> <p>536 PSU (*)</p> <p>13% students from private secondary schools</p> <p>370 students per PhD faculty full-time (*)</p> <p>6 academics hired per hour per full-time academic (*)</p> <p>82% employability, first year after graduation</p> <p>£815 income, fourth year after graduation</p>

Source: Own elaboration based on MINEDUC (2014) except where indicated (\*), taken from Consejo Nacional de Educacion (2014). Conversion from Chilean Pesos to British Pounds made on 10 February, 2015.