Free Education! A "Live" Report on the Chilean Student Movement 2011-2014 – reform or revolution? [A Political Sociology for Action]

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Abstract

This paper provides a report on the Chilean student movement, 2011 - 2014, from the perspective of the students themselves, based on the main research question: are the student protests for reform or revolution? The research data was collected during October 2013 before the Chilean Presidential and Parliamentary elections using the methodology of 'live methods', including ethnography to capture the live action we are researching as well as a particular analytical framework through which the action can be interpreted. The analytical framework is made up of paradigms which seek to understand radical political social transformation: charisma, social movement theory, an historical-materialist political economy, and a critique of political economy based on an interpretation of Marx's labour theory of value in a postcolonial context. We refer to this methodology and methods as 'political sociology for action'. Each of these paradigms are elaborated with reference to an exemplary publication that deals with the Chilean situation in particular and Latin America more generally. The paper maintains that the students have developed a sophisticated consciousness in relation to the problems and possibilities of charismatic leadership, an awareness of the power and complexity of their own position as a social movement, together with a strong understanding of the need to contextualise their resistance within a particular version of political economy: neoliberalism.

The paper suggests that a paradigm based on a critique of political economy can provide a foundational analysis for further understanding political society. Taken together: the methods of reporting 'live methods' along with this analytical framework, the paper argues that political sociology for action provides a realistic estimate of the powers required not only to interpret history, but to transform it.

Keywords: *reform, revolution, student movement, Allende, labour theory of value, charisma, political economy, Chile, social movements, historical materialism, postcolonialism*

Significant Political Actors

Chilean students are recognised as significant actors in political society (Somma, 2012). This recognition has been enhanced by their activities to reform education at all levels between 2006-2014. These reforms have been in the context of an education system that is among the most marketised and privatised in the world, based on a framework that was developed during a brutal military dictatorship, 1973-1990. Although the students have not been successful in achieving all of their demands, they have forced Chilean governments to instigate changes to education policy, made education ministers resign from office, and for politicians from all political parties during the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in November 2013 to take the issue of education policy very seriously. One of the most significant outcomes of the election is that leaders of the student movement were elected to the Chilean Parliament. But more than this, the student movement has played a key role in the development of a more general articulation, beyond education, of social grievances against the privatisation of other public services, including welfare, pensions, housing and health.

The student movement in Chile has been extensively studied by political scientists, political sociologists, and journalists. This work has looked at the strength of student network activities, virtual and real (Millaleo and Velasco, 2013; Somma, 2013), at the creativity of the student protest movement (García and Aguirre, 2014) and at the political implications of student protest as well as the ways in which it has shaped the higher education research and policy agenda (Bernasconi, 2014) . This research has also drawn on lessons from other Latin American class based and indigenous protest movements in Venezuela (Motta, 2009; Motta and Cole, 2013;), Bolivia (Webber, 2011) and Argentina (Sitrin 2006).

What is distinctive about this paper is that it gets close to the student protesters and asks them to articulate their own political vision for higher education: between reform and revolution. In order to interpret and understand what the students and academics are saying about this issue we have developed an analytical framework based on different models of radical social transformation derived from the literature of political sociology with reference to Chile in particular and Latin America in general. We refer to this model as a political sociology for action. The paradigms used to frame our political sociology for action are: *charisma*, *social movement theory* , *an historical and materialist political economy*, and an interpretation based on a politics of autonomy grounded in *a critique of political economy* applied to a postcolonial context. The point is to contextualise the Chilean student movement within a broader sociological framework of social transformation that does not need to be geographically specific and can be applied to other jurisdictions.

Our political sociology for action will draw on the work of Figueroa Clark (2013) which presents Allende as a highly *charismatic* political figure; on George Ciccariello-Maher's (2013) work on the leadership of Hugo Chavez which allows us to assess the emergence of another charismatic

Latin American revolutionary politician through his connection with Venezuelan *social movements* (2013); on Marcus Taylor's work which further substantiates political transformation in Chile through an analysis of more *historical and materialist analyses of the structures of political economy* (2006; 2002), and finally, Ana Dinerstein's (2014) The *Politics of Autonomy in Latin America*, which grounds revolutionary social transformation in the politics of autonomy through *a critique of political economy,* making links between capitalist working class struggles and indigenous resistance to colonialism across Latin America.

Methodology

The research was undertaken in the period immediately prior to the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in November 2013, including individual and focus group interviews with students and academics as well as ethnographic research during a protest march. A key feature of this research is the use of 'live methods' (Back and Puwar, 2012) to report on the opposition to the neoliberal university from inside the protest movement itself. Inspired by what Les Back and Nirmal Puwar call 'Live Methods', we tried to represent the voices of students and academics in a way that makes them heard, capturing the 'liveliness' of the movement by means of an ethnographic account of a protest march for free public education. One of the live methods utilized was a Twitter feed to report on events as they were happening in real time, using the hashtag #lookingforallende. Live Methods also suggests that research 'be attentive to the larger scale and longer historical time frame' (Back and Puwar 2012) so as to give more substance to what CW Mills refers to as 'the sociological imagination' (1999). This methodological approach encourages sociologists to provide a determining framework that is not in itself deterministic, as a way to, 'mediate personal experience with systematic constraints, knowledge with action, while underscoring the political urgency and epistemic difficulty of such a demand' (Toscano 2012 64). We have

attempted to do this by connecting the real time of our investigation with the real life experiences of students built on a socio-historical time frame through the conceptual framework of 'political sociology for action'.

The objective of the interviews and the focus groups was to learn from the students' experience about the students' movement, including the aims of the movement, its intellectual perspectives and its achievements as well as about students' socialisation into the politics and practices of protest. For this purpose we carried out individual interviews with students and academics and three semi-structured focus groups with students at one regional public university, a private university in Santiago and a private traditional university in Santiago. Whereas the interviews and focus groups were open to all students (sociology in one university, sociology and psychology students in the others), the majority of students who participated in the research have been very active in student' politics in their departments and universities and participated in occupations and demonstrations. As well as the students we interviewed three academics who are based in the same universities that the students were attending. Informed consent of all interviewees was sought prior to interviews and focus groups, abiding to international ethics regulations in the field (British Sociological Association, 2002).

Our research questions to the students and academics were:

1. How would you characterise the current state of student movement politics in terms of reform and revolution?

2.What is the significance of Salvador Allende for the political current situation?

3. What has been the impact of neoliberal policies on higher education in Chile?

4. How would you assess the impact of the Chilean student movement on higher education policy and politics and broader issues of social and public concern, e.g., health, welfare, unemployment and housing?

Our key objective was to analyse how the concepts of reform and revolution unfold in quite complex and often contradictory ways. In writing up our research and the analysis of interviews, focus groups and our ethnography, we decided to adopt an unusual approach, weaving in the voices of students from the focus groups and from academics in the presentation and discussion of our ethnography at the protest demonstration. This results is a *pasticcio* of voices, some of which were present at the march and others who were there in spirit. By incorporating the diverse narratives from focus groups and interviews about the movement in the ethnographic account of the students at the march, we give the students' demonstration the emblematic character it has for the students' movement.

Higher education in Chile: authoritarianism, neoliberalism and resistance

In this section we deal with the origins of neoliberalism in Chile and resistance to these policies. We explore this implementation with specific reference to higher education, initially through the dictatorship (1973-1990) and its forceful implementation of neoliberalism and the continuation and intensification of these policies through subsequent political administrations after the return to democracy in 1990 up to the present day. Our exposition of resistance will focus on the student protest movement from 2011 - 2014.

Chile is one of the most neoliberal countries on the globe with a high level of social segregation and difference between social classes (Undurraga, 2014). Our understanding of neoliberalism is informed by David Harvey (Harvey, 2005) who frames neoliberalism as a

project that encompasses all spheres: economic, social and cultural. Whereas this definition is quite broad, it is all encompassing in that it captures the widespread effects of neoliberalism on all aspects of social, political and economic life. Neoliberalism in Chile was forcefully implemented by the Pinochet dictatorship in the 1980s (Gárate, 2012). In his book *La revolución capitalista en Chile*, the historian Manuel Gárate Chateau demonstrates the emergence of capitalism in Chile (Gárate, 2012). Mainly focusing on the time between 1973 and 2003, Gárate shows how the belief in the seemingly rational, neutral and non-ideological character of neoclassical economics gave the dictatorship the legitimacy to forcefully implement their policies, covering the areas of health, work, education and pensions. Throughout the book, Gárate analyses how the forceful silencing of the opposition and the rise of neoliberal economics and the economist as the ideal figure of an academic, not only changed the social and political reality of Chile, but also left major marks on what is considered as relevant knowledge and methods in the social sciences and humanities until today: highly positivistic approaches such as evaluation techniques, think-tank procedures and technocratic public policy (Gárate, 2012).

With regard to higher education, the 'reforms' of the Pinochet regime involved destroying the traditional education system through an unregulated market provision of private higher education with no public subsidies, implementing different types of Higher Education institutions and certificates and transferring the cost of state financed institutions to students, thus forcing public universities to acquire funding from other sources than the state (Brunner, 1997: 226). The system mainly remained unchallenged by the social democratic government after the end of the dictatorship in 1990. Rather, the legislation favoured these conditions and within a few years Chilean Higher Education saw a tremendous rise in private universities (Rama, 2005).

Chile currently has sixty universities, sixteen of which are public and forty four private.

With only 0.3% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) going to universities, Chile has the lowest level of state funding for tertiary education compared to all other OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. On average, OECD countries invest 1.1% of their GDP into tertiary education (OECD, 2009). In no other Latin American country have private universities grown as rapidly as in Chile between 1970 and 2006 – from 34% of all registered students in private universities in 1970 to 74% in 2006 (CINDA, 2007). Over the last few years numerous cases of fraud in relation to the Chilean national higher education accreditation agency (CNA) were revealed, where institutions received accreditation against payment (Mönckeberg, 2013; 2007). As a result, numerous universities had to close down, leaving thousands of students who had already paid for their studies without the possibility of receiving their degrees (Mönckeberg, 2013; 2007).

During the period of the dictatorship the rights of students, administrators and academics were diminished (Garretón, 2005) through the installation of junta supporters as vice-chancellors and to other roles of senior university management. There was intellectual censorship at all levels, including spying on students and academics and the burning of books (Garretón, 2005). Students lost the right of representation through the repression of student union activity inside their institutions (Bellei, Cabalin and Orellana, 2013 2014). Moreover, Chile is the only Latin American nation state that still has the constitution established by a military government. With the reduction of public funding during the dictatorship the burden of financing higher education has mostly been carried by the students. This has been taken forward by subsequent administrations such as the social democratic

coalition 'Concertación' that maintained and perpetuated neoliberal policies.

Amongst other groups in society, students had a major role to play in the public protest against the dictatorship from the mid-1980s onwards, during the campaign of the 'NO' and until the end of the dictatorship in 1990 (Bellei, Cabalin and Orellana, 2013 2014). By then, students' rights had been seriously diminished and their legal rights of representation have not been reestablished during the almost twenty five years of democracy after the end of the dictatorship.

The 2011-2014 student protests has its origins in the so called 'Penguin' movement of school pupils who protested against the condition of primary and secondary education. Despite the spectacular features of this movement, including in particular its creative forms of demonstration (Cabalin, 2014; García and Aguirre, 2014), not all of its demands were met by the Chilean government. The current social democratic president Michelle Bachelet who was in power in 2006 did not satisfactorily deal with the students' demands (Cabalin, 2012). Yet, only recently have these conditions of a segregated and neoliberal education system been challenged by a much broader segment of Chilean society. Since June 2011, Chilean students from both the secondary and tertiary sector have been demonstrating in the streets and occupying schools and universities, pointing to the failures and inequalities of the Chilean education and higher education system. At the peak of the movement, almost 300,000 people were on the streets with a high degree of support by the general public as indicated by public opinion polls (Cabalín, 2012; Fleet, 2012). Commentators say that one of the distinctive features of the students' movement is that students were among the first cohort born after the end of the dictatorship, a generation that has lost the fear to articulate themselves politically (Fleet, 2012). The movement has radicalised the public discourse,

culminating in a more general critique of the privatisation of public goods (Mayol 2012; Times Higher Education Supplement 2011; The Economist 2011).

One of the most significant features of the student movement 2011-2014 is that former student leaders are now MPs in the Chilean Parliament. As such, they have taken a key role in the drafting of the educational reform in Chile (Bellei, Cabalín and Orellana, 2014) that was approved in January 2015. The reform aims to put an end to structural inequality in education, guaranteeing quality education to all Chileans. The major elements of the reform include the prohibition of state funding for co-funded (semi-private) schools, the prohibition of profit-oriented education co-funded by the state, the end of the current school choice system where students are selected according to their cultural and economic capital, and the strengthening of the public sector (Gobierno de Chile, 2015). However, the plans to completely restructure both the schooling sector as well as higher education go hand in hand with practical difficulties of how to implement these major changes and how to fund them As a consequence, the National Students' Federation (CONFECH) keeps organising students' marches at regular intervals, albeit not so often as in 2011.

Framework for analysis: Political Sociology For Action

In this section we set out the full range of analysis framed around the concept of 'political sociology for action' through the various significant paradigms already identified: *charismatic* (Figueroa Clark, 2013), *social movement* (Ciccariello-Maher, 2014), *political economy* (Taylor, 2006: 2002) the politics of autonomy: *a critique of political economy* in a postcolonial context (Dinerstein, 2014). Our argument is that while all these approaches have much to offer the most complete account for revolutionary social movements is the politics of

autonomy: *a critique of* political economy, suggesting neither reform nor revolution but the dissolution of capitalist social relations.This 'political sociology for action' approach provides a critical and interpretative framework for analysis as well as for action, through which students and academics can consider their positions, without suggesting any particular strategy.

Political leadership - Charisma

Charisma has been suggested as 'the specifically creative revolutionary force of history' (Weber, 1978: 1117, quoted in McCulloch, 2014: 24), changing the course of significant political events, playing an important role in political life (McCulloch, 2014). In spite of this, the concept of charisma remains relatively unexplored in political sociology (McCulloch, 2014; Lassman 2000; Schaff, 1989) which may be due to charisma being considered mainly as a psychological concept. However, any understanding of charisma demands not only a review of personal attributes and characteristics, but an awareness of social circumstances (McCulloch, 2014: 24-25), and can only be fully understood when charismatic leadership mutates into charismatic rule, a form of political domination dependent on ideological and moral force (25) as well as the (il)legitmate use of state violence (22). Charismatic leadership is usually personified by heroism, moral courage, emotional intelligence, communicative and oratory skills, and a sense of personal vision and mission: political vocationalism based on a sense of personal duty, usually originating as an outsider on a journey full of trials and tribulations to the centre of the political stage, as a 'supreme expression of the human personality' (5).

Figueroa Clark (2013) offers a charismatic analysis of Allende's rise to power and as the basis for his political project, arguing strongly of his influence on the contemporary student protesters. Allende is presented as a charismatic political leader in a continent renowned for its charismatic twentieth century political leaders, e.g.

Castro, Guevara, Chavez, Morales and going back even further to the Chilean leader Bernardo O'Higgins, and the transcontinental ' legacy of Simon Bolivar' (5). Allende was not the product of a popular movement but helped to shape it, appealing beyond it by 'the breadth of his political vision, the energy of his political methods, and the charisma of his personality' (6). According to Figueroa Clark, Allende was the product of his age, defined by class struggle of the workers and its ideology: Marxism (11), for which he had his own interpretation as an independent thinker (18). Allende was always acutely aware of his own destiny as a future President of Chile (16) to be achieved by a life dedicated to the struggle for a total transformation of society based on principles of social justice, democracy and equality (26), grounded in an 'empathy' for the poor (28, 41) and passion to find pragmatic solutions to social problems (29). The importance of the charismatic principle is defined by his own statement:

> 'He who manages to achieve power temporarily by force is not revolutionary. On the other hand, a governor, who manages to transform society, social co-existence and the economic basis of the country [after] arriving to power legally, can be revolutionary. That is the sense that we give to the concept of revolution - profound and creative transformation...a peaceful revolution' (Allende, quoted in Figueroa Clark 2013: 49-50).

For Allende this would take the very concrete forms of more democratic systems of representation, with the people as the sovereign body in Chilean politics, including workers and members of other social organisations. All this meant a legal system that did not discriminate against the poor, equal pay for men and women, a popular 'own force army', a living wage and system of social security, with a guarantee of free medical care and free education and an end to adult literacy, with sport and popular culture promoted across all levels of society. This would include the nationalisation of the copper and mining industry and the banks, as well as the creation of worker cooperatives and state owned farms, with land titles

passing to indigenous communities. Foreign policy was to be against all forms of (neo)-colonialism and imperialism:

> 'The hope was that the people could be incorporated into every aspect of decision-making, in a process of democratisation that went beyond the realm of elections and made the exercise of power a daily reality. This would not only change the way Chile worked, it would change the way people behaved. It was the Chilean method of creating the revolutionary "new man"' (Figueroa Clark, 2013: 96-97).

Allende's political project, or *Allendismo*, is described by Figueroa Clark as 'revolutionary reformism' (5), showing that 'political compromises do not have to be reformist, or aimed at preserving capitalism, and that reforms, by building upon and within existing structures, can become a revolutionary "perestroika", avoiding the carnage and waste of violent change' (6).

In the current Chilean political context, Figueroa Clark tells us of the search for alternatives to the failure of social democracy and neoliberalism, so it is hardly surprising that 'people are beginning to look back at Allende's ideas in search of guidance' (145). The students and Chilean society are once again beginning to mobilise against the neoliberal reforms introduced during the Dictatorship (1973-1990) and carried on by the civilian Concertacion government (1990 - 2010) and subsequent Presidents of Chile. So much so that:

> 'Today the post-coup institutionality is creaking under pressure from the masses and there are signs that 'Allendismo' is once again inspiring Chile's youth, from the nationalisation of copper, to the provision of quality health and education, and indigenous rights. Chileans are again demanding sovereignty and democracy. This is the essence of Allende's legacy' (Figueroa Clark, 2013: 137).

An issue here for student politics is, as we will see, the problems created by charismatic student leaders who have now become elected members of the Chilean National Congress. Both the interviews and the analysis

reveal the need for these student leaders to maintain close links with their political base as well as with the social movement that created them.

Social movements

There is an extensive social movement literature on Latin America, dealing with all aspects of the region's compelling modern history of resistance, such as the class based and indigenous protest movements in Venezuela (Cicciarello-Maher, 2013; Motta, 2009; Motta and Cole, 2013), Bolivia (Webber, 2011) and Argentina (Sitrin 2006). We have identified Ciccariello-Maher's text as pertinent for the framework we are adopting of political sociology for action.

Figueroa Clark's approach can be criticised as being too much in favour of Allende as a charismatic figure, underplaying the social and political forces by which Allende came to power (Figueroa Clark, 2013). Such a framework for analysing the rise of political leadership has been provided by Ciccariello-Maher (2013) in his analysis of the rise of another charismatic Leftist leader in another country in Latin America, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, focusing on the social and political forces that were prevalent at the time.

Ciccariello-Maher's key problematic is the relationship between the autonomy of the radical militant collectives, e.g., La Piedrita, in Venezuela and State power under Chavez's leadership. Ciccariello-Maher argues that there is 'a complex and dynamic interplay and mutual determination between the two: social movements and the state, "the people" and Chavez' (2013: 6). This is taking place in a context where the 'Bolivarian Revolution' has wrested power from the Venezuelan elites and made for 'unprecedented social improvements, and is poised to transform even the state itself' (2013: 6). Ciccariello-

Maher's solution to this conundrum about the relationship between 'the people' and Chavez is that:

> '...the Bolivarian revolution is not about Hugo Chavez. He is not the center, not the driving force, not the individual revolutionary genius on whom the whole process as a whole relies or in whom it finds a quasi-divine inspiration… "Chavez did not make the revolution it was the revolution that made Chavez…Chavez didn't create the movements we created him"' (7). Ciccariello-Maher argues, after C L R James, that ' "by avoiding the personification of social forces"...a whole new world comes into view' (Ciccariello-Maher 7).

Key to this analysis is the concept of *pueblo*: 'the people', which Ciccariello-Maher regards as a category of '*rupture and struggle'* (8): 'a moment of combat in which those oppressed within the prevailing political order and those excluded from it intervene to transform the system, in which a victimised part of the community speaks for and attempts to radically transform the whole' (8) as part of a process in which 'dialogue and translation between its component movements serve to provide a common identity in the course of struggle' (8). In other words, not the usual history from above which focuses on political leaders, but a history from below (9): the story of a 'dispersed multiplicity of revolutionary social movements' (12), or the *bravo pueblo* (13). This is not a history of constituted power: the institutionalised power of the state, but a history of constituent power: that radically unmediated force aimed against those institutions and which itself resists institutionalisation' (15).

This raises key questions about the nature and function of the state. Citing John Holloway, Ciccariello-Maher asks 'is it possible to change the world without taking power', or is it necessary to seize the power of the state in order to effect radical social transformation? (Ciccariello Maher, 2013: 17; John Holloway 2002). Ciccariello-Maher is keen to avoid what he sees as a fetishisation of the state and a fetishisation of the power of human creativity, both of which end up with the same result, where 'the state is a

superhuman entity to be either worshipped or feared but never transformed' (16).

Ciccariello-Maher's avoidance of this double form of fetishisation is through the concept of 'dual power': neither a history from above or below, but that which 'exists in ongoing, tense and antagonistic opposition to the state, straining insistently upward from the bases to generate a dialectical motion allowing the revolutionary transformation of the state and its institutions. The ultimate goal of this opposition is deconstructing, decentralising, and rendering the state a non-state, meaning "the liquidation of the current state" and its replacement with what some may deem a paradox "a government of popular insurgency"' (Ciccariello-Maher 19), or 'as a reservoir of revolutionary energy...against the state structure in its traditional bureaucratic and military form' (254). Ciccariello-Maher suggests this approach offers a model for revolutionary social transformation in a way that avoids caricatures for others to follow, e.g., the Zapatistas, in what might be called 'anarchist imperialism' (20). What all of this means in terms of the relationship between the people and the state, is that the revolution will support the state, so long as the state supports the revolution (255).

This is a compelling account of what constitutes the real nature of revolutionary subjectivity. Its limits are that it is written as a description of the activities of social movements operating in the political sphere, with no real connection to the substantive economic processes out of which these political activities emerged, and within which social institutions, including the capitalist state, are formed. What is needed is not just a political analysis of the movement of social movements but an analysis framed through the paradigm of political economy out of which the *bravo pueblo* history of Chile has been derived.

Political Economy

An approach based on the political economy of a society provides a more materialist basis for analysis than social movement theory (Meiksins-Wood, 1998). Marcus Taylor's book *From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile (2006)*, provides a logical and historical analysis of the emergence of political leaders and regimes of regulation in Chile through the   perspective of political economy. The issue here is that structural processes seem to overwhelm political agency and subjectivity, with little room for politicians to dictate events, leaving the spaces for political resistance to occur. The limitation of this form of analysis is the extent to which political resistance can become real revolutionary antagonism.

Taylor understands the development of neo-liberalism as a response to the crisis of 'capitalist development, class formation and institution building in Chile from the 1920s' (Taylor, 2006: 11). For Taylor neoliberalism did not arrive in Chile fully formed, but emerged out of a violent and brutal process of state repression that sought to eradicate the Marxist menace. The appeal of neoliberalism for the Dictatorship was that it was not simply an alternative economic doctrine for national developmentalism, but rather it offered 'a multifaceted political strategy that proclaims to refashion social relations in a way that will depoliticise and reinvigorate society by imposing self-regulating market institutions as the essential organising principles of social life' (Taylor, 2006: 34). More specifically Taylor refers to the policies adopted by the Dictatorship as a strategy of creative destruction, informed by the principles of a group of economists referred to as the Chicago Boys: rapid de-industrialisation, mass privatisations, deregulation of financial restrictions to pursue more lucrative sectors outside Chile and to persuade finance to flow into Chile. This process was facilitated by the privatisation of the banks, resulting in large scale centralisation of finance in massive

conglomerates 'grupos economicos' exacerbated by privatising public enterprises 'consolidating the modalities of private power within Chilean society' (Taylor, 2006: 72).

For Taylor neoliberalism is more than an economic doctrine, but is rather 'a state-led project of social engineering..[in ways that]..advance the disciplinary power of markets upon social actors…[i.e.] the extended commodification of social relations and the reinforcement of market discipline [to] enhance the social power of money, therein paving the way for a concentration of power around holders of money, specifically financiers' (6).

Taylor has a sophisticated theory of the capitalist state and the market, as complementary forms of the capital relation (Clarke 1991;Holloway and Picciotto 1977; Burnham 2000; Bonefeld, 2000; Postone, 1993). In this arrangement money is not a means of exchange but a supreme form of social power forcing people to live within the class relations of capitalist production (46-47). The economic system on which the power of money is based requires a strong state to enforce and police the process of exchange, despite the rhetoric of free-marketeers (44). It is this restriction of the working class as wage labour that creates the basis for class struggle, with its concomitant rise and fall in profitability, while all the time creating the possibility of social transformation based on the interests of labour rather than capital (47).

In this analysis of the Chilean political economy the power of political leaders are severely constrained. Parties and leaders emerge out of the ongoing crisis of capitalist accumulation, e.g., the Christian Democratic Party, led by Eduardo Frei in 1960s, who initiated a sustained process of state institution building to deal with the crisis prone course of capitalist development in Chile, in a programme

Frei referred to as 'neo-capitalist' based on a Keynesian model of expansionist policy. However, unsatisfied expectations led to further politicisation of marginalised groups, as new social movements and a more powerful labour movement looked to social transformations beyond what even the state could offer. These new social and labour movements are expressed as the rise in Socialist and Communist Parties in the 1960s, as the Frei government failed to overcome economic stagnation. It was out of this context that Allende emerged, winning the Presidency by a narrow margin in 1970.

Allende focused on the concept of a 'democratic transitions to socialism' and nationalisation of key industries as well as extended welfare programmes, enabling the masses to take power into their own hands and referred to as the 'Estado Popular'. Taylor argues that through these policies Allende was challenging 'the bedrock of capitalist social relations' (25), which for Taylor is 'the institution of private property (Taylor 2006 25) through the politics of redistribution. Not surprisingly these policies achieved high levels of popular support among the working class, but were not able to prevent a growing economic crisis and opposition from the bourgeoisie, and most significantly from the US who sought to undermine Allende's government by 'making the economy scream' (27). Further opposition emerged as a right wing paramilitary strategy of destablisation, including strikes by owners of small and medium sized enterprises who were threatened by rising wages and resulting inflation (27), as well as moves by the military against Allende whose government was seen as 'a great threat to the survival of the basic capitalist parameters of society' (28). The coup that followed in 1973 marked the end of 'national developmentalism' and the space for the emergence of what came to be known as 'neo-liberalism' (28).

The dictatorship sought to undermine welfare provision by introducing market mechanisms into all aspects of public policy, including health-care, pensions, education reform, labour relations, social security provision, judicial procedures, political decentralisation and agrarian reform (85). In the initial period a policy of austerity was introduced, depressing wages while deregulating financial flows (61) as well as other monetarist policies, creating a period of boom which allowed the regime to claim an 'economic miracle' (64). However, the policy ran up against its limits, being unable to exploit labour in real manufacturing industries (68) as well as a speculative bubble through the expansion of credit and mounting levels of debt, and a fall of commodity prices on the world market, including copper, all of which plunged Chile into deep recession (69).

The 1982 crisis led to increasing protest against the repressive Dictatorship from the labour movement and social movements as well as other oppositional forces cutting across class lines to include parts of the bourgeoisie and middle classes, involving some armed resistance (101). This period sees the emergence of moderate political parties, e.g., Democratic Alliance, and the reformist Socialist Party that sought to maintain neoliberal structures but within a democratic political framework that favoured social justice and equality (102). The increasing insecurity of the Dictatorship forced it to set up a referendum in an attempt to consolidate its powers, which it lost in 1988.

The post-Dictatorship government, Concertacion, is marked as a period of continuity rather than rupture, particularly in regard to macroeconomic policy and labour regulation; generally characterised as a 'third way' between neoliberalism and social democracy, or 'an attempt to mediate the contradictions of neoliberal capitalist development while reproducing its core institutions' (100). However, the policies of the incoming

Alwyn government in 1990 failed to live up to the populist promises on which it had been elected, in fact 'the new regime would maintain and deepen the pivotal tenets of the neo-liberal social transformation undertaken in the dictatorship period while failing to deliver the expected degree of civil and social transformation' (104) Nevertheless the Concertacion governments did attempt to develop social justice within the framework of a neoliberal model, through a social policy defined as 'growth with equity' by which they hoped to restrain class conflict through the redistribution of resources to the most in need by providing such public goods as education, as well as training and health to raise the level of human capital (116). On education the Concertacion have since then taken the model further in the direction of neoliberalism through the voucher and co-payment system, so that the class dimension of Chilean society is further exacerbated (182), with choice dependent on income (183) and other anti-poverty policies based on targeted redistribution, rather than any sense of the decommodification of society (192), in the form of competition for funds (193) and other attempts to depoliticise interventions in the realm of social policy (195).

Taylor concludes by arguing that inequalities in Chile remain entrenched through income distribution and institutional structures. He re-emphasises neoliberalism not as a set of technocratic economic policies but a process that involves 'deep seated social transformation'(198). He sees the reforms of the Concertacion governments as being never anything more than 'a politics of expediency' (199) and as such the Concertacion is a product of the institutional structures of neoliberalism rather than its negation: responding to the contradictions of neoliberal restructuring while consolidating and reproducing the fundamental relationships on which neoliberalism is based (200).

The strength of Taylor's work is that it provides the context in which political leaders emerge and it shows the very constrained nature within which they are operating. Taylor's analysis is grounded in an understanding of the capitalist state, as a form of the capital relation (Clarke 1988, Holloway and Picciotto 1977), yet the way in which he characterises the state and its political actors, arising out of constrained set of economic and political determinations, makes it difficult to see where the logic for social transformation will appear, other than through the labour movement. However, the emphasis on the labour movement as a force for revolutionary change underestimates the extent to which the labour movement is itself a form of the social relations of capitalism and thus an agent of capitalism's continuing affirmation rather than its negation (Postone 1993).   In order to develop this revolutionary analysis we will need to delve more deeply into capitalism's contradictory formations, looking at the work of Ana Dinerstein in relation to the politics of autonomy in Latin America in the twenty- first century.

A Critique of Political Economy

An analysis of the contradictory formations of capitalist society are set out in Dinerstein's *The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America: The Art of Organising Hope* (2014). The political problematic in this book is neither reform nor revolution, but the politics of autonomy in the key of hope grounded in a critique of political economy. Teeming with radical scholarship, this book reports on the explosion of rage and hope against the injustices of neoliberal politics and policy at the end of the twentieth century by citizens as well as popular, labour and indigenous movements in Latin America. At the heart of the book lies the concept of autonomy and the way in which it has been used by these movements of protest and resistance - Marxist, anarchist, libertarian and indigenous - to imagine alternative utopias beyond the limits of the law, the state and global capital, while all the time challenging the ideologies of left-wing parties and

trade unions. If Latin America has been a laboratory for experimenting with neoliberalism, the book reveals Latin America as a laboratory for resistance against neoliberalism and a place where revolution has sought to reinvent itself (Dinerstein, 2014: 26).

Dinerstein's work is influenced by John Holloway's *Change the World Without Taking Power* (2002), a development of Holloway's 'Open Marxism' brought into very concrete focus through his encounter with the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas Mexico in the 1990s. A key aspect of Open Marxism is the way it deconstructs the domineering character of capitalist categories through a reappraisal of Marx's value theory of labour. What emerges from this book is an attempt to reinvent the concept of revolution, theorised not by capturing the power of the state; but, rather, 'dissolving the relations of power, to create a society based on the mutual recognition of people's dignity' (Dinerstein 2014: 17; Holloway 2002: 20). Dinerstein argues that Holloway's work is nothing less than a turning point in the theoretical activity of revolutionary thinking. Faced with this revolution in the theory of revolution, she argues that we can no longer think about progressive politics in terms of reform or revolution (18); but, rather, as a process of 'change and becoming' (18), based on grassroots mobilisation for radical change grounded in a critique of capitalist value (18). She points out the forms of grassroot imagination have already appeared in Latin America as horizontalism, self-management, direct democracy, anti-bureaucracy and, above all, the rejection of the state as the main site for political change.

But how can you avoid the power of the state on a continent where the left has been capturing state power through the Presidencies of Chavez, Morales, Rafael, and before that Allende; all of whom adopted indigenous and leftist campaigns as the basis for anti-neoliberal, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist social policies. These anti-

strategies formed a core part of what is referred to as neo-developmentalism, that included pluri-national constitutions and Communitarian Socialism. Dinerstein argues that the result of these policies may have been a reduction in income inequality, better education and health systems and welfare, but the extent to which these governments constituted a break with neoliberalism is debatable; and that they might more accurately be regarded as a continuation of neoliberalism, particularly in relation to the way in which natural resources have been exploited in these countries.

The result has been, she reports, since 2006 a new wave of protests in Latin America by indigenous and non-indigenous people: a key feature of the indigenous protest has been the emergence of the concept of *buen viver* against the policies of developmentalism. What is important in Dinerstein's work is the way in which she makes connections between the struggles of indigenous people, informed by their cosmological view of the world, and populations that have been directly exploited by Capital. She conceptualises indigenous people as having not been fully subsumed by Capital, by which she means people who have not been subordinated to the process of valorisation: she refers to this process of non-subordination as 'real subsumption by exclusion'. This process of subsumption by exclusion has been an important part of the process of making the Latin American working class and industrial society.

In these cases autonomy means different things for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples: for non-indigenous people it means freedom, democracy, refusal of work, struggles against poverty, misery and the state. For indigenous people autonomy refers to the struggles over land and territory rights, as well as the desire for self-government based on customs, traditions and cosmologies: to be revolutionary for indigenous people is not to change (52). Most especially Dinerstein argues that

identity for indigenous peoples is not a negative concept, but forms an essential aspect of their struggle against colonialism: to be a Maya or a Zapatista; although this ability to self-define is not the same thing as identity which is always imposed (52).

She finds the theoretical link for these different versions of autonomy in the connection between Holloway's Open Marxism and the Zapatistas rejection of the state as a locus for radical transformation (25): so that autonomy is both emancipatory (non-indigenous) and decolonising (indigenous).

Alongside autonomy as the organising principle of these movements of protest, Dinerstein suggests the concept of prefiguration as a pedagogic device through which autonomy can be achieved, what she refers to as 'the process of learning hope' (16). The desire of these forms of resistance is not to achieve the 'ideal society' but through the process of struggle in and against the law, state and capital as well as the struggle against colonial oppression to produce what she calls excess (28): the capacity for human life to overflow the limits imposed by capitalist and colonial regimes of domination. She substantiates the politics of hope through situating it within the work of Ernst Bloch who described hope as the 'human impulse to explore what is Not Yet' (30). Despite her Marxist credentials Dinerstein is not afraid of taking on Bloch's controversial idea that hope is anthropological ' a genuine feature of what makes us human'. She understands Bloch's anthropology as a dynamic conflictual contradictory dialectical process by focussing on the concept of the 'Not Yet' and the way in which it offers the possibility of conjuring up concrete utopias out of the conditions that are already present in the world, however oppressively capitalist and colonial. Dinerstein is clear:

> 'These spaces are not, however, 'liberated zones' but deeply embedded in the capitalist/colonial dynamics. It is precisely

because they are embedded that they can confront value with hope, thus producing radical change' (197).

In this way Dinerstein means to overcome the sterile debate between those who favour the concept of autonomy and those who argue about the importance of the centrality of the power of the state. Her elegant solution is to focus on the prefigurative possibility of autonomy without avoiding the problem of the state, while all the time making the link between indigenous and non-indigenous struggles (32).

Dinerstein offers us a framework by which we might imagine our own concrete utopias. This framework can also be used as an analytical device for research: to set alongside already existing movements of resistance so as to consider their revolutionary capacity and potential, e.g., student protests in Chile. She refers to this framework as 'autonomy in the key of hope', with four distinct registers of hope: negation, creation, contradiction and excess. *Negativity*, as we have already seen, is encapsulated by the Blochian concept of the Not Yet; *Creativity* is the creation of a new form of society, understood as the commons or communitarian economics (43); *Contradiction* is promoted through the invention of a new subaltern de-colonialising commonsense (44) or by the notion of the multitude, or out of the contradiction that forms the substance of the organising principle of Marx's law of value, the commodity-form, through which human life subsists only 'in the form of being denied' (48); and, finally*, excess*, by which she means that which gets beyond contradiction, as the overflow between human capacity and the restrictions of abstract labour (49), i.e., the product of humanity's subversive energy (50). And all of this with plenty of space for danger and disappointment along the way, including the recuperation of radical ideas and their translation into the logics of capitalist power (63-69).

Dinerstein provides an empirical case study of each of these registers in the key of hope from specific movements of struggle in Latin America. These are Argentinian experiences of dignified work and the movement of popular justice in Argentina in 2001/2 (*creation*); a review of the Zapatistas armed uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, challenging and reinventing revolutionary traditions in the 1990s (*negation*); an account of indigenous popular movement 2004-5 and the creation of the plurinational state in 2009 in Bolivia (*contradiction*), and, finally, an exposition of the landless workers movement (MST) from the 1980s in Brazil with the development of 'territories of hope' through popular agrarian reform and the democratisation of land ownership (*excess*). The elaboration of each key with reference to specific case studies is a presentational device as these registers of hope are inextricably interconnected.

A defining feature of Dinerstein's work is the way in which it is conceptualised and brought to life through Karl Marx's labour theory of value, reinterpreted by Bonefeld, Holloway, Gunn and Psychopedis's concept of Open Marxism (1992, 1992 1995). Excess is derived from Open Marxism's account of the limits of abstract labour as a practice and principle of human activity, or doing. The possibility of human creativity or doing is subordinated to the production of value, imposed through the forms of abstract labour, money and the state. However given the nature of human capacity perpetual subordination is impossible due to the mismatch between doing and the value form, which cannot persist without a remainder (184). The dialectical dynamic that forms the core of the Not Yet is the conflictual nature of the commodity form, between use value and exchange value, where human life exists as the resource rather than the project and, therefore, is always in conflict: as class struggle. In this way the categories of capitalism, law, money and the state, are attempts to contain this contradiction as capital seeks to realise itself as surplus value. For example, the

state is a political form of the social relations of capital: this means that the specific form of the capitalist state, and its relationship with the market with which it is so closely associated, is derived from class struggle. The capitalist state is not the site in which class struggle takes place but the form of the state is the outcome of class struggle (Clarke 1991, Holloway and Piciotto 1987). That is to say 'the state is not a state in capitalist society but is the capitalist state' (153). Dinerstein makes the important point that these capitalist categories are not facts of nature but are formal abstractions: 'the constant subordination of life to the rule of value' (187). The real material basis of hope for Dinerstein is the realisation that value is always contingent on the condition of class struggle. Autonomy in this sense is the struggle in and against the law of value (187): it is a real abstraction.

It is this concept of real abstraction that enables Dinerstein to introduce the negative notion of value based on the idea of the Not Yet: 'anti-value in motion', as the substantive basis through which hope might be materialised. Value and the Not Yet are always that which is to be realised, so too with anti-value, 'hope is also unrealised materiality' (190). As Dinerstein puts it:

> 'Value requires to be socially validated and attains concreteness only through money. Hope is an emotion of the cognitive kind that guides action and is only materialised in concrete utopia...' (190).

Value and hope are conceived within the value form but they move in opposite directions. Value and hope are confrontational and contested as a Not Yet realised materiality, to be achieved hopefully in the 'recovery our power to do' (191) which is what Dinerstein means by excess. So anti-value in motion is the production of excess through the politics of autonomy (187). And, in this way, the crude formulation: between either reform or revolution is dissolved in the conceptual dissolution of the capital relation.

In the next section we write our ethnographic account of the student's protest march incorporating the data gained from interviews and focus groups with students and academics. This section is given an extra dimension by a live twitter feed that can be accessed on Twitter using the hashtag #lookingforallende. The final part of the paper will discuss this enlivened ethnography within the analytical framework set out as a political sociology of action.

Marching for education: political socialisation, reform and revolution

There have been a long series of students' demonstrations in Chile from their high point in 2011. The Chilean students are famous for their street demonstrations, the creativity and ingenuity of their carnival-like performances and the bravery of their confrontation with the riot police (García and Aguirre, 2014). The students' battles with the police are all the more remarkable given the history of the brutal repression of the dictatorship in which the police and the legal system were deeply implicated.

We decided to participate in a major students' march. We stuffed our pockets with recording audio and visual equipment and were determined to get a record of the day, through an approach based on what Les Back and Nirmal Puwar call Live Methods (Back and Puwar, 2013). Students were willing to talk with us: they commented on the lack of support from their teachers and academics and wondered why their teachers were at work when their students were on the march. It was the sixth march organised by the Chilean Student Federation (CONFECH) in 2013 with other demonstrations taking place in other parts of the country, including Temuco and Valparaiso. The key demands of the march are free education and an end to profit making in education. The march took place one month before the Chilean Presidential and Parliamentary elections on Nov 17th 2013. According to

one of our interviewees this created a very different environment for the march, with many political parties and social movements being present, although only a few of them are in favour of free education and have included that as a demand in their political party programmes. We met with friends and colleagues at the start of the march at Plaza Italia, one of the central squares and meeting points in Santiago. It was a hot spring day in the southern hemisphere. We admitted to having some nerves. We discussed our mutual situations. One of our interviewees, an academic working on part-time and casual contracts, said: 'We are like rats in a great big neoliberal experimental laboratory.' He refers here to the forceful implementation of neoliberalism in Chile during the dictatorship and how this had resulted in tremendous segregation in all spheres of life. Social segregation is reflected in urban planning and social spaces with one's home address being a clear indicator for one's socioeconomic background (Tironi, 2003). Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds go to poor public schools and live in poorer neighbourhoods. Students from richer socioeconomic backgrounds go to good private schools, live in expensive neighbourhoods and go to good universities.

The sense of tension kicked off even before the march got going. Rocks started flying, aimed at a group of police that appeared on motorcycles. The police presence seemed very minimal, although reinforcements were parked down the side streets. The dark green camouflage of their specialist riot vehicles was effective amongst the tree-lined boulevards of downtown Santiago.

The students express a sophisticated understanding of Chilean political economy, very close to Taylor's argument that neoliberalism is more than simply an economic policy, but impacts profoundly on all aspects of social life, including educational opportunities and the political geography of the city:

'The neoliberal system has created a tremendous degree of social inequality in Chile, and this inequality can be encountered in many spheres and education is one of them. Let's put it like this, understanding the marketisation of education as a product and not as a right creates tremendous inequality. And this can be seen walking through the city, in the geographic distribution, in urban segregation, in the kinds of access to schools.' (Sociology student, male, traditional private university)

The march started on time. It set off from the Plaza Italia, walking down Santiago's main thoroughfare, continuing north on Mac Iver, before finishing at Estacion Mapocho after a couple of hours. Throughout the march students' are chanting for free, non-profit and public education of quality and for the transformation of education from a consumer product and commodity into a right. A female sociology student from a private university explains to us that the main achievement of the students' movement consists in having promoted a public discourse about the underlying foundations of the current education system: neoliberalism. In other words, the students have extended their understanding of political economy to develop a critique of neoliberalism which reaches beyond education into other areas of public service and welfare:

' ….. Students and people in general are asking for dignity. A country where one can develop as a person but based on rights. The right for health, the right for education, the right for housing, and a less unequal society. I think it is something much more general that one can see in the students' movement. That's why there are not just students but also workers, teachers, grandparents and even older people who say "**the students taught us how to be courageous**" because the neoliberal system results in a very segregated and individualised society.' (Sociology student, female, private university, Santiago - authors' emphasis added)

And so the demands of the students were quickly supported by other sectors of society. The student protests seemed to have become a vent for the concerns

of Chileans that they did not dare to express for so many years. Francisco, an academic from a regional public university, reinforces this point and explains how the students' movement started to denaturalise neoliberalism, as a sort of political sociology for action, as the dominant and so far unquestioned discourse:

> 'The most important thing, in my opinion, started from the questioning of the neoliberal model of funding higher education and the philosophy of the model, from when Chilean society starts to reflect on key aspects that define a series of neoliberal policies applied to public services. So, the students' movement managed to move from an apparently sectoral demand to a general questioning of neoliberalism. In other words, they touched the heart of the model. They managed to modify the common sense we had about our approach to nature and resources, our relationship with the state as citizens and not just as consumers. So, the students transformed this common sense about ourselves, that we are not consumers but that we have rights.' (Francisco, academic, sociologist, regional public university)

The systematic questioning of neoliberalism as an organising principle of life is also reflected in a number of recent publications in the Chilean social sciences that outline an alternative to the neoliberal model or speak of the downfall of the model (Mayol, 2012). A few months after the beginning of the students' movement the unquestioned belief in education as a consumer good was all of a sudden a subject under discussion. The students' movement triggered a discursive shift in how education was being discussed: from the discourse on education as a consumer good to the discourse on the right for free public education of good quality that all citizens should have access to.

Another student explains that the students' movement and its ideas come across in such a revolutionary way because Chilean society had completely internalised a neoliberal way of thinking about all aspects of life:.

'I think the reason why these ideas come across as revolutionary is that the neoliberal model has been so successful. So many people have internalised the ideas of neoliberalism that no-one talks about meritocracy ….nor refers to a society of equal opportunities. Access to opportunities is absolutely unequal in Chile and so there is no such a thing as free competition as they define it.'
…..…(Sociology student, male, traditional private university, Santiago)

From the perspective of 'political sociology for action', the students have emerged as a significant social movement themselves. According to Nelson, a sociologist from a traditional private university, this new social movement of students has radically changed the way people think about politics. This has extended to more ambitious political horizons, such as the demand for a new Constitutional Assembly in order to make up for the injustice that is inscribed into the Chilean political constitution from the dictatorship that is still valid today and is an impediment to real democracy.

Remembering the more recent history of the Chilean students' movement, and the so called Penguin Movement from 2006, it is important in order to understand that revolutionary change does take time. Reinforcing this point, another sociology student argues that the French Revolution did not last just one day but that it was a process. In a similar way, change in Chilean education is a process that takes many years:

'…It was not a failure if you look at what they were planning but it's important to put that into perspective. Those of us who study sociology know that we can't say that the French Revolution only lasted for one day. It's a process, changing an education system takes ten, twenty years of fighting for it. We cannot pretend that we can achieve it all in just one year.. …….In 2011 when it started again, there were demands for free education and now even the candidates for the presidential elections are debating this, there are discussions

about changing the constitution via a Constitutional Assembly or inside the Congress. And that it all started with the students' movement, that's important. It's true, the Penguins' movement was a defeat, but it was one more step towards something much bigger and today we can see it.' (Male student, Sociology, private university, Santiago)

The crowds of school kids and students are joined by political parties with their flags. The students are chanting for free education, but free education is not the only demand of the march, which also includes groups of Mapuche people demonstrating for the rights to the ancestoral land of indigenous people in the south of Chile.

Mike took a picture of *Revolución Democrática's* flag, a symbol of a new leftist political party, unaware that the flag bearer was Giorgio Jackson, a young man who came to prominence in 2011 as a student leader with national and global recognition. Jackson was putting himself forward as a candidate of *Revolución Democrática* in the forthcoming parliamentary election. He was elected and took up his seat in the new Congress in 2014.

This issue of leadership among the students raises the question of political charisma. Some of the students explain to us that they are not too happy about Giorgio Jackson and other charismatic student leaders, Camila Vallejo and Gabriel Boric wanting to become Members of Congress. Many students perceive this as a form of betrayal in that the student leaders who came to prominence by criticising the system now want to be part of it. However, there are other students who argue it is naïve to think that in a country like Chile one can change things from outside. As one student put it:

'I don't agree with some of the political programmes of the former students' leaders. But I think it's good that former students' movement leaders try to get seats in the Congress, as members of political parties such as Revolución

Democrática, the Communist Party, the Anarchists (UNE). They come from different political backgrounds and they realised that they would be able to achieve much more from within the political system - getting seats in Congress - than from outside. So, in a way criticising them is a bit like trying to ignore the fact that going for a Congress seat was the next step to be taken. Well, if we stay outside the system and keep questioning everything from the street, most likely there will be few changes.' (Female student, FG 3, regional public university, sociology and psychology students)

The significance of charisma extends to the students' awareness of the reach of Allende's legacy into the current political discourse. According to many students people are still not prepared to talk about Allende – even if they agreed with his ideas or the ideas of the students' movement – because the memory of being denounced as a Marxist and the fear of being tortured or discriminated during the dictatorship is still present in the older generation and has totally modified people's relationship to politics:

'The Pinochet dictatorship worked hard to eradicate what they referred to as "the cancer of Marxism". There is a real hostility to everything Marxist in the print press and on TV. Commentators make negative comparisons between the situation in Chile with what is happening in Venezuela or Cuba.' (Nestor, Freelance academic)

And, as another student put it:

It still is something complicated for many people to talk about Marxism, for many families, for example if I think of my grandparents, people who experienced the dictatorship and the perspective they have….it's still a bit like "I don't talk about this" or " I don't want to have anything to do with this"'. (Female student, FG 3, regional public university)

Several students think that Allende is a very important presence even without being explicitly mentioned. His

ideas were silenced by the Dictatorship and during the decades after that but they are now experiencing a comeback with the emergence of the students' movement and other social movements in Chile:

> 'Talking about Allende, I think that nowadays his discourse is still there but in a very latent way in the people. In other words, his discourse is in the people, in the things we are trying to achieve, in the concerns of the country, it's in everyday discussions. What now is again part of everyday discussions was once part of Allende's programme. These concerns are the concerns of the people.' (Female student, FG 3, regional public university, sociology and psychology students)

The students tell us that at the time of Allende politicians would have been committed to listening to the voice of the people. In contrast, the students argue that today this would no longer be the case. Even after the return to democracy, according to one student, the political elite simply maintained its own interests. This is why the students' movement is so relevant, recuperating a new sense of the common and of the public good. Salvador Allende in this case would represent the attempt to build a democratic socialism, a society of rights, too. So in that sense, the figure of Allende becomes relevant to the extent that the student protests constitute real action to create a more egalitarian society.

The street vendors were doing well selling fresh lemons, which can be used as an antidote to tear gas. You bite the lemon and the citric acid neutralises the gas. The police , also referred to as '*pacos*', use tear gas as well as water cannon filled with 'skunk water', a noxious malodorant substance. The vehicles which spray the water are nicknamed *Guanacos*, after a Latin American camel-like creature, renowned for spitting as a way of self- defence.

One of the problem for the students is how to articulate a language of revolution in an education system where Marx and other radical political approaches, including anarchism, have been denigrated and denied. This raises the issue that we considered as a key matter for our political sociology for action: how to think about the movement for political transformation in terms of either reform or revolution.

The students feel that this is an issue that can be explored through political theory. Some students remarked about the lack of Marxist social theory in the social science undergraduate curriculum. There is a strong sense from the students that Marxism in Chile is not only something that is avoided by their parents' generation but has been dismantled as an intellectual activity inside higher education:

> 'The topic of Marxism is not something that is taught, we do not learn it anywhere. I believe that in Sociology you should learn it... Nor do we see it in Psychology, or anywhere in the school. It's not something that everyone comes to terms with. (FG3, sociology undergraduate student, male)

And not only Marxism, but also anarchism. Students from a private university in Santiago talked about the political diversity of the movement and that people take different roles within it. They worried that the intellectual foundations of anarchism are not being taken very seriously and wanted to make the point that for most students anarchism is an important force within the students' movement. The students explain that some of the anarchists in the demonstrations are amongst the most disadvantaged groups of society and that violence is a last resort to demonstrate their discontent:

> 'The movement is quite diverse and consists of different groups. There are the students who are involved with cultural activities and dances and then there are others who are

always shown on TV, students with hoodies. But both groups are necessary within the movement. Those are different forms of expression. Sometimes one tends to think, 'why are they destroying things' but on the other hand, they feel violated too. There is anger, there is discontent. Those are the two faces of the movement but both of them are necessary. (Focus group 1, UDP)

Some of the students explain why they think some students are so destructive:

So there is a big sense of feeling disempowered. I am a pacifist but I also understand why they are doing it. Finally, the system let them down and one can relate to why they destroy everything. Sometimes they destroy or damage chemists and banks. I don't participate in that but I can understand it'. (Focus group 1 UDP)

One of our group decided to leave the march out of fear that violence would develop. But as well as a sense of increasing tension there was also an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment, of carnival even. On the other side of the road students had requisitioned a water hose from a nearby park and were spraying each other to cool off in the blistering spring heat.

We marched past a supermarket twinned with a university that seems like the epitome of neoliberal higher education. The crowd was about 20,000. The narrow city streets throbbed with noise and music, which dissipated in the wider boulevards. At the end of the march there were speeches and music, and someone lit a fire which attracted the presence of the riot police. A water cannon *Guanaco* appeared from out of the site streets and started spraying the protesters. While the music and speeches carried on the students fought battles with the police, stone throwing and avoiding capture by the snatch squads.

We decided to leave at that point. The march itself had been well attended but low key. The political parties had made a difference to the atmosphere. As usual the confrontation with the police kicked off at the end of the march. We felt relieved, we had wonderful conversations with our friends, we had not been arrested or had to bite our lemons or been drenched in skunk water.

The press photos of the event featured in the next day's newspapers focused exclusively the violent confrontations, with no serious discussion of the protesters demands in any of the papers, or the diversity of political opinion within the student movement.

Political Sociology for Action

It is possible to make a strong connection between the students comments and activities and the paradigms for a political sociology for action that we have already established, focusing on charisma, social movements, political economy and a critique of political economy.

Students are very conscious about the issue of political *charisma*. Salvador Allende provides a powerful charismatic presence on which the students rely for inspiration. Allende's legacy has been enhanced by the emergence of charismatic student leaders, Georgio Jackson, Camila Vallejo and Gabriel Boric, who building on Allende's legacy have been able to create a new personal political platform for progressive social reform. This strong sense of personal charisma has been intensified by the charisma of the student movement itself, which is renowned for its spectacular and creative forms of carnival-style protests. In fact, following Ciccariello-Maher's analysis we would argue that the student leaders have emerged out of the student movement: the student leaders did not make the student movement, the student social movement made the student leaders.

Taking Ciccariello-Maher's analysis further, the student social movement becomes a *bravo pueblo (13)* as a category of '*rupture and struggle'* (8): 'a moment of combat in which those oppressed within the prevailing political order and those excluded from it intervene to transform the system, in which a victimised part of the community speaks for and attempts to radically transform the whole' (8); as part of a process in which 'dialogue and translation between its component movements serve to provide a common identity in the course of struggle' (8).

The students social movement is further substantiated by the way in which they have grounded their protests within a framework in which politics is conjoined with economics: as a form of *political economy*. This focus of the students critical discourse has been the development of a critique of neoliberalism, not just as an economic policy but as the imposition of a particular way of life: as a social experiment. As one academic said: 'we are rats in a social experiment.' Following Taylor the students understand the development of neoliberalism as a response to the crisis of 'capitalist development, class formation and institution building in Chile from the 1920s' (Taylor, 2006: 11). For Taylor and for the students neoliberalism is more than an economic doctrine, but is rather 'a state-led project of social engineering..[in ways that]..advance the disciplinary power of markets upon social actors…[i.e.] the extended commodification of social relations and the reinforcement of market discipline [to] enhance the social power of money, therein paving the way for a concentration of power around holders of money, specifically financiers' (6).

However, it is not clear how the problems confronting Chilean society can be resolved at the level of political charisma, or even by the students as a social movement who have been able to conceptualise the predicament of Chilean society within the paradigm of a neoliberal political economy. Dinerstein's critique of political

economy suggests a more profound understanding is required based on a deeper understanding of the organising principle of capitalist society. This deeper level of analysis was identified by Marx as the labour theory of value, now brought back to life through a contemporary reappraisal of his work in the form of Open Marxism. So the project becomes for students and academics in dialogue with Chilean political society to critically engage with the conceptual framework that Dinerstein has developed: *anti-value in motion* (Dinerstein 2015, Dinerstein and Neary, 2002), building on the categories of creativity, negation, contradiction and excess so as to further develop a politics of autonomy in the key of hope.

Live Sociology - sustaining the sociological imagination

In this paper we have sought to create a political sociology for action through the use of Live Methods, featuring a combination of writing styles, with a pasticcio of voices from focus groups and interviews incorporated as part of an ethnography of a student protest march, as well as the use of the Twitter social media platform. All of this within a theoretical framework that has provided a set of analytical tools through which to consider the students understandings of their situation. We would argue that this method provides further substance to C W Mills' concept of the 'the sociological imagination' as a way of representing the private troubles of students and others together with public issues in the context of a socio-political totality. The theoretical framework we have described as 'a political sociology for action' offers a way beyond the dichotomous debate between reform and revolution, appreciating political society in terms of more fundamental levels of dimensionality: to '"see it whole"……[and in a way that] is rarely met by contemporary social sciences (Toscano in Back and Puwar 2012 65). We suggest that through this theoretical framing it might be possible to overcome the sense of 'powerless anxiety, while at the same time providing a

realistic estimate of the powers necessary to alter, however minimally, the course of history' (Toscano 2012 68).

As academics working in the traumatic environment of the neo-liberal capitalist university, we feel that collaborating with our radical student movements to overcome a sense of powerlessness is a good place to start. They can teach us how to be courageous.

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