The continuity and discontinuity of education policy:

a study of change in the Chilean debate about higher education

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DECLARATION

I, Francisco Javier Zamorano Figueroa confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis's main topic is an exploration of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in terms of the way in which higher education (HE) policies have been developed in Chile between 2003 and 2016. While neo-liberal and privatisation policies in higher education continue deepening worldwide, the Chilean state started conducting a free education policy with the promise of recovering the public and social role of the HE model in the country. This context represents a particular case in the world in that free-of-charge education has risen as a re-distributive principle, which seeks to improve national social justice through a policy that involves separating family purchasing power from access to educational quality by universal educational state funding. This research aims to analyse the public HE debate to understand the continuity and/or discontinuity of arguments providing legitimacy to the Chilean HE model in a context of policy change. Although this study does not address the policy's implementation and practices, the re-organisation of the critiques and justifications in the HE debate presents an excellent and original opportunity to approach the setting of the HE model's relationship with state and society. As this policy entails the hopes of re-defining the understanding of social justice in the country, there was an analysis of editorials and opinion columns published in the most important newspapers and interviews to relevant HE actors for describing the most significant differences and similarities with previous HE policies within a 14-year period. The findings suggest that justifications around the free education policy represent new forms of understanding neoliberal relationships in a context of policy reform. Through an institutional arrangement anchored on free education promising to improve access to tertiary education, policy continuities and discontinuities seem to work together to construct a new legitimate Chilean HE model.

IMPACT STATEMENT

The main objective of this thesis is to study how the development of public policies entails a particular relationship between continuity and discontinuity at the time of its implementation. To the extent that public policies are aimed at generating changes in the contexts where they are applied, this research sought to be beneficial through the generation of new and original data that contribute to the implementation of policies by targeting social elements that affect policy-making processes. Therefore, it has an applied impact on the decision-making of relevant actors at local and national levels. Giving value to situations outside the field of public policy seeks to integrate them when policy actors formulate agreements to intervene in a situation that is to be changed. Specifically, the notion of legitimacy is brought to the fore to emphasise that it is a factor to consider in developing any institutional situation of the definition of a policy.

Furthermore, there is an academic impact since this thesis contributes to new theoretical outputs emerging from the data. This theoretical development might be beneficial to articulate policy processes that integrate popular demands which are far removed from the experts in charge of conducting policy. By asserting that policy unfolds gradually and at different speeds, this study conceives it as a complex process that requires social actors' participation at all levels and times of the policy process to reach positions that can define and guide it. The flexibility of this new theory opens the space for social change to articulate with policy through the institutionalisation of practices addressing social justice. This issue is precisely the spark that initiated this research since a social movement of students in Chile became a HE policy that sought to modify the country's inequality. The theoretical outputs obtained from the analysis of this situation might bring along interesting insights if they are contrasted with other national realities that have found a political response in the form of policies to face increasing levels of social malaise in the last years around the world.

This thesis also aims to be beneficial at an international level by broadening the academic range of sociological interpretations within the educational field. The integration of the pragmatic sociology of critique seeks to be a useful analytical tool to examine how the promise of change from education can materialise. Findings suggested that analysis of change should integrate internal educational aspects manifested in situations of dispute among policy actors and external aspects by distinguishing between a policy model of neoliberal society and other alternatives. In this regard, the neoliberal policy appears as a possibility among others, leaving space for developing new forms of coordination among actors that might elaborate alternative society models. It is also a type of analysis that incorporates individual resistance but considers a social totality that defines our relationship with reality.

The social change promised by educational policies would then require articulating collective actors that surpass the individual level, and the concept of institutionalisation becomes crucial. The dissemination of this thesis focused on collective actors and policy change to open spaces of collaboration that might enable new knowledge about the research topic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENT

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAM. Association of Media Agency

AFD. Direct Fiscal Contribution

AFI. Indirect Fiscal Contribution

CAE. State-Guaranteed Loan

CDA. Critical Discourse Analysis

CEFECH. Research Centre of Student Union from the University of Chile

CEPPE. Centre of Policy and Practice in Education

CFTs. Technical Training Centres

CIAE. Centre of Advanced Research in Education

CORFO. Chilean Economic Development Agency

CRUCH. Council of Chilean University Deans

DEM. Department of Immigration and Foreigners of Chile

DIVISUP. Higher Education Division

FHE. Free-of-charge Higher Education

G9 group. Group of private universities within the traditional sector

GDP. Gross Domestic Product

GER. Gross Enrolment Ratio

HE. Higher Education

HEIs. Higher Education Institutions

INE. National Statistics Institute of Chile

IPs. Professional Institutes

MECESUP. Programme to Improve the Quality and Equity of Higher Education

MINEDUC.	Chilean Ministry of Education
MP.	Member of Parliament
MRQ.	Main Research Question
NPUs.	New Private Universities
OECD.	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAA.	Academic Aptitude Test
PISA.	Programme for International Student Assessment
PSU.	University Selection Test
PUC.	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
PUCV.	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
RSQ.	Research Sub-Question
SC-TE.	Short-Cycle Tertiary Education
SIES.	Chilean Information System of Higher Education
UAI.	Universidad Adolfo Ibañez
UChile.	Universidad de Chile
UDD.	Universidad del Desarrollo
UdeC.	Universidad de Concepción
UDLA.	Universidad de las Américas
UDP.	Universidad Diego Portales
UFT.	Universidad Finis Terrae
UIS.	The UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UMCE.	Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación
UNAB.	Universidad Andrés Bello

UNDP.   United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO.   The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USACH.   Universidad de Santiago de Chile

USS.   Universidad San Sebastián

UTA.   Universidad de Tarapacá

UTalca.   Universidad de Talca

UTFSM.   Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María

UV.   Universidad de Valparaíso

1. INTRODUCTION

In a context in which global education policy is "flowing and converging to produce a singular vision of best practice based on the methods and tenets of the neo-liberal imaginary" (Ball, 2012, p. i), Chilean education policy has seemingly headed in the opposite direction. In 2016, the country started implementing a structural reform based on a promise of free education to be delivered by the state at all levels of the education system. The Chilean political system sought to make educational access less dependent on families' purchasing power and improve national social justice by enhancing state funding through a free education reform (Bachelet, 2013).

The *coup d'état* led by Augusto Pinochet in 1973 had introduced neoliberal policies that promoted privatisation in different social areas (Larrañaga, 2010). Higher levels of privatisation meant a shift of the role of the state as an articulator of society, and access to public services, such as education or health, became segregated according to family backgrounds (Larrañaga, 2004; Bellei, 2007). In 2011, a social movement led by HE students started questioning the neoliberal educational policies and demanding greater state participation in the educational field. Faced with a potential collapse, the Chilean higher education (HE) model saw free education as a policy response to overcome the crisis. The Chilean educational model thus reflects a particular and interesting case study at a time of tensions between citizens' demands for free education (as a form of 'equitable provision') and neoliberal market models. This thesis aims to understand this complex process of *policy change*, and explore the *policy continuities and discontinuities* that the HE reform has generated in the context of neoliberal educational policies at the national and international levels.

The international neoliberal way of creating educational policy is connected to broader social transformations that have altered the social relationships rooted in the welfare state model. Ball (2012) claims that neoliberalism represents the Keynesian-welfarist social institutions' critical discourse to offer an alternative project based on the *economisation of social life* and *market-based relationships* that change power relations in society (p. 12). Since educational policy forms part of a diverse range of social policies supported by the welfare state during the 21st century (Spicker, 2014; Cammet & MacLean, 2014; Dean, 2003), neoliberal transformations have affected its operation and scope since the 1980s (Harland, 2019; Ball,

2012; Ball, 1997; Marginson, 2018; Apple, 2013; Lakes & Carter, 2014; Brooks, 2018; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). Educational policy has adapted to the neoliberal orientation by fostering flexibility and entrepreneurialism based on market forces (Ball, 1997). The undermining of the welfare state has also meant that education policy has moved beyond national boundaries to become dependent on global policy established on a transnational level with new actors who define it (Ball, 2012). Brooks (2018) highlights that the neoliberal project has expanded globally regardless of the resistance of the different types of welfare states around the world. It is a process that standardises practices orientated towards individual choice, market competition, and business-based managerialism within educational policy.

In this neoliberal context, it seems paradoxical to develop a free higher education (FHE) reform within a particular national HE model. The demand for efficiency (Johnstone, 2017a) and the economic constraints of national states—with social needs differing from those addressed by the welfare state (Barr, 2004; Marcucci & Johnstone, 2007)—has led FHE to be discarded as an appropriate policy. Instead, the neoliberal project has promoted a set of cost-sharing policy instruments (Archibal, 2018; Johnstone, 2017a) to replace the limited HE funding from the former welfare state (Carpentier, 2012). The abandonment of FHE as a policy alternative has also been underpinned by the constant expansion of HE systems worldwide. McCowan (2019) points out that the global growth in higher education institutions (HEIs) and their enrolment in the last 40 years has never before been seen, so national governments have adopted the strategy of transferring the economic burden to students through tuition fees (Archibal, 2018). Johnstone (2017a) even states that cost-sharing instruments would entail a sense of equity, since HE studies involve individual economic rewards for an elite that cannot be funded by society. In this regard, the FHE policy appears to be incompatible with a neoliberal perspective that views knowledge as a *commodity* (Harland, 2019), which is "organised and made available for the purpose of generating income, and potentially profit" (McCowan, 2019, p. 123).

The global neoliberal project has also been implemented in Chile. Neoliberalism has become the leading articulator of social relations and educational policy. The predominance of neoliberalism is due to various economic reforms carried out sequentially since the *coup d'état* led by Pinochet in 1973 (Camargo, 2007), which have encompassed the entire social policy field—including education—subsequent to the dictatorship (Larrañaga, 2010). With the

return of democracy in 1990, the neoliberal organisation continued working with a certain stability until 2011 when the student social movement questioned the situation in the country (Bellei et al., 2014; Fleet, 2011). The political system responded to these new demands with the proposal of a new educational reform, which put the emphasis on a free education reform with particular focus on post-secondary studies (Bachelet, 2013). FHE policy has become a central issue that raises questions about its suitability and coherence with a neoliberal education model. This context opens up the possibility of studying how some concepts and justifications may prevail or disappear in the discussion about how to enact a policy that promises to bring structural social changes.

This research is aimed at studying the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity* at a moment of *policy change* in the Chilean HE model. It is important to note at this point that the term 'model' will be used in the thesis to describe Chilean HE. It is considered that it constitutes a distinctive model as it holds a hybrid nature which is not purely neoliberal (although steered by neoliberalism) and involves a different level of analysis that will be described in Chapter 3. Besides, the notion of model entails opening the door to different interpretations and suggestions of how to understand HE. A model represents only one materialisation among other possibilities so that the analysis of it would involve studying flexibly its justifications and critiques to keep or change it. Within this framework, *continuity* will involve studying the constancy of similarities in concepts and justifications in a HE model prior to the emergence of students demanding FHE and another model after 2011. In contrast, *discontinuity* implies disruptions and differences between the two models.

1.1. Chilean education policy in a neoliberal context: equity as a policy response

With the end of the dictatorship in 1990, the neoliberal tendency of Chilean policy required the efforts of a skilful state. The state was responsible for controlling potential social rifts and maintaining harmony over time through a political promise to improve levels of equity in society (Aylwin, 1989). Larrañaga (2010) claims that the social policy fulfilled a shock-absorbing role, based on the promise of equity to reduce the neoliberal side effects inherited from the dictatorship and improve the integration of citizens into the new democratic polity. The need to strengthen democracy and the neoliberal economic project marked a social policy that focused on reducing the social effects of apparently incompatible aims. These contradictory goals were connected by promoting a policy model oriented towards national

equity (Camargo, 2007) in which education played an important role (Verger et al., 2017). The value of democracy emerged as the primary orientation for educational policies after 1990 (Cornejo, 2006). This was also intended to counterbalance a neoliberal process of social segregation initiated by the dictatorship with the 1981 education reform that affected all levels of education. This reform changed the traditional education system based on public institutions (OECD, 2004) and introduced neoliberal principles based on private sector participation in provision (Larrañaga, 2004; World Bank, 1999). The new democratic governments saw education as a means of fulfilling the imperative of social integration (Peña, 2007) for a society that had been politically divided since the dictatorship.

The return to democracy also saw the emergence of incipient academic voices criticising neoliberal development (OECD, 2004; Sembler, 2007; García-Huidobro, 2007; Redondo et al., 2004). These voices called to end the quasi-market educational model, reject the neoliberal influence on education and complain against the use of market logics in educational practices. However, academic criticism was mostly limited to policy discussions between scholars and had no significant effects on political and social actors. Despite its rejection in some quarters, backers of neoliberalism adopted new strategies and reinforced practices to maintain its predominance in education. It consolidated a continuing process of privatisation (Larrañaga, 2004; Bellei, 2007) and promoted policies that supported educational competition (García-Huidobro, 2007; Cassasus, 2007). In addition, the excessive respect for choice on the part of families produced increasing levels of individualisation (Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Calidad, 2006; García-Huidobro, 2006) and gave form to an educational model based on the idea of education as a private benefit similar to goods exchanged in the marketplace (Bonal et al., 2017).

In this context, an education model oriented towards equity became a key element, since it promised educational quality for all students regardless of their socioeconomic and cultural background (Hoppenhayn & Ottone, 2000). Equity was understood as increasing access to education through greater enrolment (McCowan, 2004) and the education model showed impressive levels of coverage in primary, secondary, and higher education (Cox, 2007). In this regard, educational access would produce greater democracy, since educational participation represents a first point of entry to the public sphere, while private provision based on market logics became essential to meet the requirements for access. The policy oriented towards

equity based on increasing educational access appeared to be a sign of progress in a neoliberal framework. Larrañaga (2010) points out that education emerged as the element capable of enabling social mobility and providing the skills required to live according to the new economic requirements of the knowledge society. However, this particular role gave greater momentum to demands to access more (equity) and better (quality) educational provision. Along with this, the unequal access to different levels of quality in the education system cast doubt on the real meaning of fairness within this conceptualisation of equity. The development of the educational model began to receive strong criticism from a key part of society: HE students.

1.2. From equity to free education: HE policy as a response to social issues

The quest to balance democracy and neoliberalism with educational policies oriented towards equity has seemed to characterise education policy and the HE policy debate over recent decades. The emergence of the student social movement in 2011 challenged the stability by exposing the internal conflicts in the Chilean development model. During the first decade of the 21st century, HE became a strategic focus for the new democratic governments since the country had achieved a secondary education completion rate of 80.7% in 2011 (UIS, 2020). They saw a possibility to improve equity by expanding the access and retention rate of the most disadvantaged groups in post-secondary studies (Fernandez Darraz, 2015; Espinoza & Gonzalez, 2015).

According to World Bank EdStats (2021), the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Chilean HE was 75.0 in 2011, representing the third-highest GER in Latin America and surpassing the regional average by almost 30 points (see figure 1.1 for more information). This ratio included students who attended both short-cycle tertiary education (Technical Training Centres [CFTs] and Professional Institutes [IPs]) and universities (traditional universities [CRUCH] and new private universities (NPUs). SIES (2020) points out that total undergraduate enrolment in 2011 was 1,014,999 students out of a total population of approximately 17 million people. Figure 1.2 shows that these figures form part of a historical process of rising enrolment that started in the 2000s and continued regardless of the type of HEIs. Recently, enrolment has seemed to flatten out at around 1,200,000 students, but it showed sharp growth for almost a decade until 2016, when the free education policy began its implementation.

Figure 1.1: GER tertiary education of Latin American countries in 2011

Country	GER
Cuba	82.5
Argentina	77.5
Chile	75.0
Uruguay*	63.1
Costa Rica	47.2
Colombia	43.5
Brazil	43.5
Latin America & Caribbean	42.8
Peru*	40.5
Paraguay*	35.1
El Salvador	27.6
Mexico	27.0
Honduras*	20.7

*GER in 2010
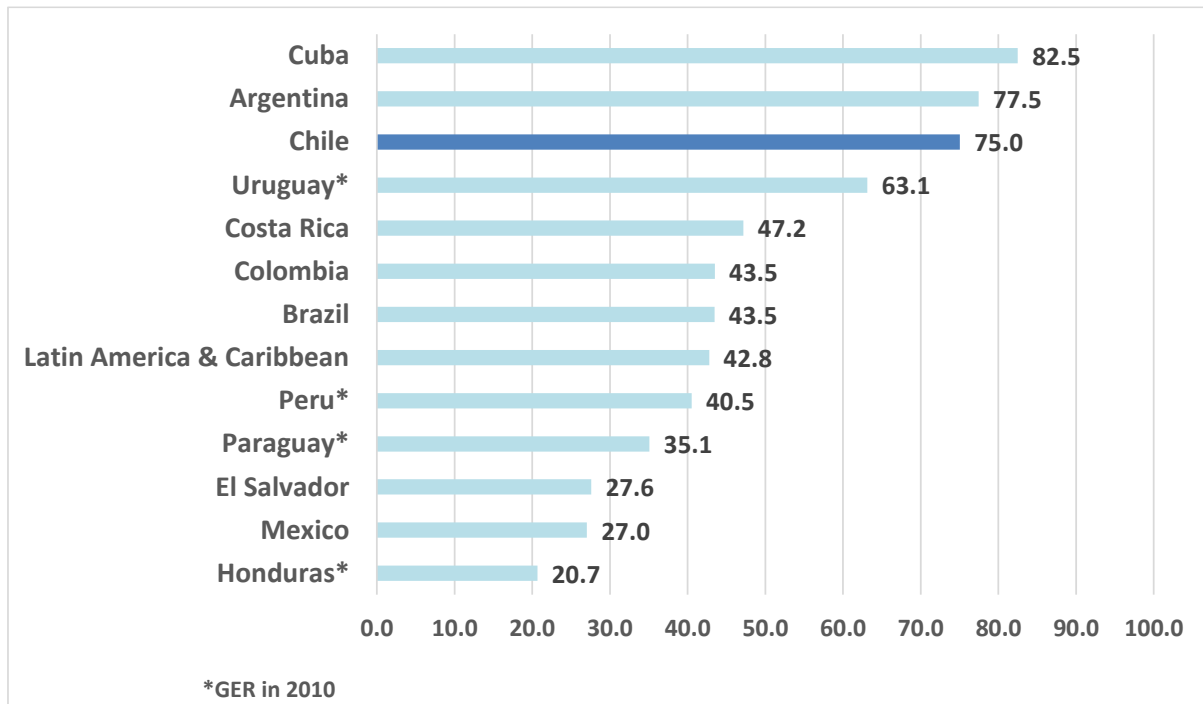
Source: Prepared by the author based on World Bank EdStats (2021)

In this regard, the source of the students' dissatisfaction looks like a contradiction in an HE model that has shown impressive statistics in terms of HE access. Nevertheless, after previous important student movements in 1997, 2005, and 2006, HE students identified that provision to ensure access with quality for everyone was inadequate, demonstrating a failure in the goal of equity. In line with this, Ugarte (2013) observed that the GER showed different rates of growth depending on the decile to which the student belonged. While the GER for decile X reached almost 50% in 1990 and over 80% in 1998, for decile I the GER was 5% and 7%, respectively. Similarly, Centro de Estudios MINEDUC (2012) estimated that students from decile I achieved a GER of 27% in 2011, while for decile X it was 91%. On the other hand, the increase in HE access has been perceived as unequal in terms of admission to high-quality institutions. Generally speaking, the high-quality Chilean HEIs belong to a particular group of private and state-run universities termed 'traditional institutions', which were created before the 1981 HE reform and grouped in a council of deans (CRUCH). They charge students tuition fees and regulate admissions through a national university selection test (PSU). The PSU is a test that selects those who can attend high-quality institutions according to their scores. Those who are unable to achieve good scores have the possibility of attending NPUs (created after 1981) and short-cycle tertiary education (CFTs and IPs) that regulate their access according to the ability of applicants to pay the fees. Figure 1.2 shows that undergraduate

enrolment in NPUs and SC-TE HEIs surpassed and equalled, respectively, that in CRUCH HEIs in 2011. That year thus became a turning point regarding HE enrolment's composition until the implementation of FHE policy in 2016 when enrolment started apparently reversing this tendency.

Figure 1.2: Evolution of enrolment in 2005-2020 according to HEI type
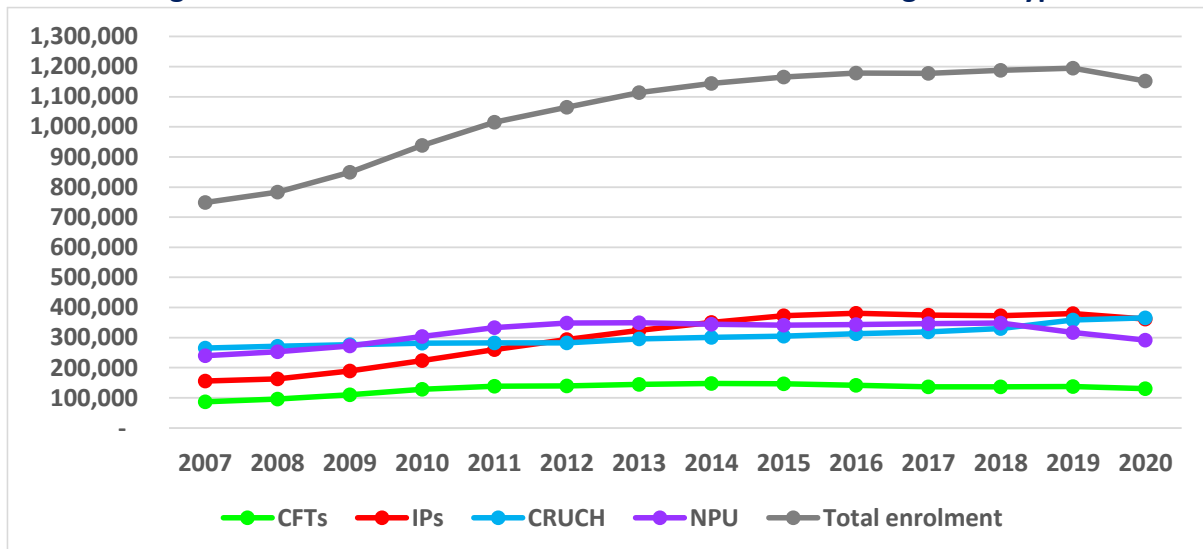
Source: Prepared by the author based on SIES data (2020)

Finally, it is important to highlight that the policy strategy of increasing the participation of deprived students in the Chilean HE system mainly resorted to market mechanisms to cover the tuition fees. Bank loans became the primary support strategy to finance studies in the various types of HEIs (Bellei et al., 2014; Fernandez Darraz, 2015, Salazar & Leihy, 2017), which led to significant amounts of debt for graduates and those who dropped out of HE. In addition, the HE model became highly privatised—blurring the distinction between public and private education—and students, mostly attending poor-quality HEIs, had to pay expensive tuition fees, accumulating large debts with banks (Kremerman & Paez, 2016). In contrast, only an elite group could access the most prestigious universities (Venegas, 2016; Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). The 2011 social movement thus emerged as a response to a segregated education system that offered different educational quality according to students' social backgrounds (Bellei & Cabalin, 2013). After seven months of marches, the 2011 social movement managed to change the HE policy agenda (Bellei et al., 2014; Fleet, 2011; Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). In 2014, three years after the social unrest provoked by the demands raised by the student movement, the second government of Michelle Bachelet accepted the challenge and promised to make education a policy priority (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017; Fernandez Darraz,

2016). Her mandate started with the commitment to provide free education for everyone through a new educational reform.

1.3. The FHE reform as an opportunity to study policy change, continuity and discontinuity

The Chilean debate about HE policy (Atria & Sanhueza, 2013; CEFECH, 2016; Orellana & Sanhueza, 2016; Libertad y Desarrollo, 2015; Allende & Cox, 2015; Beyer & Cox, 2011) has interpreted the emergence of the FHE policy in an evaluative manner. Since President Bachelet proposed free education as a solution to eliminate the market and competition from the education model (Bachelet, 2013), the HE policy debate has tended to *evaluate* the policy's possibilities to meet that goal. On the one hand, there were those (Atria & Sanhueza, 2013; CEFECH, 2016; Orellana & Sanhueza, 2016) who questioned the real scope of this reform to change the neoliberal manner of conducting policy. On the other hand, there were others (Libertad y Desarrollo, 2015; Beyer & Cox, 2011) who argued that the FHE reform could exacerbate the problems related to equity since it would be a benefit for the wealthiest students and could discourage competition between HEIs that improves the quality of the system. This research is intended to go beyond the evaluative interpretation of the implementation of the FHE policy. Its focus is instead on the processes of *justifications and critiques* that provide legitimacy to a particular HE model that works with specific policies, which are organised according to a principle of orientation that gives coherence to the HE system. For instance, rather than simply assessing to what extent the promise of equity in the HE model was accomplished by Chile's democratic governments, this research examines the *justifications and critiques* within the HE policy debate that enabled the *legitimate* establishment of the equity-oriented HE model. The legitimacy concept will refer then to a general public acceptance of the HE model instead of personal interpretations seeking to define how this model should be grounded. Similarly, it focuses on the content of the *policy change,* created by the promise of free education, to provide legitimacy to the HE model instead of the achievements of the FHE reform.

The focus on legitimacy has involved taking a sociological approach. The policy is understood as an institutional and valid arrangement that connects the level of practices with social structures to establish a sense of *common good* that gives order to society. Moreover, the sociological perspective provides valuable insights and theoretical tools to comprehend the phenomenon of education policy in a context of *policy change*. Although there have been

similar efforts by different traditions within the policy sociology of education, this thesis proposes distinguishing the concept of policy change from the notions of *policy continuity* and *discontinuity*. By detaching the meaning of change from continuity and discontinuity, this research defines policy change as a concept connected with continuity and discontinuity, which is intrinsic to the policy analysis. However, its content is neither contrary to policy continuity nor consistent with policy discontinuity. This conceptual distinction provides the opportunity to study both policy continuity and discontinuity incorporating change, but their definition depends on the energy of the change in the policy. Low energy for change will probably involve policy continuities with certain adjustments, while a high level of energy could provoke policy discontinuities.

Crew and Crew (2018) provide interesting insights regarding the conceptual versatility of understanding change with different levels of degrees in the educational field. The authors point out that change has been termed in different ways. Change has meant continuity when minimal *adjustments* are carried out. In contrast, a significant change would entail *transformations* at the level of organisations' mission and values, policy, or practice. Intending to offer a more varied notion of educational change, the authors suggest a framework based on two factors that could help to understand the nature of change: *depth* and *pervasiveness*. Depth of change refers to how transformations are felt within organisations, while pervasiveness involves the *breadth of impact* of these transformations. Change as an element of analysis moves between these two factors and its particular combination defines the nature of changes.

In this regard, Crew and Crew (2018) suggests that *adjustments* are changes with a low level of depth and pervasiveness, while *transformational* changes show high degrees of depth and pervasiveness. Transformational changes are capable of modifying the culture of organisation, policy, and practices of educational institutions, as well as affecting the totality of components forming part of the educational system under study. Moreover, there could be two possible mid-range transformations: *isolated changes*, which occur when the depth of the change profoundly modifies the organisational arrangements of one institution, but its impact is limited to few educational providers, and *far-reaching changes*, which affect a large part of the educational model, but their depth is low in terms of transforming the organisational culture of institutions. This distinction about change is relevant for a *dynamic*

relationship between continuity and discontinuity. It provides a range of possibilities to study it beyond a polarised understanding in which the presence of continuity means the absence of discontinuity and vice versa.

This thesis conceives the link between continuity and discontinuity as a non-polarised relationship seeking to provide room for the possibility of coexistence between the two. The reference to a policy continuity entails maintaining the *status quo*. In contrast, a policy discontinuity would encompass those orientations addressed to transform this *status quo*. Besides, the two terms would be related dynamically because of the degree of movement activated by the notion of change. Change via policy would act like a see-saw that provides energy to *continuities* and *discontinuities*. On the one hand, the process of *continuity* requires the action of small shifts to preserve the status quo. On the other hand, the process of discontinuities requires immense energy of change to generate significant transformations. That is to say, there is *continuity* in the analysis when changes in policy development do not affect its implementation—or they are minimised as much as is possible. At the same time, the possibility of studying *discontinuity* relies on a profound change concerning any previous state of affairs. Both continuity and discontinuity would form part of the same continuum dependent on the application of ebb-and-flow energy activated by the forces of change. The concept of change, therefore, becomes critical to research the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity*. Within the Chilean context, the demand for FHE introduced by the Chilean students into the policy debate opened up space to explore how the HE model has produced *continuity* or *discontinuity* regarding *changes* to its legitimacy.

1.4. Research questions and rationale of the study

Since the evaluative tendency is also present in the literature about Chilean HE equity, a first sub-question (RSQ1) addresses how the Chilean HE debate has mobilised discursive resources to meet the national promise of equity in the HE model. RSQ1 refers to the possibilities of policies oriented towards equity to construct a legitimate HE model that is coherent with the reduction of the side effects caused by neoliberal development. A second sub-question (RSQ2) explores the emergence of the 2011 student social movement and how its demands for FHE affected the HE model and its legitimacy. This is a question about the possibilities of building a new model of legitimacy based around justifications and critiques underpinning the FHE policy. The examination of these two research sub-questions (RSQs) leads to a third sub-

question (RSQ3) about the differences and similarities between the justifications and critiques in the debates about policy oriented towards equity and FHE. It should be noted at this point that, as this research focuses on funding policy elements promoting equity or free access, the policy analysis will pay special attention on how these funding mechanisms are related to systemic aspects of HEIs, and will only refer to the content of curriculum at HEIs in an indirect way when these contents are connected with the HE model. These three RSQs inform the main research question (MRQ) that connects them regarding *policy continuity and discontinuity* in the Chilean debate about HE policy. Given that the demand for FHE policy would represent a moment of *policy change*, MRQ involves wondering about the fit between an equity-oriented and FHE-oriented model in terms of the *justifications and critiques* that provide legitimacy to the Chilean HE model. Therefore, MRQ that this research addresses is:

How are continuity and discontinuity related in the public debate on Chilean HE policy?

The following RSQs arise from the main question:

RSQ1: **How have actors in the Chilean HE debate mobilised discursive resources to meet the national promise of equity by democratic governments in the HE model?**

RSQ2: **How have actors in the Chilean HE debate adjusted the FHE discourses to provide legitimacy to the HE model?**

RSQ3: **What are the differences and similarities between equity and free education in terms of the justifications and critiques mobilised?**

The MRQ becomes relevant to the study of HE public policy because it involves questioning the possibility of making real changes through policy. In this regard, if *continuity* is dominant in the *dis/continuity relationship*, this research will strive to understand how the HE model can absorb and integrate critiques to transform them into small changes that enable the subsistence of a predominant and legitimate HE system. On the other hand, if the degree of change modifies the *state of affairs*, the *discontinuity* will become prevalent in the relationship. However, since the presence of continuity does not mean necessarily the absence of discontinuity and vice versa, the main question is open to both types of change. It is even feasible that *continuity* and *discontinuity* can coexist in the policy-making process. In this regard, the sub-questions arising from the main question imply looking more deeply into

the nature of a *dis/continuity* process. Thus, RSQ1 aims to provide a baseline to compare the evolution of the debate about the Chilean HE model starting from its relationship with a broader social context (the demand for national policy oriented towards equity). RSQ2 addresses the content of an FHE policy that promises to bring structural changes, so the legitimacy of the Chilean HE model and society is at stake in the policy debate. Finally, RSQ3 seeks to study the distance or proximity between specific arguments over time that could legitimise a potential change or a new process of combining justifications and critiques.

In order to respond to these questions, this research focuses on the mobilisation of discourses coming from influential actors participating in the Chilean debate about HE policy between 2003 and 2016. The beginning of the period refers to a context in which Chile consolidated a HE model with mass access and policies converging to improve HE equity. In contrast, the end of the period coincides with the start of the FHE implementation. In this regard, the time delimitation required data collection from two sources to articulate historical contexts and reflections on the discourses of HE policy. On the one hand, discourses in newspaper documents (opinion columns and editorials) were collected to trace back the HE debate in different moments between 2003 and 2016. On the other hand, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with policy-makers, politicians and scholars were conducted to track how these discourses have changed or reinforced over time. The analysis of newspaper documents and interviews involved integrating thematic and discourse analyses to describe the most significant differences and similarities within HE policies' discussion within the 14-year period.

In addition, the research questions involve theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to policy sociology of education. Theoretically, the thesis conceptualises policies from a particular perspective. It conceives policies as social practices that interact on an intermediate level (between individual actions and social structures) in seeking their social institutionalisation. Thus, policies would be practices of actors that carry them out them through the mobilisation of principles of justification and critique. These principles enable a decision-making process based on evaluating the specific situations in which those actors participate, and the implementation of a certain practice is just one possibility among many others. In this regard, the theoretical relevance involves the analytical effort of applying the contributions from the *pragmatic sociology of critical capacity* to policy analysis. It attempts

to study daily social practices without losing the ambition to connect them with social totality through an institutional analysis.

In methodological terms, the study's novelty lies in the social scientist's role within the *pragmatic sociology of critical capacity*. The social scientist in the pragmatic approach turns the lens onto moral situations as its object of study. S/he focuses on how the very actors mobilise justifications and critiques in order to manage the uncertainty faced in the different situations in which they are involved (Susen 2015). There is no focus on what actors make or say to elaborate a subsequent interpretation of their reality from the researcher's perspective but on describing their own capacity to develop critiques and justifications to establish agreements or disagreements in their particular contexts. In this regard, this research aims to describe how the actors themselves mobilise justifications or critiques and discourses in different situations to maintain or change a certain steering model of education policy. Besides, since the capacity of critique and justification of the actors are the core of the study, the pragmatic approach enables an analysis of policy beyond its effectiveness (success or failure) because it allows a description of how policy agents mobilise moral principles to construct and ground social order during the policy definition process. This new methodological approach is then concerned about the suitability of educational policies in particular situations, contexts, and/or debates.

In addition, this study has a practical significance since it opens up possibilities for social action. The implications are both political and social because the research provides new insights into how a model can be reproduced and changed. It provides a critical framework that takes account of contradictory changes and reforms to provide tools that strengthen spaces of resistance against the dominant form of constructing society. Furthermore, this thesis is relevant to the educational policy itself since it provides a better understanding of and new insights into what policy analysis is. It is a flexible analytical framework intended to determine the political and moral scopes of social intervention.

It should be noted that studying education policy is also a personal motivation and commitment for me. In this respect, the motivational aspect is related to my experience as a university lecturer in Chile who has strived to find practical solutions to the HE model's problems. Educational inequalities are visible in the classroom and it is of pressing concern to advance towards better diagnoses to resolve them. Furthermore, the personal commitment

involves my status as the holder of a Chilean state grant. As a beneficiary of public funding, I feel committed to generating new knowledge that may reduce social inequality and support those who receive the fewest benefits from the current educational model.

Finally, I would like to say that education has been the central pillar of my professional development in that it connects my identity, sociological background and political views. Firstly, my educational trajectory led me to think about how education (equity, quality, etc.) influences people's lives. Since I needed to end up my school studies in a state-subsidy-funded private school, after studying in a state-run primary school, to improve my possibilities of attending HE, educational opportunities have been a recurrent question mark in my development as a citizen and researcher. Secondly, sociology knowledge has become a disciplinary tool to take the risk to conduct educational research connected with complex conceptual developments. I have attempted to expand my academic development through a constant search for becoming a scholar with robust knowledge in theory and quantitative and qualitative methods to apply it to educational research. Lastly, the educational research field means, for me, something more than the production and transmission of knowledge. It entails a space to make converging political experiences and provide opportunities to achieve social justice so that the emergence of the 2011 social movement of students aroused great interest for me and a hope that their demands would come true.

<div align="center">*****</div>

The following is an attempt to answer these research questions through a theoretical, contextual, methodological, and analytical journey. Firstly, there is a theoretical review of sociological frameworks that enable a better understanding of the research topic. Chapter 2 follows the discussion in sociological theory about social production and reproduction to obtain an equivalent conceptual background that allows the study of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. Chapter 3 complements this theoretical framework by contrasting it with different currents of thought from the sociology of education and policy sociology to define a framework that incorporates the elements of *continuity and discontinuity* under the umbrella of policy sociology of education. As a contextual section, Chapter 4 addresses the Chilean situation concerning the relationships between the state, policy, and HE model. Chapter 5 describes the methodological approach and decisions made in order to study the *dis/continuity relationship* in the Chilean debate about HE policy. Finally,

chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 entail the analytical interpretation of the data collected to respond to the research questions. Chapters 6 and 7 describe the HE debate about equity and FHE, respectively, while Chapter 8 explores the discursive elements regarding the policy-making process. Chapter 9 returns to this study's central question and analyses the relationship between continuity and discontinuity, considering an inward review of policy and an outward perspective concerning society. Finally, the conclusions highlight the main findings of the research and outline new concerns for future studies addressing this topic.

2. THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

The main topic of this research project is an exploration of the relationship between *continuity and discontinuity* in terms of the way in which higher education (HE) policies have been developed in Chile. However, the literature has encountered certain difficulties in studying continuity and discontinuity as interrelated concepts. Given the evaluative tendency to analyse Chilean policy developments such as equity or free education, change has been assimilated to how policy meets its original aims (success or failure), which affects the conceptualisation of continuity and discontinuity. For example, if equity-oriented policies brought along change in increasing the level of equity in the HE model, there would be a discontinuity with the situation targeted by the policy. In contrast, the policy implementation's lack of change would imply continuity with the situation targeted by the policy. In this evaluative perspective, the link between continuity and discontinuity appears as a polarised relationship dependent on an idea of change. While the non-occurrence of change would entail continuity, its occurrence would bring discontinuity.

The bifurcated understanding of this notion of change (occurrence / non-occurrence) defines continuity as an antonym and discontinuity as a synonym for change, simplifying more complex bonds between continuity and discontinuity. In this regard, this research proposes to detach the polarised relationship between continuity and discontinuity (which is dependent on the occurrence of change) to grasp different degrees of continuity and discontinuity mediated by a notion of change that might contain adjustment, isolated, far-reaching and transformational levels (Crew and Crew,2018) or other levels not systematised by the literature yet. Therefore, change would work as the driver with diverse degrees that defines the *what, how much and when* of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. In this regard, this thesis addresses then the challenge of devising a non-polarised definition of the relationship between policy continuity and discontinuity, avoiding contrasting continuity with change and, likewise, of equating discontinuity with change.

Additionally, the challenge lies in the lack of systematisation of this research topic, even within the international literature. The connection between continuity and discontinuity has depended on the particular perspective of disciplines exploring the subject, meaning there have been few attempts (Drucker, 1969; Van Notten et al., 2003, Morgan, 2002; Ayres, 2000) to understand them together as an element of study. Ayres (2000) made one of these

attempts by highlighting the relevance of time to develop an analysis of *continuity* and *discontinuity*. Time is a sensitive factor because it defines how each discipline understands change, which would be crucial to investigate the relationship between them. For example, Ayres points out that the conceptualisation of transformations of disciplines is time-specific. An irreversible transformation in one academic field—usually understood as a *discontinuity*— might resemble a steady and smooth trend in another discipline. Conversely, for instance, small trends in demography or economics could represent an enormous transformation in the historical field. This temporal factor and the multiple disciplinary interpretations underlie the difficulty to establish a polarised relationship between discontinuity and continuity.

Being aware of the multiplicity of disciplinary definitions of change, this study has drawn on sociological theory's contributions to advance towards a conceptualisation of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity mediated by a multi-layered notion of change. The debate on change within sociological theory has experienced similar difficulties outlining a definition of change that overcomes the limits of its occurrence or non-occurrence. The integration of traditional perspectives may shed some light and provide interesting insights to comprehend the relationship between policy continuity and discontinuity. Also, as Chapter 3 will describe later, the connection between sociological theory and policy analysis has cultivated strong bonds due to the incorporation of constructivist insights within the policy field. Contributions from authors such as Foucault and Bourdieu are essential to understanding policy sociology and education's prolific development in the last decades. Therefore, a review of the traditional discussion in the sociological theory debate may help map positions within the policy sociology. The review of the experience of difficulties to study change and the connection with the policy analysis will be significant in proposing a social theoretical framework with the flexibility to understand the relationship between continuity and discontinuity.

Concerning the similarity in the trajectory undergone by sociological theory to grasp a diversified concept of change, this discipline offers the possibility of understanding the notion of continuity linked to social reproduction and discontinuity linked to social production integrating change to the framework with an articulator role. For example, these links can be traceable in the critical realist approach elaborated graphically by Archer (1996; 2003). Archer (2003) suggests displaying an approach that considers the time gap in the emergence of

structure and agency seriously. Loosely speaking, the morphogenetic approach conceives of social reality as an open system involving social change. The social change appears as the consequence of a time divergence in the emergence of the agency's structural and interactional level. In this regard, society's morphogenetic construction would allude to the capacity of keeping structure and agency separate to understand that one is not determinant on another and cannot merge in one category. Figure 2.1 summarises the approach more simply:

Figure 2.1: Summary of Archer`s morphogenetic approach to social change

- *Morphogenetic approach*

$$\underline{\text{Structural conditioning}}$$
T^1

$$\underline{\text{Socio-cultural interaction}}$$
$T^2 \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad T^3$

$$\underline{\text{Structural elaboration (morphogensis)}}$$
Structural reproduction (morphostasis) T^4
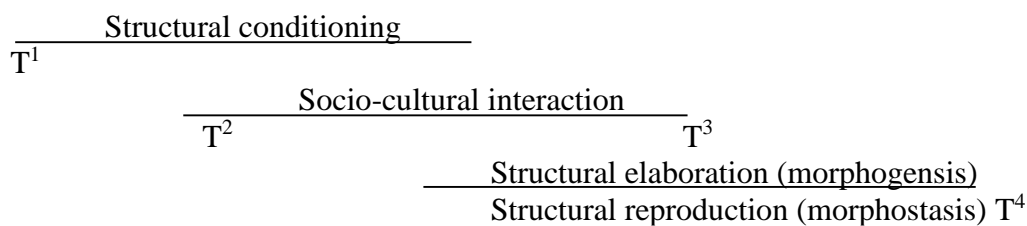
Source: Archer (1996), p. 157.

Archer (1996) states that the emergent structural level is placed in T1 and is previous to the interactional level. T2 represents the moment in which the structures exert causal influences of restraining or enabling over an agent that shows reflexivity reacting to the structural conditioning. T3 mirrors the moment in which causal relations among agents are performed, giving birth to a structural re-elaboration in T4, which depends on the interests and orientations interplayed by agents. In this framework, morphostasis would mean no variation between T4 y T1, implying the *reproduction* of the T1 situation and *continuity* during the social process under analysis. In contrast, there would be morphogenesis when a transformation occurred since T4 is different from T1. Change of the situation under analysis would imply a *discontinuity* during the socio-cultural interaction (before T4) to *produce* an elaboration of a different situation regarding T1.

This graphical representation of the reproduction/continuity and discontinuity/production enable a follow-up of the trajectory displayed by sociological theory –and its conceptual integration to policy analysis– to study the concept of change mediating processes of social (re)production. On the side of social reproduction, for example, critical sociological theory (Marx, 2019) has tended to concentrate on the prevalent status quo in a capitalist society. Its

focus would lie on the structural conditioning in the transit from T1 to T2, which would contain the necessary influence to obstruct change in T4. On the side of social production, its focus refers to the possibility of creating new social conditions through the power of agency (Touraine, 1984). The transit from T3 to T4 minimising the influence of T1 and T2 would be the spotlight of the analysis. It should be noted that although this thesis makes treatment of social production in relation to discontinuity, some micro-sociological frameworks (i.e. ethnomethodology) address the social order from a perspective anchored in the constant production of society (leaving out reproductive statements). Although they represent interesting approaches, they are beyond this theoretical framework's scope since it defines social production and reproduction as *ideal types* (Weber, 1949) to convey the dis/continuity relationship.

On the other hand, since policy analysis has borrowed conceptual contributions from sociological theory, the review of its trajectory concerning social change allows the association of the processes of *policy continuity and discontinuity* with more profound transformations at the core of society. Policy practices would thus be framed within a historical period that gives the dis/continuity relationship a temporal nature. In this regard, the occurrence of social reproduction (*continuity*) or social production (*discontinuity*) will always depend on a materialised baseline that is defined historically. Sociological theory has studied social change with a broad scope from different perspectives. Depending on the emphasis given to the action of change, social theorists have defined their orientation to analyse the social order from a reproductive or productive perspective. This divergence in the analysis shows similar patterns to the theoretical discussion of the relationship between continuity (as a form of social reproduction) and discontinuity (as a form of social production). The conceptual connections offer the opportunity to draw on categories that have already been used to make progress in studying these kinds of relationships. To understand the conceptual sense of social change, Chapter 2 embarks on a protracted analytical route to ascertain the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in the HE policy field by using theoretical contributions and avoiding conceptual reductions that dismiss its dynamic nature.

The first sections of this chapter briefly describe how the sociological theory has, from a macro-level perspective, interpreted social reproduction and production mediated by change. Contributions originating in Marxism to conceive of continuity (2.1) and Alain

Touraine's sociology to conceive of discontinuity (2.2) would represent the *ideal types* of positions to address the theme concerning continuity and discontinuity. Other authors such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault (2.3) are also included, as they integrate the socio-cultural interaction from Archer`s framework (the transition between T2 and T3) to conceive of *dis/continuity* as a relationship. The Weberian concept of the *ideal type* (Weber, 1949) requires a warning. It is only a methodological tool with explicative efficiency to approach the research topic. It does not intend to pigeonhole those theoretical traditions with different interpretations of the social (re)production relationship within a rigid analytical category (for example, Marxism). However, the insistence of using the notion of *ideal type is* pertinent, as it enables the interpretation of a theoretical movement that summarises the efforts to account for social reproduction and production linked to the idea of change. Finally, this conceptual review is intended to support a tentative analytical framework to grasp the dis/continuity relationship. Section 2.4 uses the theoretical approach known as *pragmatic sociology of critique* based on Luc Boltanski's work. The pragmatic sociology of critique is a valuable contribution to provide analytical outputs that allow continuity and discontinuity to be researched. Its focus is on the social practices themselves, without ignoring the reference of social totality—expressed as the contexts or situations in which agency is developed by the actors.

2.1. The Marxist tradition and the capitalist reproduction/continuity of society

It would be unfair to assert that the Marxist tradition is the best example of the prevalence of *continuity* in sociological theory. However, its constant search to find potential mechanisms to enable the proletarian revolution in capitalism gave rise to a complete theoretical oeuvre oriented towards explaining social reproduction, as well as its obstacles that stop actors from bringing social change. Although merging the different Marxist currents of thought would be impossible to achieve, the following suggests that the Marxist version of *discontinuity* has its analogue in the idea of revolution or the transformation of economic relationships of production. Conversely, *continuity* can be linked to the idea of social reproduction and the role played by ideology to reproduce social relationships. In his early works, Marx (2019) aimed to overcome the internal contradiction caused by the social relationships of production between capital and labour in capitalism. This relationship involves a particular economic mode of production: while the capitalist class owns the means of production to increase its

accumulation, the working class had to sell its labour-power to capital for a price lower than that of the final good produced. Intending to work out how social change can succeed in favour of the deprived class, Marx wondered how capitalist society continued operating despite its contradictions. Larraín (2007) points out that the introduction of the concept of ideology became a crucial element to grasp the unstable historical condition of bourgeois society, as well as the solution to its internal contradictions. The social reproduction of capitalist relationships occurs when the social structure organising society into classes ties workers to this structure (Marx & Engels, 2011). In this context, ideology offers a solution at the consciousness level for an unsolved contradiction at the level of practices, making them natural and unquestioned (Larraín, 2007). The operation of an ideological conscience makes sense of the inverted bourgeois social relationships. Social reproduction, according to this theory—continuity with capitalist social relationships of production—, therefore involves a materialist conception of ideology that hinders social change.

Various authors have interpreted Marx's theoretical approach, giving rise to different currents of thought in this tradition over time. The emphasis given to social reproduction (the *continuity* operated by ideology) or social production (*discontinuity* created by revolutionary shifts) gives hints of the differences between these currents. At first glance, Louis Althusser represents the best exponent of the association between social reproduction and ideology. Althusser (1963) points out that ideology performs the function of coherence at the level of the superstructure in capitalist society. Ideology would be an effect of the existing capitalist relationships—the substructural level—that ensures the *continuity* of social relationships. Ideology operates through *non-violent state apparatuses* (Althusser, 2006) that would equip individuals with an interpretation of reality understood as an *illusion*. Secondly, Gramsci (2004) provides an interpretation of ideology that gives more active participation to the subject. He also links the reproduction of capitalist relationships to ideology, but he introduced a new concept coined as hegemony. Hegemony and ideology work together in the domain of civil society in order to continue social relationships. Gramsci diverged from Althusser since ideology would be an orientation for action and not a mere set of ideas, acquiring a positive meaning that is functional for potential transformative practices (Larraín, 2008). The greater openness to social change allowed Gramsci to formulate a more dynamic relationship between social reproduction (*continuity*) and social production (*discontinuity*)

than Althusser's work. Finally, there is a third current of thought in Marxist tradition that shifts the axis of the theoretical discussion towards the idea of *discontinuity*: with the Frankfurt School trying to recover the centrality of the subject to overcome an ideology—based on the abstraction of economic exchange—that has become totalitarian in capitalism (Adorno, 1997). The social totality closes off any alternative that seeks to be different from the market forms and ideology would be the way to exclude the difference in order to inform a unique identity. Marcuse (1971) adds that the totalitarian tendency of ideology has even made the socio-historical conflicts present in capitalism disappear. However, Adorno and Horkheimer (2016) claim that *discontinuity* is possible. *Discontinuity* requires rejection of the ideology of harmony and the vindication of difference to challenge the repetition of the totality.

The review of Marxist contributions regarding social reproduction and production is intended to highlight how this tradition addressed the relationship between *continuity* and discontinuity. While *continuity* might refer to ideology's operation in this tradition, the question about the conditions to achieve revolutionary change would entail *discontinuity*. The different Marxist currents of thought defined continuity-discontinuity depending on the emphasis given to the role of change in its relationship with ideology. The shift brought by The Frankfurt School involved a reformulation of the ideology that would influence later sociological contributions focusing analysis on social production—or *discontinuities*. An example of these contributions is Alain Touraine's sociology as an *ideal type* oriented towards social *discontinuities*. Social production would involve *discontinuity* since it redeems the power of agency to change the course of social reproduction. Concerning this sociological theory, the next section addresses Touraine's work, highlighting the centrality of the subject to conduct social change.

2.2 Social production and the centrality of change/discontinuities

Touraine (1994) claims that Western thought, particularly Marxism, has wrongly omitted the central role of society's subject. It has focused on *rationalisation* as the only category under analysis, stressing the aspect of social reproduction—*continuity*—instead of society's production. Given that Western thought understood modernity as the secularisation of pre-modern thought, it ignored that the figure of God represented the unity of a subject which provided sense to humanity. When reason secularised the world image, it neglected subjectivity without replacing God with another principle. The rational interpretation of this

transition meant that modernity lost its power as a potential utopian change, omitting discontinuity possibilities. Rationalisation as the source of modernity turned into anti-modernism. Its particular viewpoint can only capture those elements—such as ideology—linked to the social order, neglecting social change aspects. Touraine (1982) called for a study of agents' practical action, relativising the preponderance of *continuities* in the form of ideology and social reproduction since domination can work without capitalist ideology in society. Given that society changed and culture displaced economy as the space for social struggle in the post-industrial society, sociological theory should focus on the new practices and social movements that society is producing.

Touraine (1982) goes on to say that power relations are detached from property and labour relations, so a transformation has occurred in which social movements interrelate with different interests and cultural values to inform an instable and uncontrolled society. This instability would be a consequence of a constant conflict to redeem the subject, producing a cultural process of *subjectivation* as opposed to the process of *rationalisation*. Touraine (1994) defined subjectivation as a process that is not always culminated, insofar as individuals never identify themselves with any collective or social totality. Likewise, rationalisation cannot be reduced to subjectivation, so both cultural processes work with an interdependence: an unstable interdependence that allows the emergence of both cultural processes when one of them becomes predominant. Touraine terms this social instability the programmed society. In this kind of society, cultural industries take control of the government of humankind, creating new conflicts between new thriving forces motivated to and aimed at transforming society. Access to information becomes a new form of domination in which actors linked to decision-making spaces become dominant. However, access to information cannot be understood as pure *continuity* of domination. The detachment from power would enable these individuals, through the *subjectivation* process, to converge to produce social movements devised as spheres of resistance to *produce* new social relationships.

Marxism and the sociology of Alain Touraine represent two sides of the same coin. They remain in the polarised version of *the dis/continuity relationship*. Archer (1996) contends that the emphasis on one of these poles tends to conflate the other, making it emerge as an epiphenomenon of the former. Regarding this thesis, both theoretical positions are ideal types that demonstrate the limits of conceiving of the *relationship between continuity and*

discontinuity as based on one of these poles. In the following section, there will be a review of the sociological frameworks intended to move past this contrast, but finding new challenges to tackle.

2.3. Continuity and discontinuity: the (re)production of society

Marxism and the sociology of Alain Touraine were presented as *ideal types* of theoretical attempts that emphasised analysis in one of the poles of the opposition between *continuity* and *discontinuities*. The following outlines two theoretical positions that attempted to overcome the reduction of one pole in the other and had an impact on the sociology of education: the critical sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and the social philosophy of Michel Foucault. Firstly, Bourdieu (2007) enriched the debate about social (re)production by providing a theoretical proposal intended to overcome the classic distinction between structuralism (reproduction) and constructivism (production). This opposition compelled social scientists to choose one rather than the other. Bourdieu (1984) argues that the adoption of a relational thought would overcome these polarised alternatives. Its main task would be to work out how invisible *relationships* operate to construct a social space of external *positions.* The relative distance between positions defines a social space of relationships in which the *distinction* prevails. Agents take these positions with the possibility of reproducing or producing the social space by making choices among a range of *practices*. The *continuity* and *discontinuity* of the social space would thus depend on the continuation of social regularities instead of structural rules, since practices would become strategies *which are not rational, but reasonable*.

Bourdieu (2007) introduced the concept of *habitus* to convey a set of long-term internalised dispositions that orientate the practices and social perceptions of agents. Habitus is an intermediate category to structure practices and, in turn, previous *structures structure it*. Habitus, social positions, and practices establish reciprocal relationships that would shape and differentiate the social space. The positions of agents within the social space depends on their ability to transfer *capitals* defining the distance and difference of their relationships. Therefore, there will be a reproduction of the social space if the distribution of these capitals restricts the possibilities of the agents taking new positions. In contrast, social production will rely on the possibility for agents to invest capital and achieve better or worse positions in the social space. The main critique of the theoretical development of Bourdieu was its tendency

to provide a perspective based on structuralism, since habitus becomes crucial to understanding social relationships.

This section also extensively cites the work of Michel Foucault, since his theoretical proposal fits nicely into analysis of educational policy. His contribution went beyond the limits of social theory and has become a relevant framework for the development of the sociology of educational policy in recent decades (see Chapter 3). The relevance of Foucault's theoretical oeuvre for this thesis rests on how he conceived of the process of *subjectivation* in a double way: how subjectivation can turn into forms of domination (continuity) and emancipation by enabling subjects of resistance (discontinuity). Shumway (1992) linked the contribution of Foucault's approach to his rejection of understanding history in a unique sense that localises each historical event within an arrow of time. The critique is against the thinking of Enlightenment that conceives the course of history with an evolutionary sense aimed at continually improving the world. This evolutionary sense would connect past to future in a positive way through many small, gradual changes without significant breaks and gaps. Conversely, the Foucauldian interpretation of history sees *discontinuity* as an element present everywhere and as a reversal of the positive historical sense. That is, the questions should address what could not be and why this is, in order to understand what happened. *What happened* would be an effect of power relationships embodied in discursive practices. Any conceptualisation of (or claim to) *continuity* must therefore be made tentatively, because it is undeniable that *continuities* are present over history, but they are only one possibility among many others. Foucault (1977) is also reluctant to conceive of domination in terms of a study of ideology, because social domination occurs at a micro level, operating through changes in social practices rooted in disciplinary power relations. The development of a historical disciplinary power allowed these micro procedures to invade larger social forms and not vice versa (Foucault, 1995). These theoretical contributions have been characterised as part of the first stage of the French author's arguments, highlighting his structuralist standpoint.

It is also possible to identify a second stage in Foucault's theory, which emphasises the role played by the notion of the *subject of resistance*. Along with the disciplinary power, Foucault (1980) found other technological and political inventions within society. He called this new technology *biopolitics*. Biopolitics would be the result of the emergence—or discovery—of

the population as a social reality. Foucault concluded that disciplines of the body (or individualising force) and regulation of the population (totalising force) constituted the two poles to develop the organisation of the power over life. Both individualising and totalising forces would work through what the author called bio-power. Bio-power is aimed at economical administration of life and the management of the population—governmentality. In this regard, social (re)production would be the product of power that includes the body and species regarding the norm. According to Ball (2012b), the norm is the point of connection between regulatory bio-power and discipline, because it represents the sole element that can circulate between both. The norm would be the condition of the possibility to establish a regime of truth, since it sets limits, thresholds, divisions, and classifications. The norm would therefore become a *measurement of truth* and the meaning of the right way of being. The task implies illustrating how the effects of truth are historically produced within discourses instead of judging whether they are true or false. Social practices would construct history and are embedded in the form of power relations, insofar as an inherent sense of history is not supported and, even less so, the establishment of truth closer to that sense (Foucault, 1977).

Ball (2012b) adds that the method of producing social change—transgressing what we find intolerable—is Foucauldian *genealogy*, since it rejects and debunks the inevitability of history. Genealogy provides a new opportunity for those who ended up as the losers in a previous conflict based on power relationships. Foucault (2012) saw the possibility of an alternative social production with the genealogical study of power relationships. This type of study should provide the tools required to reject the current reality and to devise a new technique of power that does not link individualising and totalising processes under the form of power of the state. The author proposed a new process of *subjectivation* that can produce alternative subjectivities responsible for breaking down the current ones. In this regard, the reproduction of society would correlate with the reproduction of a historical mechanism of producing subjectivities rooted in power relationships. Foucault goes on to say that these relationships of power would produce new subjects of resistance to themselves. The new subjects would be those who dispute the current forms of producing subjectivities and relations of power. According to the Foucauldian approach, reproduction and production of society are therefore part of the same social process. Although Foucault's framework allows the study of production and reproduction of society with the ambition of totality, the shift towards the

study of power relationships and individual resistance to them threatens the development of collective critiques to transform society. In this regard, the theoretical contribution of Boltanski is included in this thesis as the main theoretical framework to interpret *policy continuity and discontinuity*. Boltanski's contribution brings new and broader insights in comparison with the aforementioned theoretical traditions. For instance, Boltanski's work moves past the opposition between individual and collective change without losing the aim of creating totalising explanations in the sociological framework.

2.4. The dynamic relationship between justifications/continuity and critique/discontinuity in the sociology of critical capacity

Boltanski (2011) prioritises the role of institutions in society to integrate the analysis of individual and collective actions of *continuity* and *discontinuity*. Starting from the *critical sociology* of Bourdieu, breaking away from it before reconciling with it in a final stage, Boltanski contends that institutions are responsible for maintaining the social order and confirming *what is real* in reality. To understand the role of institutions, the author introduces the distinction between *reality* and *world*. Since *reality* is a social construct of individuals separated among themselves, it displays a fragility that requires unceasing confirmation to obtain robustness. This *reality* would therefore be an effect of a selection of elements and actions shared by subjects. In this context, institutions are responsible for *continually confirming* this selection. The *reality* is fragile because the selection process constructing *reality* is incapable of encompassing all of the possible elements and actions of society. *Reality* would be a reduction of a broader sociological category called *world*, which would contain everything that occurs in society. The notion of *world* is a tool describing the social totality, while *reality* would represent a non-totalising model of this *world*. If the *world* is vast and unknown, the *reality* is a historical form that is capable of describing it. The social construction and selection of reality and the different alternatives of selecting elements stemming from the totality represented by *world* offer a theoretical framework that allows an interpretation of the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity* at the level of individual and collective agency. The essential concept in Boltanski's oeuvre is the concept of *critique*, which allows an understanding of both situational disputes in the daily life of social actors and at macro-level of society. There is a review of Boltanski's work about *critique* regarding the concepts of generalisations (2.4.1) and regimes of justification (2.4.2) below. While these sections focus on understanding the micro-level of continuity and discontinuity, Section 2.4.3

explores his conception of normative sociology to convey how local social *critiques* can connect with *existential changes* to transform society.

2.4.1. The principle of equivalence: generalisations, agreement and dispute

Boltanski, along with Laurent Thévenot, in *On justifications* (2006), initiated the pragmatic programme to study how social actors face uncertainty in their daily lives. He called this approach *the pragmatic sociology of critique*. The authors propose that social actors have a critical capacity to make *critiques* and *justifications* that convey how society *remains together* despite the *uncertainty* expressed in multiple social disputes. Social actors participate in different daily life situations by mobilising their critical operations—based on cognitive capacities and moral sense—to reach *agreement* or *discord* and avoid violence. These different situational contexts become the source of arguments to support *critiques* or to make a defence against them in the form of *justifications*. The *critique* emerges when people sharing a context—and trying to coordinate their actions—discover that something goes wrong and start conceiving change as a potential solution (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). When a *situation of critique* occurs, the process of dispute is activated. Dispute therefore begins when actors mobilise *justifications* to defend or change situations. The emergence of *critique* thus implies the possibility of breaking away from the previous situation, although it cannot be permanent since the actors are unable to live in a process of constant crisis. Therefore, returning to agreement becomes a plausible solution. It should be noted that disputes do not refer solely to language disputes, since agreement and disagreement operate on grounds that confront actors with a reality expressed in humans and objects. In a situational dispute, actors bring together objects, humans, or facts (beings) from the past—distancing themselves from the present—to show the *common* elements that enable justification as something *acceptable*. Boltanski and Thévenot gave the example of a fictional dispute between two drivers after a collision. To avoid a violent solution, the drivers need to mobilise *justifications* that build a dispute beyond *personal discontent*, so that *justifications* appealing to *shared experiences* and relevant objects—such as highway codes or the state of the vehicles' tyres— become significant to reach a *common definition* of the situation.

In a situational dispute, social actors must necessarily resort to a *common form of generality* to define the context of dispute. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) termed this form of generality

the *principle of equivalence*. The *principle of equivalence* operates as a reference to evaluate actions, people, and objects present in a given situation. It establishes what is *common* among the *justifications* performed in a dispute (Boltanski, 2012). Boltanski and Thévenot (1999) claim that the process of generalisation is crucial, since any agreement includes a pre-condition to leave aside singularities and individual features in order to converge towards an external *form of generality* that works *equivalently* for people attempting to solve situational disputes. A *principle of equivalence*—as external to people—works in a regime of *justice*, which is a particular *regime of justification* to which people appeal when they enter into a dispute (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020). Because a dispute without violence would always be a dispute over *justice*, the only way of establishing general *principles of equivalence* would be to rank the status of the diversity of the beings forming part of the situation (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). The authors give the example of dinner and the temporal order of serving dishes to avoid disputes between dinner guests. A *principle of equivalence* will work if actors agree that the age of the guests is an appropriate criterion to allocate dishes. However, disputes could emerge if there is a mobilisation of another *principle of equivalence* questioning the method of ranking the current order. The allocation of states of being participating in situations will thus depend on a *principle of equivalence* that provides validity to differential distribution of *worth* between beings. Therefore, the question about the agreement (*continuity*) and critique (*discontinuity*) is also a question about the legitimacy of ranking orders in ordinary social situations.

2.4.2. Regimes of justifications: an analytical framework to comprehend continuity and discontinuity

Boltanski and Thévenot (1999) state that the attribution of a valid *worth* to human and non-human objects participating in disputes relies on the application of facing different *tests*. Tests would allocate beings a ranking of *worthiness* or status. The tests place beings in various positions, departing from the most basic classification: higher and lower status (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020). The achievement of the *agreement* becomes feasible when the participants in a dispute recognise the *legitimacy of the test* allocating different worth. Conversely, the critique, and the potential for change, would arise when there is questioning of the distribution of statuses, casting doubt on the legitimacy of tests and, sometimes, on the validity of the specific *principle of equivalence* operating in that situation. The authors claim that the articulation of principles of equivalence and their respective tests give rise to six

regimes of justification to which social actors resort in order to justify or criticise the different situations faced in their daily lives. These six *regimes of justification* refer to metaphysical *cités*[1] from the moral philosophy of time. A *cité* is the deployment of a specific form of the *common good* defining a correspondent status of higher worth. The *common good* represents the connection of higher status beings with other beings, since the former may provide benefits for the community as a whole. Worthy beings must contribute to the common good—even of those considered to have lower status—so as to ensure everyone is in *agreement* with the social order. The idea of *cité* mobilising a *common good* would thus be a conceptual solution to the problem of achieving a social order that is always at risk of clashing with social inequality manifested in the distribution of worth (Boltanski, 2012). *Cités or polities*, which can coexist within society, represent a particular arrangement of several elements oriented to mobilise a singular definition of *justice* that ensures a feeling of equality and order for society. The six classic *cités* based on the political forms of worth would therefore be:

 (i) The inspired *cité*: the polity of sublimation and art. The worthy values are grace, inspiration, creativity, expression, and singularity. Worthy beings are capable of accessing unrevealed and supernatural truth, making them unique, original, and singular. Inspiration would be personal and inscribed in the body of people. The rejection of stability is seen as a sacrifice to achieve high statuses in this *cité*. The test measures the beings' degree of passion and enthusiasm. The inner adventure and experience is the aim to reach inspiration, while there is a repulsion for routines and worldly objects.

(ii) The domestic *cité*: the polity of personal relationships and reputation. Worthy beings are those placed in the top positions of a hierarchy. Stability, tradition, permanence, dependence, family, bonding, habits, and authority are prized values in this cité. Worthy objects would be good manners, titles, dwelling, stamps, and different forms of demonstrating authority. High domestic worth involves sacrificing selfishness, privileging duties and consideration, so the domestic test depends on the trustworthiness endowed upon high statuses. Worthy beings provide unity and belonging to the rest of the beings in the community.

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[1] The concept of *cité* is also termed as 'world' throughout Boltanski's oeuvre. There is no difference between the two in terms of their content, but in this thesis the former is preferred, as the word 'world' will be used with another meaning in the subsequent theoretical development of this author.

(iii) The *cité* of fame: the polity of popularity and the esteem of others. Worthy values are recognition, external opinion, renown, and fame. Celebrities and objects such as names, brands, signs, or media form part of this cité. The identification of others with oneself would require the sacrifice of secrets—that is, personal life—to access recognition. The way of testing the worth of fame lies in the popularity or the audience of beings whose confirmation occurs in public events.

(iv) The civic *cité*: the polity of the collective interest and solidarity. Worthy values are general will, obligations, and welfare. Collective persons such as representatives and objects such as unions, law, parties, citizens, committee, delegates, and members form part of this *cité*. Meanwhile, ID cards, brochures, symbols, acronyms, slogans, posters, policies, or programmes appear as the material means to demonstrate the collective presence. The sacrifice of selfish desires and passing the democratic test of inscribing the general will in the law and elections are the formulae to access civic worth.

(v) The market *cité*: the polity of price and exchange. Worthy values are competition, particular desires, rare goods, and money. The exchange of rare objects that are sellable at high levels in the market builds the market bonds. Millionaires and competitors such as businessmen, salesmen, and independent workers are relevant actors. Opportunistic people gain worth in this polity, but they need to pay attention to others in order to take the best opportunity. The test takes the form of a deal, and the contract represents the most official expression of the test.

(vi) The industrial *cité*: the polity of efficiency and evaluation. Worthy beings are those linked to technology, scientific methods, productivity, and utility. Professionals, experts, and specialists, and objects such as methods, planning, means, or predictions gain value in this polity. The industrial test measures the capabilities of beings in terms of achieving the expected results. Regularities manifested as statistics (averages), criteria, and measurements are the proof of this test. If the market *cité* focuses on the articulation of desires, the industrial actions represent the other side of the economic coin: the distribution of production.

The *regimes of justification* become a tool to analyse how society remains together despite *disagreement, critique, and uncertainty* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Furthermore, the authors point out that the *regimes of justification* may establish relations of *compromise* to reach a social agreement. The authors developed the case of a client who wants to take a loan

from a bank. The relationship would pertain to the terrain of the market polity, but it may turn into a *compromise* if the borrower and the manager of the bank are close friends. Here the faithful friend would become a solvent client to attain agreement on the domestic *cité*. This kind of agreement provides the opportunity to understand *continuity* through the incorporation of change in the form of *compromises* that stop disputes, which could evolve into transformative *discontinuities* if *compromise* fails. The compromise and the *continuity* of the social order would thus depend on the equalisation of beings stemming from two different polities. On the other hand, if an actor resorts to *justifications* from other *cités* to criticise the social order grounded in one specific polity, there would be a possibility of producing *discontinuities*. For instance, the industrial *cité* might produce critiques about the inefficiency of bureaucratic procedures in the civic polity, or useless luxury goods within the market polity. The question would rest on the degree of transformation that these *critiques* could entail. With regard to this thesis, this double starting point would entail the possibility of grasping *discontinuities* based on the study of the *critiques* producing *uncertainty*. At the same time, the study of reaching *agreements* would imply paying attention to the processes that involve *continuity*. Moreover, the conditions of agreement, dispute, and non-violence fit correctly into the spheres usually studied by policy analysis. However, these notions share the same problem described in sociological discussion about social production and reproduction: change does not contain collective action to transform society.

2.4.3. Normativity, critique and social change: the institutional level of continuity and discontinuity

To take the possibilities of social change to a macro-level, Boltanski (2011) shifted his theoretical framework towards normative sociology by exploring the feasibility of converting *critique* into social transformation. Boltanski argues that actors participating in disputes in daily life tend to develop actions of *justification* and *critiques* limited by the possibilities of their interpretation of the situations in dispute. Although they may be aware of general injustices working at the social level, their performances of critique are realistic rather than utopian. Even when actors deploy the capability of criticising the tests that form different *regimes of justification*, there would be difficulty in obtaining a general social critique. The theoretical task thus rests on the ambition of studying society through totalising tools with the hope of turning the *critiques of reality tests* into *critiques of institutionalised tests*. In this regard, the previous distinction between *world* and *reality* becomes significant to Boltanski's

work because it allows him to convey how social actors can *generalise a critique* until converting it into a *radical* one. The *radical critique* is that which goes beyond situations and uses non-selected elements from the *world* to criticise *what is real* within this reality. If a situation occurs where reality is questioned, impossibility and unrealistic characteristics of situational disputes can become possible aspirations. The connection of critiques from the micro and macro levels of society enables *relativisation* in the understanding of *continuity* and *discontinuity* as two opposing poles. *Continuity and discontinuity* could coexist at both social levels providing there is the opportunity of conceiving of diverse combinations between them in relation to social order. That is, a *discontinuity* at the micro-level of disputes might be perfectly compatible with *continuity* at the macro-level of society.

In this regard, the work of *confirming reality* conducted by institutions is the key to Boltanski's proposal (2011). Institutions carry out this task by establishing a correspondence between the *symbolic forms* that shape reality and *the state of affairs* within it, showing a positive aspect that provides *semantic security* for the social order. Institutions would thus interpret the selection of elements forming *reality* in order to confirm its existence. However, institutions would also be a source of symbolic violence as critical sociology has claimed. This dual character of the institutions would entail the opportunity of devising social change because the focus of the *radical critique* should be the critique of the conditions that make it possible for institutions to confirm *reality*. The change would be an effect of questioning the *whatness of what is.* Since reality is a social construction, agreement between actors who relate *symbolic forms* and the *state of affairs* should not be understood as spontaneous. The institutional work of interpretation provides security to social practices and avoids the possibility of *uncertainty* coming from the non-spontaneous order becoming a permanent dispute or even violence. Institutional practices offer prior tacit agreements that even reduce the level of reflexivity of social practices to resolve disputes. If disputes escalate beyond private situations because of a proliferation of diverse interpretations, Boltanski states that the critique attains a meta-pragmatic level. The meta-pragmatic critique requires broad reflexivity and a public context of development, since actors identify a malfunction in the institutional work reconciling *symbolic forms* and the *state of affairs* of reality. When institutions resist meta-pragmatic critiques, there is a process of confirmation of the *reality* and *uncertainty* is distanced from the actors. However, critiques would arise if there is a

challenge to *reality* supported by sources of *uncertainty* coming from the *world*. Critique and confirmation are interdependent and work dialogically.

Boltanski (2011) adds that confirmation of *reality* always becomes difficult because institutions are bodiless entities. Although the bodiless tendency gives authority to institutions as elements transcending time and space to define the *whatness of what is*—that is, fixing *symbolic and the state of affairs of reality*—it entails fragility. Institutions require a corporal spokesperson to operate in specific situations of defined space and time. Among the different elements forming part of reality, social actors are the only beings capable of fulfilling this role. The problem is that individuals facing day-to-day situations mobilise their interests and motivations to define reality. Institutions would thus involve a dual nature. They are both spaces of trust to overcome the *uncertainty* and fictional entities built up by erratic human beings who bring *uncertainty* back to those same institutions. Social life is a constant tension that Boltanski called a *hermeneutic contradiction*. The tension present in this *hermeneutic contradiction* opens up the space for critique and change that become dependent upon the failure of institutions to confirm reality through *semantic domination*. The capacity of critique to become *radical*—by resorting to experiences coming from the *world*—allow a process of questioning the *existential tests* supporting *semantic domination*. The critique of *existential tests* represents the opportunity to face social inequality in a normative way. Specifically, social inequality would encompass those asymmetries of power favouring dominant actors or groups to define the rules of reality. Dominant groups in society are those capable of mastering the *hermeneutic contradiction*, since they recognise the artificial creation of institutional rules. Instead, dominated actors tend to be more respectful of the rules of social order—and even prone to suffering their control by punishing transgressions. In this framework, emancipation—as the possibility of *discontinuity*—would depend on an equal relationship of access to the spaces of domination of the *hermeneutic contradiction*. Change relies on the possibility of interpreting the reality for dominated groups with the same autonomy as dominant actors.

The most recent contributions of Boltanski are relevant to this thesis because they open up the possibility of connecting the policy analysis of *continuity and discontinuity* with more comprehensive social transformations. In Boltanski's words, the notion of policy would usually be an element forming part of institutional arrangements. It has an orientation to

change, but in a reformist sense that seeks to confirm the reality. The particular scenario of Chilean HE policy challenges this traditional view of policy. The HE sector decided to implement a free higher education (FHE) reform, but diverging from the thrust of a social movement of students that demanded structural social changes. The Chilean context requires a broader approach to explain the role of policy, since there was an opening to elements coming from the *world* to dispute the *reality* (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, FHE represented a political slogan with a normative stance that promised to improve social justice in the country (Bachelet, 2013). The *continuity* or *discontinuity* of the Chilean HE policy would thus depend on the possibilities of channelling the energy of change to contain it within the institutional framework. In this regard, Boltanski's entire work is relevant for the task of describing the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity* in the Chilean HE sector. Firstly, via the idea *of regimes of justification* or *cités*, it is feasible to trace back the evolution of the HE debate among participants of the HE debate struggling to impose *figures of compromise* to legitimise the HE model. At this level, HE *justifications* and *critiques* represent the primary sources of information to understand how the model is maintained or changed during a certain period. Secondly, the opposition between *reality* and *world* enables the connection of this level of practices with the openness to structural changes brought by the students. The normative position of linking FHE to social justice acquires particular relevance. *The pragmatic sociology of critique* offers a normative lens to break away from social dominance by equalising the control of the *hermeneutic contradiction* between dominated and dominating groups. This conceptual development will thus be significant to grasp the idea of *policy change* at the different levels of policy discussion.

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The inclusion of the sociological debate about the production and reproduction of society in this chapter sought to respond to the lack of systematisation in the research about the *dis/continuity relationship*. The sociological debate enables understanding of this relationship by positing a similarity with a long-term study of social reproduction-*continuity* and production-*discontinuity*. The main commonality between these two relationships entails the significance of the role played by change in the debate on social (re)production and dis/continuity. Via a theoretical route, it was possible to describe how social theories—Marxism as *ideal type*—tended to incorporate the concept of historical change at its minimal

level in order to maintain the status quo—*continuity*—of society. On the other hand, the sociology of Alain Touraine stressed the importance of change as a principle of orientation to the constant production of society—*discontinuity*. However, given that each stance emphasised one part of the relationship, critiques emerged to question a reduction expressed in terms of structuralism or subjectivism. There was therefore a need to overcome this reduction. In this regard, the contributions of Bourdieu and Foucault form part of this chapter in order to address production and reproduction of society simultaneously. They faced similar challenges to previous sociological traditions, even losing their collective character that characterises the sociological discipline. In this respect, change emerges as a neutral category that is one of various different probabilities.

Although there will be no use of these theoretical *ideal types* to interpret the data, they will be useful to describe the development of the conceptual educational and policy treatments of the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity* in Chapter 3. The theoretical *ideal types* enabled placement of the different educational and policy interpretations concerning the *dis/continuity relationship*. Chapter 3 shows how different interpretations in these fields fall into the conceptual trap—and its interpretive limitations—of emphasising one of these sociological perspectives regarding the (re)production of society. With respect to these difficulties, this thesis uses the work of Boltanski as a potential analytical tool to break down *the dynamic relationship between continuity and discontinuity* in the policy field. This conceptual standpoint has become interesting because it allows the study of *dis/continuity* in a social space of non-violence and determined by *justifications* and *critiques* that would enable the energetic action of change to maintain or transform society. Analysis of the different *regimes of justification* operating within society enables an interpretation of when change might acquire the status of *radical* or *reformist* transformation. Instead of other sociological currents of thought, Boltanski also kept the opportunity open for an *institutional change* given the *hermeneutic contradiction* that social actors undergo in their lived *reality*. However, the application of this theory to educational policy analysis requires careful examination of the contributions that educational and policy sociologies have provided for the study of social change.

3. THE NORMATIVE SHIFT IN THE POLICY SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Chapter 2 outlines how *continuity* and *discontinuity* can be linked to the idea of change in pragmatic sociology of critique and how this approach can provide theoretical bases to understand the prevalence or emergence of new paradigms to orientate HE policy. The previous chapter focuses on the theoretical discussion about the connection between the continuity/discontinuity relationship and social change in the tradition of social theory. This theoretical effort enables the development of an analytical framework to study the link between dis/continuity as a conceptual category and give policy the nature of social practice. There is a conviction that the aggregation of a more comprehensive notion of social change to the study of HE policy is useful to define the continuity/discontinuity relationship. In this regard, conducting policy analysis implies tracing back practices of continuity and discontinuities that are or are not oriented to social change. If Chapter 2 operates as a broad theoretical framework, Chapter 3 is intended to connect the sociological theory debate about social (re)production with *the dis/continuity relationship* in the literature of educational research and policy analysis.

The connection between sociological theory, educational research and policy analysis aims to understand how educational policy continuity and discontinuity address historical and normative dimensions. Since education policy has mostly been in the sphere of social policy, which also involves health, social security and social care (Spicker, 2014; Cammet & MacLean, 2014; Dean, 2003), its study has entailed paying attention to the historical character of social policy's construction (Spickers, 2014; Gough, 2013). In this regard, Spickers (2014) claims that this set of social policies was a political resource to meet welfare demands from citizens during the 20th century. Welfare emerged as a normative threshold that defined the scope and limits of state intervention in the private sphere of people's daily lives.

Although countries around the world adopted different welfare models (Gough, 2013), welfare in the past century emerged as a bearer of the common good (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2006). For example, Spickers (2014) identified a residual model of welfare that involves targeting policies at those citizens who cannot achieve welfare by themselves and an institutional model that describes social policy as a requirement and dependency shared by everyone in a social context. The variety of welfare and the degrees of state participation in policy development would demonstrate the constructionist tendency of the policy and its

dependence on contexts. The large diversity of policy-making models would share then the feature of focusing on how to correctly decide to produce a change from one state of affairs to another one from a normative perspective (Spicker, 2014, Peters, 2015). This normative character of social policy discipline enables the possibility of applying sociology to this field.

Hence, Chapter 3 is mainly focused on reviewing the literature on the policy sociology of education. This conceptual journey entails dividing the chapter into two large sections. On the one hand (3.1), there is a literature review that incorporates how policy sociology integrates the notion of change from a constructivist/normative perspective for its analysis (3.1.1) and how the dis/continuity relationship can be understood from the lens of empirical educational research (3.1.2). Although both fields of research provide relevant contributions to study this relationship, the final part of this section uses the *incremental* proposal from Hall (1993) to interpret policy change with an ambition of integrating collective action and totality (3.1.3).

The choice of the pragmatic sociology of critique as a theoretical framework indicates a concern to explain the possibilities of social resistance beyond the individual level and connected with society understood as a totality that encompasses multiple possibilities of actions. Therefore, this thesis sees Hall's framework and pragmatic sociology as compatible, since both traditions share a collective and totalising ambition of understanding social change. On the other hand, the second section (3.2) takes Hall's contributions to rehearse an explicative model of policy development that enables an interpretation of the evolution of the Chilean HE model in Chapter 4. The construction of the neoliberal paradigm (3.2.1), the goal of equity (3.2.2), and the policy instruments for HE funding (3.2.3) are addressed as a coherent project that describes the latest changes seen in HE systems around the world.

3.1. The scope and limitations of policy sociology of education

Since policy is exercised in the public sphere to influence and potentially change a certain state of social conditions, the link between policy and social change has been widely recognised by the respective literature (Peters, 2015; Spicker, 2014; Brooks, 2018; Smith & Vittal, 2012). However, the incorporation of the notion of change into analytical frameworks of policy sociology has shown some difficulties. The literature on policy sociology has had to confront rationalist currents of thought to develop constructivist and normative frameworks

to convey change as an effect of enacting policies (Ball, 1993; Grimaldi, 2011; Bacchi, 2002; Rizvi & Lingard, 2007; Adams, 2018). Although this normative turn has led to an understanding of policy analysis oriented towards social change regarding socio-historical moments and different levels of practices embodied in diverse ranges of discursive contexts, the review of policy sociology contains an interpretation of social change that remains trapped at the individual level. The retreat from collective change led the interpretative frameworks to lose their ambition of being a totalising explanation understood as the relationship with the broader society in which policy is inserted and legitimised. Section 3.1.1 describes this particular relationship between policy and the social sphere, having in mind that policy change is conceived as an intervention that modifies a certain state of social conditions (Peters, 2015; Spicker, 2014; Brooks, 2018; Smith & Vittal, 2012).

In addition, review of educational policy literature reveals that the *dis/continuity relationship* has shown low levels of systematisation and scant disciplinary efforts to grasp them as interrelated concepts. Specifically, most of the attempts in the educational sector give greater importance to *continuity* over *discontinuity* or to the latter over the former. This is what Introduction and Chapter 2 have termed as a polarised relationship. It would seem that the two categories are linked to each other through the presence or absence of the idea of change as a critical element. Section 3.1.2 describes these two ways of concealing the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in order to clear the path towards a specific and generic sense—in the social field at least—of understanding the dynamic relationship between continuity and discontinuity. With the intention of overcoming the limitations of conceiving change at an individual level (3.1.1.) and the polarised dis/continuity relationship (3.1.2), Section 3.1.3 incorporates the contribution from Hall (1993) as a model that allows an inward interpretation of policy and an outward interpretation of its relationship with society. Hall states that policy is part of a broader policy paradigm—society—that is intended to orientate the policy process towards remaining sustainable over time. In this regard, any old or new paradigm with the hope of becoming hegemonic would depend on different internal orders that organise the coherence of the paradigm to develop policies that reinforce it.

3.1.1. The normative turn of policy sociology

This section features a brief literature review on policy analysis and policy sociology of education, particularly regarding the multiple practices of continuity/discontinuity and their orientation or not to produce social change. Adams (2018) suggests that two broad approaches can summarise policy-making models. They would depend on the extent to which technocratic-rational knowledge or political constructions are dominant at the moment of making decisions and creating the policy. The model associated with the technocratic process involves the possibility of providing some level of rationality to make decisions. In contrast, the constructionist model entails enquiring about how decisions are problematised and justified by arguments, so policy analysis should start from the moment of defining the problems that mobilise policy. Similar to the sociological discussion in Chapter 2, there is a third position which is intended to move past this duality by using an eclectic perspective that mixes the best of both currents of thought. These approaches are described below, stressing how they can refer to the r*elationship between continuity and discontinuity* in the field of policy sociology.

The first approach—related to political science—proposes *rationality* as a critical element in policy-making analysis (Peters, 2015). Agents responsible for making policy decisions would orientate their actions with the aim of optimising resources to develop policy. This approach conceives of policy development as a sequence of decisions that would represent the accumulation of knowledge (Spicker, 2014; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). The final result of going through this sequence of stages is a product which can be evaluated according to the expected result at the beginning of the policy process (Adams, 2018). Peters criticises (2015) that it is an approach that does not take into account the actual conditions of policy-making and is incapable of recognising the difficulty of separating the decision-making practice from its context. Although the rationalist approach has tended to become obsolete, Spicker (2014) argues that there is an agreement about its utility as an analytical tool to start breaking down policy and he calls for flexibility to be introduced into the framework.

The *rationalist approach* has been strongly questioned by a *constructionist approach* that aims to establish the conception of policy as a discursive problem. Adams (2018) states that policy analysis should focus on a broader context that contains policy. Agents situated in certain contexts construct the policy problems so that policy analysis should be a constant

questioning of the social conditions that enable the creation of policy. Along with the process of problematisation, the constructionist approach focuses on argumentation as the response to define a way of action in policy creation. Given that policy creation is a construction, a rational approach would be not able to provide tools for study of policy (Brooks, 2018). Ball (1993) claims that a sociological perspective enables an understanding of policy as a discourse because "we do not know what we say, we *are* what we say and do. In these terms we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies" (p. 14). *Policy as discourse* has become relevant because discursive frameworks—rooted in regimes of truth—enable or restrict the conditions of possibility to interpret and enact policy. Policy as a discourse "identifies how prevailing social, cultural and political ways of viewing the world impact on the policy process" (Adams, 2018, p. 34), involving breaking down policy as a social construction.

In this constructionist approach, policy as discourse goes hand-in-hand with *policy as text* (Adams, 2018). *Policy as text* (Ball, 1993) is another relevant component for policy analysis, as it entails noting that statements of policy in the form of texts stem from commitment and struggle in different stages of policy creation. Therefore, texts are not entirely closed, complete, or clear, insofar as they need some level of interpretation and translation in the *policy formulation process*. Dissension and disruption emerge as elements to study in policy-making. The agents involved in different levels of policy enactment—from policy-makers to professionals and policy recipients — make a particular *reading* of the policy according to their interests, values, and/or social commitments. This conception of policy again focuses on the role played by the context, emphasising the importance of *ad hocery* in policy action. *Ad hocery* in policy creation (Lightfoot, 2015) implies that policy is something other than its implementation because context is determinant (Ozga, 1987). The relevance of context leads to the policy process being conceived as a space for questioning that provides the opportunity to generate forms of resistance (Lightfoot, 2015). However, despite the fact that constructionist approach proposes a critical perspective for policy analysis, it makes the possibility of change an individual responsibility instead of a collective one. This restriction has led to the development of new theoretical efforts intended to incorporate a group of contributions originating from the rationalistic and constructivist approach from an intermediate position.

A third trend in policy sociology can be summarised as an eclectic framework intended to overcome the limitations of the previous approaches. Grimaldi (2011), for instance, recognises the risk of excessive *textualism* within the constructionist approach. He uses an *epistemological pluralism* to attempt to reconcile modern (rationalistic approach) and postmodern policy approaches (constructivist approach). Like the sociological tradition mentioned in Chapter 2, *epistemological pluralism* focuses on addressing how social structures in the real world participate and inform contexts in which actions and policies are displayed. Avoiding seeming structuralist, Grimaldi states that the enactment of agency and policy takes place in strategically selective contexts. In these contexts, creativity, uncertainty, and reflexivity become the conditions of possibility to transform "the structured features and selectivities of their contexts of action and in challenging the taken-for-granted or apparently neutral assumptions shaping those contexts" (p. 463).

Also from an eclectic viewpoint, Rizvi and Lingard (2009) shift the perspective to the normative character of policy and the relevance of the values within it. They claim that policy has a public and normative nature, as it seeks to direct the action and attitudes of people as collective actors. Following the interpretative character of policy text and the questioning derived from its interpretation, they point out that policy can produce and shape change, since it provides the opportunity to propose a desired or imagined state of affairs. Policy operates as a representation of the *public good* related to particular contextual interests, which can be questioned during the policy creation and interpreted as issues that emerge in the policy agenda. In this regard, policy would be an ensemble of decisions that allocate values authoritatively. This distributive nature of policy values implies that policy is not merely embodied in discourses, but also in social imaginaries "that shape thinking about how things might be 'otherwise'—different from the way they are now" (p. 8). There would be a normative position in policy creation that provides room for the critique.

Although there is recognition of the efforts to move past the individual nature of policy change, both the epistemological pluralism and the eclectic approach of Rizvi and Lingard (2009) are still constrained by the impossibility to transition from individual questioning to collective actions to produce policy discontinuities. While this conflict has continued forming part of the analytical project, its scope is limited to individual actions in localised contexts. In the case of the introduction of values to policy analysis by Rizvi and Lingard, the eclectic

nature of the theoretical proposal may be responsible for not extending the analysis to a pragmatic sociological perspective. The eclectic standpoint has brought with it an explanation of policy practices from a social constructivist perspective, while neglecting any explanatory attempt to grasp the totality of the policy process. The lack of ambition to explain the totality of the process leads to the analysis being divided into different moments of analysis according to the most suitable theories to convey the relationship between policy, shifts, and change. A first issue detected in the policy literature would refer then to the trap of integrating change into the analysis by retreateing from a conception that understands change concerning the social totality. This issue connects with a second challenge in the educational policy literature that has integrated change within a polarised relationship between continuity and discontinuity, dismissing its gradual character providing this relationship with dynamics.

3.1.2. Continuity and discontinuity in empirical research about education policy

The conceptualisation of change defines the interrelation between *continuity* and *discontinuity* in the educational sector. Conceptual developments have tended to research continuity and discontinuity separately or to confuse these terms with change. For instance, continuity analysis has focused on the observed coherence and the historical features in policy implementation. There is *continuity* for the analysts if coherence in policy implementation is not affected by change, or it is minimised as much as possible. Instead, discontinuity analysis has displayed a multivariate terminology that has tended to recognise it as a synonym of change in the educational policy field. The possibility of studying discontinuity seems to depend on a change concerning any previous state of affairs in the analysis. Therefore, change becomes a central notion to understand the connection between continuities and discontinuities.

The educational sector has tried to incorporate concern regarding change to understand continuity and discontinuity by giving more importance to continuity or discontinuity without studying them as a relationship. On the one hand, educational policy research has generally studied continuity in opposition to change. It refers to the contraposition that avoids including discontinuity in the formula and usually defines change regarding what Crew and Crew (2018) called *transformational change*. Continuity-as-opposed-to-change generally associates the content of continuity with a static moment via a historical perspective. It addresses what is historically maintained to resist changes in educational reforms and how actors involved in

the implementation of reforms can provide coherence to their application. If continuity incorporates changes, they take the form of *adjustments*.

The structure of the continuity-as-opposed-to-change literature is quite similar. It makes a historical description of how elements in the educational system suppress changes proposed by reforms and policies over time. Although change is part of the research, *continuity* displays a more significant position in the analysis. This approach to educational *continuity* includes a diverse range of topics. For example, issues as traditions in work-oriented HE (Weaver, 2011) and policy learning as a traditional value (Chung, 2015) have given a positive value to continuity. Both advocate integrating continuity into the analysis in a context in which transformational changes produce excessive expectations for the participants in the educational sector. The structure of both studies looks similar. They call for redemption of the value of continuities in policy implementation to achieve effective changes which have failed in altering what they were intended to transform. The policy will have a more significant impact if it is based on continuities that are already present in the context of implementation.

There has also been concern regarding other research topics, but conferring a negative sense on the idea of continuity. Although the structure of studies maintains the subjugation of change to emphasise continuity, this kind of literature understands continuity-as-opposed-to-change in a relationship of co-option. For instance, Tomlinson (2003) researched how continuity of discourses and practices of racism prevailed and adapted to changes introduced in English education during the last three decades. The author even points out that changes in educational policy are the primary vehicle to maintain social continuity. Similarly, Strain and Simkins (2008) interpret continuity in a negative sense, since the English Educational Reform Act of 1988 failed to fulfil the promises of change.

Other authors have even assigned both a negative and positive value to continuity (Morris et al., 2010), but maintaining the counter-position of continuity to change. The literature on educational policy has also opposed continuity to change differently. Continuity would be a synonym of policy coherence, while change appears as the final goal that paradoxically requires coherent continuity to enact changes in policy implementation. The need for continuity as a precondition thus becomes the centre of the analysis. The coherence would depend on the form in which different policy actors support policy at all stages of its implementation. In this regard, teachers (Lopes Cardoso, 2011; Matemba, 2010; Acker, 1990;

Chisholm, 1999), educational psychologists (Stobie, 2010), parents (Râty et al., 2012), headteachers (Zheng et al., 2013), and local educational authorities (Croll & Mose, 2000) have been studied as the bearers of continuity and change.

On the other hand, research on educational policy has studied discontinuity in terms far removed from the idea of its opposition to continuity. While the paragraphs above show how the literature has conceived of continuity as an issue of *adjustment* rather than change as a *transformational* shift (Crew and Crew, 2018), the following describes the study of the notion of discontinuity as a synonym of change that seems to be incompatible with continuity. There has been less educational research on discontinuity than on continuity. Stephen Ball (2012) developed what is possibly the best-known work about discontinuities. He highlighted discontinuities, drawing upon Foucault frameworks, as a principal element to analyse educational history. Ball contends the traditional coherence and univocity allocated to the institutionalisation of the school in the history of educational policy. Educational history, he argues, is a history of classification and exclusions understood as strategic discontinuities of practices oriented towards a contradictory uniformity and collectivism. In a different work on education, Balarin (2008) critically reviews educational reforms by introducing the concept of *radical discontinuity*. She argues that weak states among the so-called developing countries would face permanent instability to develop policy and constant shifts in policy orientation and content. Radical discontinuity would be the main factor affecting the success of carrying out educational reforms over time. Discontinuity would be an excess of a desirable degree of changes for democratic policy processes, involving a negative conception of the term.

Finally, it should be noted that educational policy research has shown a disconnection with the study of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity as two sides of the same coin. Moreover, the few empirical attempts made have tended to treat one side as the epiphenomenon of the other. They repeat the mistake of unilateral theories addressing the production and reproduction of society in Chapter 2. Barnhouse (2001) made one of these attempts. She proposed an approach to study *dis/continuity* through a dialectic relationship between the two, even suggesting that one could co-opt the other. She conducted a historical study regarding continuities and discontinuities in reforms oriented towards improving the distribution of educational opportunities of access and state goods in the United States. Barnhouse concluded that inequality is linked to continuously shifting mechanisms in

educational access and the operation of the state to support those new mechanisms. Continuities would use discontinuities to prevail in the form of changes or displacements. This is a research perspective that integrates continuity and discontinuity in the form of a relationship, but which is no different from those studies understanding the co-option of change by continuity. The reduction of discontinuity to a co-optional relationship removes much of the explanatory potential of this connection.

The literature review carried out in this section has given rise to the complex need to research *continuity* and *discontinuity* in terms of a dynamic relationship. The notion of change and its nature become elements that are constitutive of the relationship, but there is a need to avoid equating change with continuity or discontinuity. Change is the driver that provides movement to their relationship and is not an antonym for continuity or a synonym for discontinuity. Both the reference to change as an antonym/synonym of dis/continuity in education research and the lack of a notion of collective change in policy sociology face the challenge of developing an analytical framework that captures the dynamic of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. With the intention of addressing this challenge, the incremental proposal to study changes in policy envisioned by Hall (1993) is developed below. It provides interesting insights based on the idea of *policy orders* to conceive change with a gradual-non-polarised character and related to a social totality through a policy paradigm.

3.1.3. Combining change and totality: the three orders of policy

Before continuing, it should be noted that the ambition of *totalising* explanation is no more than that; an ambition employed as a Weberian ideal type (Weber, 1949) to understand the explanation of a social phenomenon. In this respect, the work carried out by Hall (1993) represented an interesting attempt to consider the idea of totality and multi-layered change in the same framework. Hall states that policy-making is strongly linked to the idea of social learning that helps to operate in the context of a policy-making process characterised by perplexity and uncertainty. Therefore, the process of making public decisions would involve a certain level of social learning. That is when policy development starting at time-1 is affected by various elements present in policy at time-0. Past policies would have effects on policy in force. This author defined social learning "as a deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information. Learning is indicated when policy changes as the result of such a process" (p. 278). Social learning and

change would thus be closely related, as changes in the policy will influence the type of social learning developed.

The relationship between changes in policy and social learning suggests an interesting perspective for policy analysis. Hall (1993) proposes that social learning should be understood through three levels of change in the policy-making process: (i) social learning about changes in the general *goals* that guide the policy; (ii) the *policy instruments* designed to achieve those goals; and (iii) the specific *settings* forming part of these instruments. Changes in the policy would imply different levels of social transformations associated with distinctive types of social learning. Therefore, changes in the policy at the level of instruments or their settings would imply less radical changes compared with changes in the definition of the goals. Social learning appears in this approach as an incremental feature, as first-order changes produced at the level of instrument settings can be developed regardless of transformations in the levels of instruments and goals. For instance, in a context of HE policies aiming to improve access by introducing loans that fund studies of more deprived students, the decision of fixing a ratio of interest of these loans every year would be change at the level of settings. In this case, the new optimal ratio of interest would be a learning that would come from previous implementations of the instrument settings.

A second-order change would entail transforming instruments devised to develop the policy. This kind of change would necessarily involve changes at the level of the settings, although the goals could remain the same. Regarding the example of improving access, a change at the level of instruments would imply to modify the loans strategy to a scholarship strategy. Since scholarships replaced loans, ratio of interests are out of the policy decision but the policy goal would be the access improvement still. Finally, a transformation of the goals would suggest that the policy-making process is open to defining new goals, as well as its new instruments and settings. In this case, the change would come from deciding not to improve access and take another goal as policy orientation. A HE policy oriented to graduation or retention of students would entail a different articulation of its policy instruments and settings.

Hall (1993) is aware of the possibility of oversimplifying his model and argues that a system of ideas would be responsible for policy changes. Ideas would be central to understanding the commitment to or question of the policy-making process. Policy-makers would perform "within a framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and the

kind of instruments that can be used to attain them but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing" (p. 279). Since this system of ideas would determine the conditions of potential changes in policy, it would also influence the type of social learning developed in the policy-making process. The author asserts that the system of ideas works as a Kuhnian notion of paradigm, since policy change concerns the rest of the orders. Policy-making tends to be *normal* (continuous) when first-order (instrument settings) and second-order (instruments) changes take place in policy creation. These kinds of changes are a process of adjustments, which maintain the overarching goals from an established paradigm. However, when a third-order change happens in policy creation this could imply a radical transformation in the system of ideas.

The paradigm analogy also provides the opportunity to understand continuity in policy creation, since first-order and second-order changes and learning would provide continuity with past policies. In contrast, discontinuity and social change entail shifts in the policy goals and the transformation of paradigms. Furthermore, taking the notion of the Kuhnian paradigm as a reference could be useful because it opens up the possibility of capturing social change linked to a broader explicative model stating how one paradigm replaces another in the field of natural sciences. In this regard, the process of paradigm change would entail a long process that would achieve its consolidation when new authorities rule policy-making to institutionalise the new paradigm (Hall, 1993, p. 281). Therefore, although paradigms are aimed at producing a *totalising* explanation, they "are by definition never fully commensurable in scientific or technical terms" (p. 280) because they represent just a particular account on the context faced by policy-makers. In this regard, working under the umbrella of a paradigm would involve the process of negotiation, commitment, and containment in all the orders of social learning studying the process of policy-making.

It should also be noted that this thesis interprets the concept of policy paradigm as a *fourth policy level* by detaching it from a change at the level of a policy goal. This shift would produce more significant analytical results. Firstly, the detachment between policy goal and paradigm enables the study of the policy goal as a two-way element. It needs to incorporate an ideological level with a pragmatic tier to provide coherence to the policy development. The ideological level refers to the policy's political content, which requires a link with the policy paradigm since the political tier entails the image of the desired society pursued by the policy.

On the other hand, the pragmatic level involves the same coin's technical side, since the policy implementation needs specialised knowledge to have success. It is pragmatic because policy development will make decisions based on what works to achieve that desired society's image. In line with this, the consolidation of a policy goal will usually demand an articulation of the political and technical sides framed in a broader policy paradigm.

Secondly, the detachment between policy goal and paradigm provides the flexibility of understanding the possibility that a policy goal can change without transforming the legitimacy of the policy paradigm underpinning the policy-making process. In this regard, policy changes would work at different levels of policy creation so each level can be analysed through judgments that invoke principles of justice based on values to define the legitimacy of the policy development. The idea of a paradigm oriented towards legitimacy includes the idea of dispute that is central in the conceptual framework developed by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). The arguments that define the legitimacy of policy operate in a similar manner to the role of critique in regimes of justification. Furthermore, the differentiation of the policy-making process into three levels—plus the paradigmatic level— allows an analysis of postsecondary education as a specific model, among other possible models, which is articulated by contradictions and coherencies that enables the study of continuity and discontinuity focused on the patterns within this articulation of policy orders. In this regard, an agreement at the third level could show contradictions with an agreement at the first or second level, increasing the possibilities of change.

In addition, the pragmatic sociology of critique has pointed out that continuity and stability are a function of figures of compromise, in which two different regimes of justification could be operating to achieve an agreement. In this case, a policy process would provide some continuity—regardless of certain degrees of contradictions—if it establishes figures of compromise among its levels of learning. On the other hand, discontinuity could be an effect of conflicts between different levels of the policy, achieving a paradigmatic transformation if elements from the *world* (Boltanski, 2011) challenge the institutionalised order. That is, this analytical framework enables the incorporation of policy as an element that interplays with the social totality in which takes place. A rehearsal of how a policy paradigm might work within the HE sector at present will be used in Section 3.2 to include additional significant concepts used in the analysis chapters.

3.2. HE policy and the orders of policy change within a pragmatic sociology approach

This thesis follows the development of Hall's (1993) theory of policy orders in two ways: i) as an inward project and ii) and an outward project that sees a coherence between the policy goal and paradigm (society). On the one hand, the inward trait refers to the internal policy practices organised through each level of Hall's orders that articulates policy-making as an institutional arrangement with different degrees of coherence and contradictions to analyse. Inward continuity or discontinuity would rely on the nature of change applied within policy goals, instruments, and instrument settings; leaving room to accept the coexistence of continuities and discontinuities according to the contradictions produced by changes occurring in each level of policy-making. On the other hand, the outward project refers to the coherence and contradictions that policy goal establishes with the paradigm in which takes place. It is an outward trait because the analysis of policy-making focuses on its relationship with society as the context of its development. Outward continuity and discontinuity would rely on relationships of coupling or decoupling between policy goal and paradigm. Besides, the level of policy goal would work as an analytical threshold since it would delimit the boundaries of the inward and outwards policy changes. Similarly to the inward project, this policy threshold enables a policy-making interpretation that allows that one project to experience continuities (i.e., the outward project) and the other project to undergo discontinuities (i.e., the inward project).

Additionally, this two-way interpretation of Hall´s (1993) framework enables its compatibility with Boltanski's (2006, 2005, 2011) work to analyse the policy development of continuity and discontinuity in Chapter 6, 7, 8, and 9. The inward project can be analysed in terms of the justifications and critiques mobilised—regimes of justifications—by actors participating in the policy-making process. Instead, the outward policy project can be analysed by the distinction between reality and world (Boltanski, 2011), since this research understands policy enactment as a process of selection of elements—among different possibilities—that confirms or modifies a previous reality. Regarding this combination of interpretative frameworks, Section 3.2 rehearses a potential assembly of the three-order analysis proposed by Hall to describe how they can operate together based on a set of ideas and values which provide the organisation that adheres to those orders. Therefore, Section 3.2.1 analyses how a new paradigm based on a neoliberal project emerged from another based on welfare in

educational policy (a paradigmatic moment) and how it successfully introduced changes to gain legitimacy (McGimpsey et al., 2017) . Secondly, Section 3.3.2 addresses how a slippery concept of equity can be co-opted by neoliberalism that empties its content to establish it as a goal to orientate HE policies (a third-order moment). Finally, Section 3.2.3 describes how HE financing instruments are strongly related to a general project and goal (a second-order moment). Although the first-order level does not form part of this analysis, it is present throughout the entire chapter and is particularly necessary to understand the financing settings that define policy instruments.

3.2.1. The emergence of the neoliberal paradigm in educational policy

Educational policy has undergone a paradigmatic change following the orientation of the neoliberal project around the world since the 1980s (Harland, 2019; Ball, 2012; Ball, 1997; Marginson, 2018; Apple, 2013; Lakes & Carter, 2014; Brooks, 2018; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009; Verger & Normand, 2015; Bradbury, 2019). Ball (1997) argues that the neoliberal promotion of values of flexibility and entrepreneurialism reformulated the social provision of the welfare state and has provided space for greater participation of market forces. Rizvi and Lingard (2009) assert that neoliberalism has become the most influential ideology worldwide based on a process of globalisation. Globalisation and neoliberalism have redefined the old national limits of policy enactment, giving rise to the international rise of transnational economic interests. Social policy has faced a new context in which the historical intervention of the state in policy-making processes has been displaced (Mundy et al., 2016). Besides, Brooks (2018) contends that the neoliberal project has been imposed globally without any counterpart beyond the types of welfare states.

Brooks (2018) adds that this paradigmatic shift is mostly recognisable in the development of HE policy, since individual choices, market competition, and business-based managerialism have become the principles guiding educational policy. Harland (2019) states that the neoliberal project has organised change through accountability measures for obtaining state funding and adjusting the operation of higher education institutions (HEIs) to standard national schemes. Moreover, accountability can acquire an ethical character because it may improve the levels of transparency and quality of HE systems. Also, there has been a shift in the policy domain that has reinforced the role of what has become known as the 'evidence-based policy' and 'what works' agenda. This agenda calls for non-ideological policy based on

objective empirical evidence (McCowan 2019, p. 260). In this regard, Brooks (2018) states these transformations have meant that neoliberalism has affected the time for developing policy. The policy-making process requires faster responses to demands from society so that holistic and slower perspectives have started being replaced over time. In order to meet market requirements, educational policy decisions increasingly depend on outsourcing research conducted by think tanks that adapt better to market times than academic work.

Apple (2013) particularly underlies the ideological articulation produced by the neoliberal paradigm. He claims that neoliberal ideology would be a modernisation of traditional thought, which has found the basis for a new synthesis of right-wing ideology by opposing state elements. Apple describes how an anti-state discourse has been used to weaken the social worth of the welfare state and social provision. The neoliberal paradigm would mean the development of a genuinely organic ideology destined to have an impact on common sense by combining *the free-market ethic* with *populist politics* (p. 23). Using a different approach, Ball (1997) calls for focusing the analysis on new neoliberal values instead of ideological transformations to explain the neoliberal effects. Neoliberalism would be a project that pits new policy elements against welfare policy elements, but it also produces new subjectivities. Neoliberal subjectivities are a new phenomenon because they are based on values of productivity, efficiency, and autonomy. What is relevant is the individual performance to understanding socio-cultural relationships anchored in a structure similar to managerialism. This cultural transformation leads to policy provision being understood as an issue of quality that should efficiently satisfy the demand of a policy beneficiary conceived as a customer. The cultivation of performativity and managerialism operate together in public education, which has started imitating the operation of the private supply, blurring even the boundaries what is public and private.

The cultural transformation in the form of new subjectivities (Ball, 1997; Bradbury, 2019; Bradbury et al., 2013; McGimpsey et al., 2017) has meant a redefinition of the role of the actors in the HE policy field. Brooks (2018) points out that the neoliberal paradigmatic change has affected the participation of the state, private, and civil social actors in the decision-making process. Lakes and Carter (2014) argue that the welfare state has become unsustainable in a context of neoliberal transformation, insofar as it has lost its redistributive nature. Its alleged inefficiency has given space to a belief based on the idea that "the market

operates most efficiently and effectively without regulation" (p. 107). Brooks (2018) adds that this belief involves reformulating the action of the state to divest it of any power as the leading producer of public policy. The new definition of the state means that the state can only *steer policy at a distance* (Kickert, 1995; Marginson, 1997). Ball (1997) termed this new policy role of the state as the development of a policy technology of remote control. This is a technology that seeks to minimise the scope of the state through targeting policies that have increased its power to control individuals. The decreasing participation of the state as a policy actor has also affected educational policy.

Rizvi and Lingard (2009) argue that national states have seen themselves surpassed by the constant expansion and mass demands for education, so the solutions have come from a marketplace underpinned by *globalised and transnational discourses, agenda-setting and policy pressures* emerging "from beyond the nation" (p. 15). The policy process has developed an intricate relationship between local and global spaces that produces a complex network of discourses, in which different actors beyond the national level influence policy-makers. It is a state in alliance with privatisation that fosters "the creation of quasi-markets in the public sector and through a range of public-private partnerships" (p. 17). In addition, Lakes and Carter (2014) add that globalised discourses work as an intensifying agent that empowers transnational policy actors, which have acquired prominence in the definition of local policy because they provide essential funds to influence the policy-making process (McCowan, 2004).

Brooks (2018) asserts that new emergent policy actors have developed a policy network structure informed by private, international, and civil sectors. The growing power of private parties in the policy field has had a significant impact on the definition of policy goals, since private consultancies—operating within the state infrastructure—have undertaken the task of defining policy aims. Moreover, international organisations and actors from civil society connected with the private sector (as philanthropist or volunteer organisations) have increasingly taken part as policy actors. This policy network has meant that the state has had to share its decision-making power with other actors, generating certain democratic issues because a system based on shared governance, instead of government, tends to prevail. In a policy governance system, responsibility is shared by different policy actors that have not been designated by democratic processes. On the contrary, governments elected through a

democratic process must be accountable to citizenry about its policy decisions. The shared governance becomes then questionable due to the doubts about the legitimacy of actors with a policy power based usually on economic power or technocratic knowledge, and not democratic elections.

Rizvi and Lingard (2009) summarised these changes, arguing that the state has seen a profound transformation of its duties and the replacement of government by governance has meant a shift of the state-centric nature of the policy process. This is a policy process with an orientation towards the global economy in which educational policy contributes to developing human capital and economic competitiveness. Lakes and Carter (2014) state that the neoliberal transformation has had consequences for HE because neoliberalism has increased social risks and made credentials the secure way of participating in the job market or meeting the expectations of future educational access. Moreover, any failure to obtain these credentials has become an individual failure, introducing the idea of personal accountability to explain educational performance. Additionally, the neoliberal paradigm has introduced increasing participation of privatised HEIs in the supply (Marginson, 2018), blurring the limits between the private and public spheres by displacing the location of power from the latter to the former (Harland, 2019). Given the neoliberal transformations and the uncertainty they have brought with them to the educational field, it is necessary to explore how neoliberalism finds the legitimacy to sustain itself over time. In this regard, Hall's (1993) contributions seem to provide a sensible response since the establishment of equity as a policy goal has tended to orientate the inward and outward balance within the HE policy field.

3.2.2. Equity as a third-order policy change

Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) point out that any social ordering requires justifications that soften its contradictions and provide it with legitimacy. Neoliberalism borrowed policy orientations from the liberal tradition to warrant its presence in the global HE system. In this regard, despite equity seeming a politics-loaded liberal goal contrary to an *instrumental orientation* based on *economic criteria and efficiency* (Vigoda, 2003, p. 1323) neoliberalism reframed and distorted the equity content in a way that was compatible with its principles. By reframing the content of equity, the neoliberal paradigm found the opportunity of promising mass HE access as a public good to respond to the growing demands of society. Although it would be an overstatement to claim that equity became the main goal orientating

HE policy in a paradigmatic neoliberal project, it can be said that it is one of the most important. International organisations influencing HE policy have shown particular concern for liberal goals such as equity and human rights. Indeed, the World Bank (1994) identified equity, along with quality and responsiveness—to the job market—as strategic dimensions to improve HE's internal performance and its relationship with society. Among these three dimensions, equity as a goal acquired particular relevance because it represented a point of intersection between economic and social policy (Malcom-Piqueux et al., 2016).

In the HE policy field, equity refers to the possibility of providing equal opportunities for access and success to individuals studying in HE. UNESCO (1998) states that equal opportunities of HE access have become crucial to participate in the knowledge society because they facilitate socio-cultural and economic development, as well as adaptation to the uncertainty of new societal changes. This conceptualisation of equity seems incompatible with neoliberalism since it would involve decisive state intervention and regulation of the market in order to ensure equality of opportunity. However, since participation in the knowledge society has increasingly become dependent on HE studies, neoliberalism has found a point of intersection between economics and education. The neoliberal project can perform as an efficient paradigm, rather than the welfare paradigm, that may facilitate HE's access to improve society's equity.

The reformulation and distortion of the equity concept by neoliberalism have also been viable because of equity's slippery and contentious content. Equity has blurred boundaries with other concepts such as equality (Malcom-Piqueux et al., 2016; Unterhalter, 2009), fairness (McCowan, 2016), or social justice (Salmi and Bassett, 2012). This multi-varied terminology around the definition of equity has led to a predominant usage of the term associated with equality of opportunities in HE policy literature (McCowan, 2007). Salmi and Bassett (2012) point out that equity conceived as equality of opportunities strives to reduce the consequences of environmental factors that are placed beyond the individual's control on access to and success in tertiary education. This conception of equity implies discarding a uniform policy treatment based on a principle of sameness (Unterhalter, 2009), opening up the possibility of devising a targeted policy to equalise the opportunities of people participating in HE.

Brennan and Naidoo (2008) state that HE equity analysis has been assimilated with participating in post-secondary studies, neglecting to study how HE studies may improve social equity even for those not participating in the HE level. Equity would be reduced to determining achievements and standards concerning enrollment rates, dropouts, and/or completion of studies. However, although participation in HE might contribute to equity by improving HE outcomes, results (success) or access (Salmi & Basset, 2012; Clancy & Goastelle, 2007), the HE literature analysing the neoliberal policy paradigm has tended to use HE access as a synonym of HE equity. Equity of access would refer to the opportunities for enrolment in tertiary education for different groups in society, making them different from opportunities in the labour market for different groups who have studied HE (equity of outcomes) and opportunities to successfully complete HE for different groups (equity of results). In a neoliberal context, equity of access would be thus mainly measurable through enrollment rates, making equivalent the considerable coverage in worldwide HE with the increase in student enrolment (UNESCO, 1998).

In this scenario, the possibilities of achieving the equity goal would be dependent on meeting the increased demands for HE access experienced in recent decades. Ntshoe (2003) links in a functional relationship the emergence of the *mass* demand for access with the globalisation process and the neoliberal project. While globalisation has required massified HE systems to meet the needs of expanding knowledge to deal with economic priorities, the neoliberal shift has provided the elements to diversify supply and enrolment. Global practices of privatisation (McCowan, 2004), reduction of state funding, and less state regulation in the economy have allowed greater participation on the part of the market to expand HE access (Ntshoe, 2003). The globalised neoliberal context is connected to equity since it would offer a massified answer to solve public education's characteristic elitism localised in the oldest urban areas (Ntshoe, 2003; Brennan et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, the particular way of fostering HE access in globalised neoliberalism has not produced the expected results, as underprivileged groups have lower possibilities of admission (Salmi & Basset, 2012; Clancy & Goastelle, 2007). Some scholars (Ntshoe, 2003; Singh, 2011) have seen a contradiction in the accelerated *massification* of post-secondary education through privatisation and marketisation because it has added financial barriers to access. Other authors (Salmi & Basset, 2012; Husen, 1976) have focused on the financial and

non-financial barrier—information access, motivation, cultural capital, academic preparation—to explain the increasing gap in terms of enrolment rates between wealthy students and disadvantaged groups. It should be noted that the educational literature revolves around these positions (Brennan et al., 2004), but it tends to analyse inequitable access more specifically in terms of policies devised to remedy these barriers (Mountford-Zimdars & Sabbagh, 2013).

McCowan (2007) adds that initiatives to expand access have mainly sought to increase places to participate in higher education. He terms this form of providing equity as the dimension of *availability.* Availability would be an HE principle to gauge how many places there are in the system. HE systems meet this principle if they provide the required number of places to students that meet the appropriate preparation criteria to participate in HE. Along with availability, McCowan (2016) discusses the *principle of accessibility*, which refers to the fair opportunities for members of society to take the opportunities that are made available to them. In a neoliberal context, the principle of accessibility has barely met the criteria because HE policy operates with different forms of exclusion that surpass individual preparation limits to earn a place in the HE model. Both material impediments and competitive educational achievement have become obstacles to access higher education in most systems. Along with accessibility issues, more extensive availability has not translated immediately into quality, as segregation of the model has become an emerging problem for the ideal of fairness.

As accessibility refers to the potential reduction of barriers to and allocation of fairer opportunities for HE admission, educational policy analysis has paid particular attention to this form of improving access. Clancy and Goastellec (2007) state that HE equity requires democratisation in access based on equality of rights. However, the discourse based on rewarding individual merit in the massified access period has been prevalent and framed equity as *equality of opportunities* in recent decades. Although HE access based on merit has been questioned by some authors (Morley and Lugg, 2009; Mountford-Zimdars & Sabbagh, 2013), the dominant discourse from the policy network states that HE equity relies on the structure of opportunities not affecting the prevalence of merit as a factor of HE entry (World Bank, 1998). In this regard, a diversification of policy strategies might benefit accessibility in the HE sector. A diverse battery of strategies would help target students' different needs to redress the structure of opportunities. The idea behind these strategies is that everybody with

sufficient merit for accessing post-secondary education has the same opportunity for entry regardless of socioeconomic background. For example, subsidies or loans could be a perfect remedy for students lacking money to attend HE studies, while a policy of private providers—due to their expansion of the offer—might incorporate those who chose an alternative or non-traditional study path.

Since access-oriented policy in the neoliberal paradigm has become the focus and shown controversial evaluations of its achievements in the HE equity literature (McCowan, 2007, 2016; Ntshoe, 2003; Brennan et al., 2004; Morley & Lugg, 2009), this thesis draws on McCowan´s (2016) contributions to interpreting the concept of HE equity in access in an attainable manner. Along with the principle of availability and accessibility above mentioned, McCowan builds up an analytical framework about HE equity in the access by adding the principle of *horizontality*. Horizontality starts from HE's a positional character because it recognises that education provides instrumental benefits understood as goods. These goods imply considering the related probabilities of access to them. Therefore, access opportunities for one person would reduce opportunities for access for another individual. The author called these positional benefits and linked them to scarce goods. Conceiving HE as a scarce good has significant outcomes regarding the kind of distribution of opportunities for access. For example, a strategy to expand access regardless of stratification risks could involve a contradictory situation in which HE, in general, provides benefits for the entire society, but without *positional benefits* for the most deprived groups that experience this expanded access as an increase in inequalities. McCowan calls for a theoretical reformulation of HE access that "simultaneously ensures sufficient places (*availability*), conditions to support all to access those places (*accessibility*) and consistently high quality and recognition" (p. 658) in the form of *horizontality*.

Intending to determine whether access-oriented HE policies are equitable, this research understands the dimensions of *availability, accessibility, and horizontality* as comparison criteria to interpret the content of equity as a policy goal within the neoliberal project. Since these three dimensions appear as distinctive aspects forming part of the concept of HE equity in access, they provide the opportunity to interpret and classify associations between neoliberalism and its reformulation of equity in different directions. For instance, a neoliberal

HE system could claim to have improved equity by achieving accessibility and availability, while another can claim the same accomplishment by only achieving one of these three principles. Therefore, this framework enables a nuanced interpretation of HE equity in access that may integrate a significant part of critiques of the conceptual distortion of equity conducted by the neoliberal paradigm with equity achievements expressed as rates of accomplishment. Indeed, the analysis chapters describe how availability and accessibility appear as attainable aims in the Chilean HE model due to the high enrolment rates. However, they cannot address stratification, which has led to a decrease in HE access opportunities for deprived students in an equity-oriented HE model. What might be evaluated as equity in access for some scholars could be inequitable for others, so that the interpretation of the relationship between the neoliberal paradigm and equity goal needs to integrate these nuances.

3.2.3. Free education as a second-order policy change

The historical development of a paradigm shift and the settling of goals such as equity in the HE debate have involved a second-order level operation—mentioned by Hall (1993) as the policy instruments—in the implementation of HE policy. Section 3.2.3 addresses the particular formula of policy instruments associated with a neoliberal paradigm that reframed equity as a policy goal. Although there have been various policy instruments envisioned to promote equity in a globalised neoliberal context, there is one that has emerged as a transnational mechanism in the recent development of educational policy: HE financing. Financing transformations of tertiary education have been coordinated with neoliberal demands for the development of an efficient global economy and the reduction of the state. Specifically, there has been a transition from an HE financing model based on in the welfare ideal to another one based on cost-sharing and/or tuition fees. For instance, Johnstone (2017a) asserts that cost-sharing might involve higher degrees of equity in access if the wealthiest students start paying part of HE studies' cost to allocate greater public funding to most deprived students. In this regard, cost-sharing also aligns with the neoliberal paradigm because it makes the state more efficient in distributing its resources.

Archibal (2018) states that the introduction of policy instruments such as tuition fees and cost-sharing have commonly been associated with private education provision. However, Johnstone (2017a) adds that fees paid to public HEIs have increased in recent decades

because of the economic, political-ideological, and sociodemographic constraints of national states around the world (Barr, 2004; Marcucci & Johnstone, 2007). Among the economic reasons, Johnstone (2017a) states that the limited funding of the old welfare state began competing with other compelling social needs. Heavy support from the welfare state has been replaced by cost-sharing via family or student participation through tuition fees. Moreover, these instruments would produce political benefits, since cost-sharing represents the alternative to free education associated with the welfare state and the ideological left-wing. Finally, the sociodemographic change demanding greater HE access has become incompatible with an elitist model in which prestigious HEIs received students from the wealthiest backgrounds. In terms of access, cost-sharing and implementation of tuition fees appear as enablers of more participation of disadvantaged groups of society through targeted state support with loans and scholarships.

In specific terms, a tuition fee is a charge applied to students attending HE in the form of fixed prices. Tuition fees are mandatory charges to allow enrolment and they represent a form of cost-sharing, as government and students/family contribute to pay for HE. In this regard, as HE produces not only public benefits—economic development and social indicators—but also private benefits for individuals, Archibald (2018) go to say that it would be recommendable to increase individual economic participation because it would respond to a criterion of justice. Johnstone (2017a) adds that tuition fees and cost-sharing are the best alternatives to boost the accelerated expansion of their HE models in the context of a meagre public budget. In this sense, expansion of enrolment was an accomplishment without having to resort to regressive policies such as free education. Barr (2003) even argues that public resources to fund free education featured an elitist nature in the past since enrolment was only open to well-off students. The author suggests that mass HE in a neoliberal scenario would require implementing a programme based on income-contingent loans understood as a future repayment dependent on the borrower's income. The author asserts that an income-contingent loan programme would be equivalent to free higher education at the point of use due to the protections granted to those who are unable to pay the loan in the future.

In this context, this type of educational literature (Johnstone, 2017; Archibal, 2018) has tended to dismiss FHE as part the articulation among policy instrument, goal and paradigm. FHE has been seen as a demand associated with the emergence of student social movements

complaining about financial barriers that hinder underrepresented social groups' enrollment expansion. Marcucci and Johnstone (2007) even state that the demand for FHE is based on the potential public results from increased participation in HE. Additionally, De Gayardon (2017, 2018a, 2018b) argues that free tuition seemed to be financing elements that do not generate greater access and success in HE worldwide. She concluded that the prevalence of free tuition in some countries suggests a link with historic rationales instead of better performance regarding access and success. Following Daniel et al. (2009), De Gayardon (2018a) evaluates free tuition systems using the iron triangle, which attempts to reconcile the issues of cost, equity, and quality faced by any national HE system. Under this approach, free education would constrain the cost of the triangle, deepening equity and quality issues faced by governments. The demanding access and scarce public funds would suppose that a lower proportion of students access the FHE benefit (affecting equity) or HEIs receive lower public funds per student (affecting quality). In this regard, the author called for a balance in which one side of the triangle does not considerably affect the other two.

Section 3.2 rehearses an explicative model that applies Hall's (1993) proposal of policy analysis. There is a description of an arrangement that integrates neoliberalism as a policy paradigm, equity as a policy goal, and cost-sharing as a set of policy instruments. The neoliberal paradigm shift has meant to replace the welfare state with a matrix of globalised policy actors that has connected economic aims with educational goals. The retreat of the state has seen increasing privatisation processes in the HE supply to respond to demands for participating in a knowledge society that requires citizens with advanced education levels. The depth of these neoliberal transformations found sources of legitimacy in the reinterpretation of the concept of equity.

Equity started being understood as a promise of HE access based on equality of opportunities. A particular neoliberal definition of equity distorted its content to make it compatible with the neoliberal aims. Despite several critiques to the limits of this conceptualisation, the neoliberal paradigm has introduced policy financing instruments that have managed to underpin the equity-oriented goal and the neoliberal project: cost-sharing and tuition fees. These instruments highlight the individual character of HE studies and the less important role of the state. Their efficient and autonomy traits emerged as the perfect replacement for the free access strategy boosted by the welfare state. In this regard, the educational policy

literature in the neoliberal scenario has reduced the possibilities of resuming free education as a policy instrument.

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Chapter 3 follows the theoretical curiosity initiated in Chapter 2 about how to develop an analytical framework to study *the relationship between continuity and discontinuity* dependent on the action of change. Since this research falls within the field of policy sociology of education, the first part of Chapter 3 addresses how the transition from policy analysis to policy sociology has integrated the concept of change into educational policy and how educational research has understood *the dis/continuity relationship*. Both interpretations showed constraints that led to conceiving a notion of change that neglects the possibility of conducting collective transformative actions and a polarised relationship between continuity and discontinuity. While policy sociology contributions rested on the individual level of social action that has even led to losing the ambition to explain society as a totality, educational research has not attempted to research continuity and discontinuity as coexistent concepts.

In this regard, the challenge consisted of finding a conceptual framework that would allow policy study oriented towards a totalising explanation of the policy process, but with sufficient flexibility to incorporate the dynamic, non-polarised dis/continuity relationship based on an idea of gradual change. This thesis proposes that Hall's framework (1993) of policy-orders—combined with the pragmatic sociology of Boltanski—can produce analytical results to address this challenge. Special attention is paid to how a paradigm can be built on policy goals and instruments to reconcile apparently contradictory elements. Although Chapter 2 advanced in a potential explanation based on the idea of *figures of compromise* between justifications coming from different *cités* (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006), Section 3.2 complemented the interpretation of contradictions by separating these elements within policy orders that can act as differentiated levels of policy practices. In this perspective, it would be possible to think about how a neoliberal policy paradigm can work articulately with a liberal value such as equity. The initial contradictions would be lessened if the paradigm successfully provides coherence to the different policy orders but leaves room for change if these policy levels may turn minimal adjustments into transformational changes (Crew and Crew, 2018).

Section 3.2 strived to show how Hall's contributions may offer an analytical perspective to understand how a neoliberal paradigm can use a liberal goal such as equity and apply related financing instruments to provide a HE system with legitimacy despite the profound transformations in the last decades. There seems to be a coherent articulation of the policy paradigm. Cost-sharing and tuition fees promise improving equity by less regressive HE access and broadening HE supply diversity for excluded students, following the neoliberal recommendations of more efficiency, privatisation and less bureaucratic state participation. Within this particular interpretation of the neoliberal policy development, the Chilean HE policy seems to bring a particular situation to the analysis. The Chilean political system has offered that an HE policy instrument—free education—could become a policy goal since the 2011 social movement of students started demanding changes to the HE model. This shift has implied politicising the debate about a financing measure that is aimed at improving the access of underprivileged students to HE by the mere reallocation of public resources. A comprehensive understanding of this state of policy development requires a historical and analytical review of the Chilean HE model's particularities.

4. THE CHILEAN STATE AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE HE MODEL

The previous chapters present a theoretical discussion about the difficulties and possibilities of conceiving public policy based on the notions of *continuity* and *discontinuity*. In this regard, a sociological framework is used to understand both ideas. Meanwhile, the debate about the potentialities and challenges of social policy is explored. The literature review about educational research and policy enables an understanding of the relationship between policy and the concept of the nation-state. Reviewing both debates makes it possible to develop a conceptual framework to study continuities and discontinuities in the field of higher education policy. Based on this conceptual journey, Chapter 4 aims to describe the adoption of the two discussions and the proposed analytical framework regarding the particular situation of Chile and its HE model. There is an overview of Chile and the paradoxes of its specific model of development (4.1), how the Chilean state evolved in terms of its social history and policy (4.2), and a description of the Chilean tertiary education model (4.3). Finally, Section 4.4 addresses the implications concerning the implementation of the free HE policy regarding the national context and its interaction with the HE model.

4.1. The Chilean context: a paradoxical development model

Chile is a country located in south-western South America. According to the last national census conducted in 2017 (INE, 2018), it has a total population of 17,574,003 with a predominance of females (51.1%) and a constant process of population aging (people aged 65+ increased from 6.6% of the total in 1992 to 11.4% in 2017). Given its historical background defined by the colonisation by the Spanish empire of diverse indigenous groups forming part of the current territory in the 16th century, Chile has been described as a *mestizo* country (Medina & Kaempffer, 1979). *Mestizo* is a term used to refer to the encounter between Spanish colonisers and indigenous inhabitants who formed Chilean society during the Spanish colony between 1536 and 1810. The UNDP (2017b) claims that the *mestizo* trait was useful to build a mixed cultural unity through the incorporation of Spanish elements such as the language, catholic religion, and the king as the central authority. Waldman (2004) states that this unitary imaginary has provided Chileans with a self-perception of ethnic and cultural homogeneity. Indeed, according to the report about the last national Census (INE 2018), barely 12.8% of the population self-reported itself as indigenous in 2017. Chile, along with other countries in the region, underwent a process of independence from Spain during the

early decades of the 19th century and established a republic. Since then, the country has experienced minor migration waves from European and other neighbour nations until the last decade when a new increasing South American and Caribbean migration has raised the number of immigrants residing in the country. INE and DEM (2020) estimate that 1,492,522 immigrants resided in Chile in 2019, representing approximately 8% of the total population.

Chile has shared a similar institutional path to the rest of the region, as its economic-political instability has involved periods of alternating democratic and authoritarian governments, including several coups d'état. The last coup—which took place in 1973—is of prime importance to understand the current situation of the country, as it led to a re-foundational economic-political project. Augusto Pinochet led this coup and ended the attempt to develop democratic socialism as devised by then-President Salvador Allende. The Chilean coup was part of a Latin American dictatorial process that began with the 1954 military coup in Paraguay and the 1964 coup in Brazil. The suppression of Chilean democracy led to the establishment of a civic-military dictatorship that ruled for 17 years. In 1988, the public decided to end the dictatorship via a national plebiscite and elected Patricio Aylwin to take office as democratic president in 1990. However, Pinochet enacted a much-questioned constitution in 1980, which has continued in force until the present. The 1980 constitution even regulated the process of the return to democracy from a position of dubious legitimacy.

Politically, a presidential system took the responsibility for conducting the democratic process, separating the executive power from the legislative and judicial powers. This political regime has been maintained for almost 30 years and has encountered certain difficulties linked to the authoritarian enclaves inherited from the dictatorship (Garreton, 2000). One of these issues is related to the excessive power of the president. The executive power has been compared to a monarchical system, while the parliamentary composition has been subjected to bipartisanism in order to achieve political agreements (Fernandez Darraz, 2015). The organisation of the political model has been associated with great stability, but has led to an elitist capture of politics because the two largest political coalitions have concentrated the power of government for 30 years. The situation has begun to change in recent years due to the introduction of political reform in 2017. This reform led to the transition from a bipartisan political model to one with greater representation for outside political forces. However, the UNDP (2017b) provides figures on political participation that show the side effects of Chile's

political development. Chile has shown lower rates of electoral participation (51%) than the average in the Latin American region (71%). There is a considerable gap compared with countries such as Bolivia (86%), Argentina (81%), and Costa Rica (64%), although it has surpassed other countries such as Mexico (48%) and Colombia (46%).

In economic terms, the remarkable transformation of the Chilean economy occurred in the early 1980s. The dictatorship introduced neoliberal reforms that formed the model of economic development. The neoliberal economy has predominated in the country since then, even after the return to democracy, achieving to reduce poverty and increase GDP per capita continuously over time. Statistics from the World Bank (2019) show that the poverty rate dropped from 52.8% in 1987 to 6.4% in 2017, while other countries in the region show higher levels than Chile, such as Argentina (7.10%), Costa Rica (10.7%), Brazil (20.7%), Colombia (27.6%), and Mexico (34.8%). On the other hand, Chilean GDP per capita increased from $1,709 in 1983 to $15,923 in 2017, higher than in Argentina ($11,653), Costa Rica ($12,027), Mexico ($9,698), and Brazil ($8,921). Uruguay is the only nation in Latin America with better economic indices than Chile (poverty ratio of 2.9% and GDP per capita at $17,278), and the World Bank has classified both as *high-income* countries. In addition, economic statistics from the UNDP (2019) indicate that Chile's annual economic growth averaged 5.5% in the last 25 years. However, as a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Chile has shown some issues compared with the other nations. The OECD (2019) points out that the country has the second-lowest level of median disposable household income ($9,500)—only higher than Mexico, at approximately 40% of the OECD average. Chile shows the second-worst figure for income inequality. Its Gini coefficient reached 0.465 in 2017, while the OECD average was 0.318. Although the nation has a better Gini coefficient than some other countries in the region, such as Brazil (0.533), Colombia (0.497), Costa Rica (0.483), and Paraguay (0.488), other nations like Mexico (0.459), Bolivia (0.440), Peru (0.443), Argentina (0.412), and Uruguay (0.395) have lower rates of inequality (World Bank, 2019), raising doubts about whether the economic development of the country has been distributed fairly.

The economic and political tensions have correlated with the social reality experienced by Chilean citizens. The UNDP (2017b) studied the consequences of those tensions in the social sphere. The report concluded that social inequality is a constant in society despite the

democratic political and economic modernisation that has taken place. Chileans experience this inequality as classism that affects social bonds. Classism takes the form of discrimination that is observed in uses of language, clothes, work, and/or urban segregation. Discrimination is a feeling of unequal treatment in society that goes beyond class, with significant race and gender components. Like the OECD, the UNDP establishes a relationship between this perception of inequality with the economic factors impacting social asymmetries. For example, the national health system has one of the highest levels of private sector participation among the OECD nations. Private expenditure reaches 47% of total health expenditure—the OECD average was only 27%—making distribution more dependent on the purchasing power of families. Education inequalities have been another social field challenging Chilean modernisation. Although public expenditure in education increased from 2.5% of national GDP in 1990 to 4.7% in 2015, UNDP claims that Chile's results on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed one of the highest levels of disparity between social groups. There was a difference of over 40% in scores for reading skills between the fifth income quintile and the first quintile in 2012. In Latin America, Chile was ranked below Costa Rica, Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina in terms of the gap between quintiles and was in 33rd place among the 34 countries in the OECD group in 2012. Also, with regard to the national test measuring school quality, 81.5% of the fourth quartile achieved high scores on the test, whereas only 2.1% did so in the first quartile.

The social sphere and the examples provided in the paragraph above represent only some cases in which Chile's social inequality can be observed. Indeed, these social issues have led to the emergence of important social movements demanding greater gender, health, education, pension, and housing opportunities in recent years. It is interesting to highlight the double character of the Chilean model of modernisation and how this context may help us understand the consequences for the HE model developed in the country. The HE system has seemed to imitate the process described at the macro-level of the Chilean economy. The HE model shows impressive figures at the macro-level for HE access, but inequalities tend to appear when the analysis focuses on the details of those figures. Particular attention should be paid to the neoliberal prevalence in the HE model because it represents the common characteristic of Chilean society in recent decades. Given that it is difficult to understand the Chilean development of the neoliberal model, the following section focuses on its

implementation involving the socio-historical transformations taking place at the level of state and social policy.

4.2. The Chilean state: a history of its social policy

This section aims to interpret the key social aspects of the Chilean state to grasp later the historical trajectory of the Chilean higher education model and the policies associated with state development. It should be noted that the description below is intended to detail the conditions under which different social groups have effective participation in policy-making processes. In particular, it is interesting to understand how different classes and social groups have established elite agreements that define the hegemony in the state and the orientation of policies depending on the different historical periods. This section is divided into three parts defined by disruptions in Chilean society, the political model, and the state. The transition from one definition of the state to another can be understood as external shocks that directly or indirectly affect the evolution of policy and the Chilean higher education model (which is described in Section 4.3). Therefore, Section 4.2.1 refers to historical social and economic transformations that enable understanding of the increasing participation of the global neoliberal project. Meanwhile, sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 focus on the most recent changes at the state level and how their action has affected policy and the Chilean HE model. This overview is significant to understand the evolution of the current HE model and its context of development.

4.2.1. From the *Estado de compromiso* to the authoritarian state

As Chapter 3 suggested, the ambition of developing a welfare state has seen variations in the countries of the Global South (Gough, 2013). The Latin American version of the welfare state acquired the name of the *Estado de Compromiso* (Moulian, 2006, Sanhueza, 2012). This notion of the *Estado de Compromiso* (Weffort, 1967) refers to the unstable *compromise* based on different, and sometimes contradictory social interests in which there is no dominant class. The term *compromise* should be understood with a double meaning, since it reflects the possibility of achieving agreement by making concessions, but by jeopardising national stability due to an arrangement with a broad variety of social groups (military, bureaucracy, middle classes, old oligarchy, and popular-urban actors) participating in the agreement. In the Chilean *compromiso* of the mid-20th century, these social actors tended to perform in a pro-corporate manner regarding the action of the state (Larrañaga, 2010).

Sanhueza (2012) stated that the *compromise* of the regional states represented the main difference with the European welfare state and its social policy. He argued that the welfare state emerged in Europe to mitigate, balance, and overcome—through social policy—the growing social conflict and contradictions caused by the relationship between capital and work. In contrast, Latin American *Estados de Compromiso* are a consequence of the unsuccessful capitalist economic modernisation of the region—this failure was deeper in Chile than in other countries such as Brazil and Argentina that achieved certain degrees of industrialisation. Latin American states have opted for economic development based on mining and agricultural activities since their independence from Spain, which formed a conservative oligarchical pact that clashed with the economic 1929 crisis (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Sanhueza, 2012). Without a capitalist class replacing the leadership of the old oligarchy, the *Estado de compromiso* became a reaction to the emergence of multiple social interests derived from the fall of the oligarchical agreement. There was no replacement of the oligarchy by a capitalist bourgeoisie as the dominant class as took place in Europe (Sanhueza, 2012). The old oligarchical predominance became a more diversified elitist power based on the traditional export model of development (Moulian, 1983). For instance, the lack of capitalist development meant that the Chilean working class was a secondary actor during the period of the *compromise.* Its political participation mainly involved alliances characterised by the convergence of different interests with other social groups (Sanhueza, 2012). In this context, those groups capable of obtaining legitimacy and pressuring the state apparatus obtained the benefits of social policy. Social security, educational, health, and housing policies, as in Europe, were the main concerns (Arellano, 1985), but without the possibility of strong industrialised development.

After decades of instability, the diversification of interests in the hegemonic bloc and the pressure from low-income classes for more state benefits and participation (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020) increased the weakness of the *compromise* and the *Estados de compromiso* collapsed when they lost their legitimacy based on the capacity to manage diverse and conflicting interests. The crisis of domination led the old traditional and elitist powers to try to restore their hegemony. They aimed to control the advance of popular classes and masses that increasingly demanded greater participation (Sanhueza, 2012). The Latin American answer to this new problem of domination began in Brazil—and Paraguay—through the creation of an

authoritarian state in 1964. Chilean democracy suffered the same fate when a traumatic coup d'état halted the development of President Salvador Allende's project of *democratic socialism* in 1973 (Moulian, 2006). The Chilean dictatorship carried out extreme and brutal repression of the popular classes that formed part of the popular *compromise* underpinning the socialist project of Allende. The military junta that replaced the alliance system disarticulated the social actors of the *compromiso* period and caused political disintegration by using extreme violence (Garreton, 2000). Popular resistance was almost null and the weak industrial groups were incapable of combating the hegemonic control of the state, which was controlled by the elitist power (Moulian, 1983) and the state became authoritarian. According to Sanhueza (2012), the new authoritarian state should not be confused with a fascist state. Despite the personal leadership assumed by the dictator, Augusto Pinochet, the political orientation of the regime sought to depoliticise a highly politicised society during the *compromise* agreement. In contrast, a fascist regime represents the attempt to politicise society by the state by integrating ideologically popular sectors under the idea of mass access. The dictatorship government did not establish a single party and ideology because repression and restoration were its aims. In economic terms, the authoritarian state fostered the internationalisation of exports, although without implementing the neoliberal development model yet, as the dictatorship focused first on destroying the *compromise* model.

In social terms, Sanhueza (2012) argues that a new elitist pact emerged. While the armed forces were in power, social inclusion only considered the elitist sector of power. The specific social problems and policy of the previous period were converted into technical issues in which the excluded popular and middle classes encountered state responses through bureaucratic procedures. There was a transition from the distributive role of the *Estado de compromiso* to the *productive* role of the state. The *productive* state became dependent on opening up to the international market and welcomed transnational actors that took part in the new hegemonic pact. Policy thus became a field for the articulation of new interests on the part of dominant groups, but excluding popular sectors. It should be noted that these interests of hegemonic groups were not homogenous. Many different, and even contradictory, projects competed for the favour of the military dictatorship. The first economic crisis faced by the dictatorship in 1982 made this political struggle evident. Among these hegemonic groups, the technocratic sector—known as the *Chicago Boys*—imposed

itself on oligarchical groups by taking leading state positions to steer economic policy. Ruiz Schneider (1992) points out that the *Chicago Boys* had a particular trait, representing a convergence between conservative and neoliberal principles. This technocratic group acted mainly in the economic field of the authoritarian state and struggled with older oligarchical agents that sought to restore the old elitist social order. Arellano (1985) summarised this policy stage as the period of state retirement. The technocratic group promoted the privatisation of social services to lead to a change in the economic model. These transformations, along with the creation of a new constitution in 1980, marked the end of the authoritarian state. The state turned from its *productive* role to being truly neoliberal (Sanhueza, 2012).

4.2.2 The *Estado Subsidiario* or the conservative-neoliberal principles of the state

In an authoritarian context, Chile experienced the neoliberal shift earlier than any other country in the world, even leading some authors to describe this process as a social experiment (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020). The absence of social resistance in its origin is the most significant tendency of the consolidation of the Chilean neoliberal state as a distinctive and alternative variation of what has been usually understood as *steering-at-a-distance* of state action (Kickert, 1995). The Chilean academic sector (Cristi, 1992; Sanhueza, 2012; Rodriguez Lopez, 2020) termed this variation the *Estado Subsidiario*[2]. The *Estado Subsidiario* emerged as a new state operating at all levels of society under subsidy-based policies, weakening the participation of civil society as the counterpart of the state. Instead, the *steering-at-a-distance* concept involves greater autonomy and responsibilities on the part of social agents. This steering definition entails scrutiny from a robust civil society controlling the correct usage of autonomy and the fulfilment of responsibilities (Kickert, 1995). The *Estado Subsidiario* thus represented a redefinition of the relationship between Chilean society and its state: the articulation of market liberalisation encompassing what Spicker (2014) called a residual model of policy.

Ruiz Schneider (1992) points out that the actions of the Chicago Boys within the state were a crucial element to understand the emergence of an apparent contradiction: the Chilean

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[2] The term *Subsidiario* comes from the strategy used by the Catholic Church to address the social issue at the end of the 19th century, the ideas of which were summarised in the *Quadragesimo Anno* Encyclical. For more information, see Pius XI (1931), Quadragesimo Anno Encyclical.

conservative-neoliberal model. Sanhueza (2012) supports this statement. He argues that the Chicago Boys had a characteristic academic background: conservative training acquired at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile) and postgraduate studies at the University of Chicago as disciples of Milton Friedman's monetarist theory. As scholars and students of the PUC in the 1960s, this future technocratic group was reactionary to popular reforms—especially those carried out in the HE system during the last governments of the *compromise* state. Despite their neoliberal orientation, they formed strong alliances with the trade unions and associations, which shaped their traditional cultural thought. They conceived of a society formed by multiple associations—and natural communities such as family, municipalities, and corporations—that should work through intermediate social bodies in a corporatist relationship with the state (Murray, 2010; Cristi, 1982). Murray added that this conservative perspective sought to position social power in the intermediate bodies rather than the state. This aversion to state intervention became the specific point of connection between the conservative approach and the neoliberal project learned in Chicago. The state would be an obstacle to free market action for the national model of development. If the state can establish a relationship with society, this relationship takes the form of economic subsidies targeted at those social areas in which the market cannot or does not want to operate. The state participated in society at a minimal level to allocate subsidies that replaced the old connection between society and the *Estado de compromiso*. Therefore, the subsidy-based principle became the link between traditional corporatism and neoliberal capitalism. Finally, the nationalist military actors were the third component of an arrangement that informed a conservative neoliberal socio-cultural matrix, which continued operating even when democracy returned to the country (Cristi, 1982).

The re-foundational character of the *Estado Subsidiario*, oriented towards the return of an elitist hegemonic bloc, led to important consequences for policy in the period. Sanhueza (2012) states that the illegitimate referendum approving a new constitution in 1980 consolidated the action of a state with full power and an economic policy oriented towards the international market. There was an opening of the economic frontiers to foster exports and enable better conditions for accumulation of capital (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020). Rodriguez Lopez adds that this economic strategy brought stability, since it was accompanied by a political strategy of depoliticisation that converted the marketplace into a mechanism of

social coordination, while the state took the responsibility to perfect the operation of the market through technocratic solutions. Sanhueza (2012) argues that the technocratic groups took control of social policy and began a wave of privatisations focused on social and public services. Health, housing, social security, and education were transferred to private domestic and international companies. This moment represented the creation of a regressive project dependent on the purchasing power of individuals, in which the state only supported the most deprived citizens (Sckolnick et al., 1991). In this thesis, although more details will be provided later, the HE policy developed during the period before the return to democracy became an explanatory factor to understand the current principles of the Chilean HE model.

Through a legitimate and negotiated plebiscite that took place in 1988, the electorate decided to end the civic-military dictatorship and return to democratic government in 1990. Despite the multiple expectations of transformations, the democratic project did not meet the promises of greater participation. Moulian (1995) coined the concept of a democracy of consensuses—or protected democracy—to refer to a polity in which democratic and authoritarian institutions inherited from the dictatorship coexisted (Zapata, 2004; Garretón, 2000) in order to achieve political consensus in governance (Camargo, 2007). Murray (2010) contends that the elite power looked at democracy with suspicion, insofar as it had lost its content and merely assumed its instrumental and practical sense in terms of the election of political authorities. It was a democracy that had risks in transferring decision-making powers to popular sectors. Policy decisions would require skilled hands: the technocracy-oriented elite were concentrated in two large alliances of political parties (Rambla & Veger, 2009). In addition, the continuation of the 1980 constitution reinforced this political arrangement due to the conservative distrust of politics and the state (Murray, 2010).

The protected democracy began with two governments based on a centre-left political alliance, coined as the *Concertación por la Democracia* (Coalition for Democracy). The two first governments were led by the most conservative party of the coalition, *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* (DC, Christian Democratic Party), which remained in power for a decade. Despite some efforts to regulate the market, the democratic polity and the policy orientation retained their neoliberal bent (Villalobos, 2017). The extraordinary economic growth experienced between 1990 and 1998 (Larrañaga, 2010)—based on continuous development towards international exchange, the privatisation of state companies and social services, and

the prevalence of the subsidy principle—became the primary supports for the economic model (Sanhueza, 2012). Moulian (1997) also claims that an incipient new middle class emerged during this decade, which joined the economic model through consumer bank loans. This new middle class became an essential actor to understand the later educational demands and consequent policies in HE policy, although its composition differed from the old middle classes defined by their occupational positions within the *compromise* state (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2016).

During the first decade of democracy, educational policy focused primarily on schools. With regard to HE, Fernandez Darraz (2015) claims that the constraints of Chilean bipartisanism encircled HE policy. Since policy change entailed the need to forge large political agreements, the *Concertación* governments rejected making structural changes in the model. The strategy was to opt for grants, loans, internal participation, budget laws, and the creation of non-government autonomous organisations as the primary policy instruments to modify the system inherited (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018). Salazar and Leihy (2013) have pointed that the development of theses instruments during the entire democratic period built up a policy agenda with little consistence in which coexist different aims. Perhaps the most relevant policy involved the creation of a public programme oriented towards improving the quality and equity of the model in 1994. After three years of operation, this programme gave rise to a similar one called the *Programa de Mejoramiento de la Calidad y Equidad de la Educación Superior* (MECESUP, Programme to Improve the Quality and Equity of Higher Education). MECESUP represented an injection of economic resources into the system as it allocated funding according to criteria regarding quality, equity, cultural development, and internationalisation. MECESUP distributed resources and student benefits mainly through competition (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018; Fernandez Darraz, 2015). Fernandez Darraz (2015) states that the policy sought moderate agreements, insofar as radical changes were promptly ruled out. Unlike other fields, HE policy was almost exclusively oriented towards specific challenges and targeted funding emerged as the main policy mechanism.

4.2.3. The conservative-neoliberal democracy: *growth with equity* and the political loop

During the second decade of the *Concertación* governments (2000-2010), the Socialist party led the political coalition. First Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) and then Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010) continued the process of legitimising the inherited institutional framework, but with

greater awareness of the side effects of the neoliberal modernisation. The idea of *growth with equity* (Camargo, 2007, Ramos, 1995) embodied this concern. Equity represented the orientation towards developing a social protection system and enhancing political participation (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020), while the economic modernisation appeared endless and less problematic (Camargo, 2007). In this context, the definition of policy entailed the consolidation of the political practice of broad consensuses and included the participation of the wealthiest entrepreneurs in the decision-making process. Sanhueza (2012) highlights that the social protection programme actually attempted to correct the side effects of the model, but targeting it at the most deprived and in the area of market influence. In addition, the reduced state services tended to compete with the new and extended private social services, acting in the social spaces where the market refused to participate. The author suggests that this was a more profound project which sought to blur the boundaries between public and private provision. In the second half of the decade, when Bachelet took office, the first significant social movements emerged to criticise the structural features of the model. However, the neoliberal policy framework displayed defensive responses without altering the principles of the economic regime and continued excluding popular sectors from decision-making spaces (Rodriguez Lopez, 2020).

Larrañaga (2010) claims that educational policy became a key factor in achieving social integration, equity, and economic growth between 2000 and 2010. In this context, HE policy acquired "an expansive orientation as the distributor of opportunities for the new middle class that emerged in the 1990s" (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018, p. 108). Sanhueza and Carvallo add that the HE policy conducted by the Lagos government sought to reinforce the loan and grant system to ensure access for applicants that met the minimum entry requirements. The primary reform was the introduction of the *Crédito con Aval del Estado* (CAE, state-guaranteed loan), which extended access through loans to students from the new private sector and Short-Cycle Tertiary Education (SC-TE) through the participation of banks (Salazar & Leihy, 2017). This formula meant that students in the entire system could request funds from banks to pay tuition fees, but with the guarantee of the state if the student failed to repay the money to the banks (Fernandez Darraz, 2015). Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018) highlight that the banks showed little enthusiasm about the policy, so the state had to set a high interest rate (6%) for the loans and a surcharge instrument to enable the banks to charge

the guarantee unilaterally and ask for an additional surcharge in addition to the principal of the loan. The CAE also became significant in fostering the accreditation policy, since it established that students receiving this loan must attend accredited HEIs.

Another relevant policy was the transition from the *Prueba de Aptitud Académica* (PAA, Academic Aptitude Test) to the *Prueba de Selección Universitaria* (PSU, University Selection Test) in 2003. This shift was a bottom-up principle guided by the organisation governing the HE admission process: the *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas* (CRUCH, council of Chilean university deans). Contreras et al. (2001) point out that the PAA became a test that was heavily associated with the socioeconomic status of the applicants, so changes were necessary to make improvements to the admissions policy. The PSU was the result of this effort. Supporters of implementing the PSU (Koljatic & Silva, 2010; Libertad y Desarrollo, 2005) argued that it would be more equitable because it would test knowledge instead of aptitude of HE applicants. The assumption behind this stance is that PSU would equalise opportunities for the most deprived students by rewarding the learning coming from a shared school curriculum. On the contrary, an aptitude-based test would give advantage to wealthier students, whose *flair* demonstrated in the test would be dependent on the family background.

Fernandez Darraz (2015) points out that the educational policy that was restricted to financing mechanisms for intervention ended when Bachelet took office in 2006. The emergence of the 2006 social movement of secondary students explains this shift. Secondary students questioned the educational legislation and represented the first attempt by an organised group to influence educational policy decisions going beyond the financing system. It started as a complaint about transportation and the poor condition of school infrastructure, but rapidly escalated into a critique of the sector and its operation. The secondary students received national support and managed to coerce Bachelet to create a political commission to replace the constitutional law governing the Chilean educational system. The 2006 social movement was a significant milestone, since it saw the return of the influence of social actors in the policy-making process, becoming the primary precursor of the 2011 HE social movement during the right-wing government led by Sebastián Piñera.

President Piñera took office in 2010 after 20 years of *Concertación* governments. Two different theories—which have part of the political debate until the present—attempted to

explain the return of the right-wing to power. The first theory stated that neoliberal development caused a social malaise (Mayol, 2012) concentrated on people excluded from its modernisation. The mailase entailed a distrust in the institutions and a political system that did not offer concrete responses to citizenry needs. In this regard, the increasing social inequality and indebtedness of most deprived people led to a political punishment of the centre-left coalition that had embodied the modernisation project during the three decades. Disenchanted centre-left electorate opted for a more critical coalition that was placed to the left of the old *Concertación* or decided not to vote this time, which made easier the electoral victory of the right-wing again.

On the other hand, the second theory argues that the neoliberal model achieved a successful level in which people integrated into capitalist development in a later phase—seeking continuity of the project of modernisation (Peña, 2017)—chose a right-wing authority because they demanded more capitalist integration to society. It would be a demand for returning to the right economic-political direction that was lost when Bachelet re-took office in 2014. This position emphasised that Bachelet would have replaced a political strategy prioritising the national economic growth for another introducing regulative reforms to a successful neoliberal development model. The introduction of greater regulation would have forgotten that the neoliberal project produced specific subjectivities which understand social integration under neoliberal codes and see the right-wing as the representatives of this political demand.

Rodriguez Lopez (2020) points out that, as expected, Piñera maintained the orientation of the model, but neglecting the equity value associated with economic growth. Piñera replaced equity with values of competitiveness, freedom of enterprise, and security. With regard to HE policy, the right-wing government defined the HE system based on the ideas of access and excellence. However, everything changed with the emergence of the most important social movement of HE students in 2011. As described in the Introduction and discussed in greater depth in the analysis, the student social movement became a turning point in HE policy. In 2011, students began criticising the stratified HE system that did not allow opportunities for all. Some authors (Ruiz Encina, 2013; Bellei & Cabalin, 2013) have claimed that there was a generational continuity with the 2006 social movement, since it was the same young people, embodying the social malaise, who were demanding changes five years later. It was a kind of

consolidation of social agents influencing the policy-making process (Villalobos, 2017). The social movement represented a halt to the advance of the neoliberal project, marking the defeat of the right-wing alliance in 2013 to a large extent.

Bachelet retook office in 2014 and promised reforms and policies in the educational sector that sought to change the structure of the conservative-neoliberal model. She succeeded in enacting policies such as a tax reform to fund educational changes, an inclusion law for school education, the implementation of free HE, and a new law for state universities. Furthermore, she created two new state universities and 15 public vocational institutions to promote state participation in the sector. This government programme became a complex policy matrix in which FHE worked as the core of the political project, promising to reduce social inequality through a change in the educational model over the long term (Bachelet, 2013). However, many questions arose regarding the real content of these changes, since the public rejected the continuation of these reforms by re-electing Piñera in 2017. The new defeat of the centre-left relaunched the two previous theories about current Chilean development: while the theory of malaise demanded the *discontinuity* of the development model, the modernisation theory advocated *continuity* through the correction of the economic failures of the regime. The dispute still continues in a context in which there is debate about the most significant HE reform since 1981: the implementation of free higher education that even led to modifications to an historic HE model built on financing reforms.

4.3. The Chilean higher education system

The Chilean HE system has had mixed provision since its beginnings. Traditional state and private institutions have coexisted since the first decades of consolidation of the republic. Indeed, there is a blurred distinction of *traditional* HEIs. They have historically been treated as public institutions because their contribution to national development and the common good would not depend on the nature of their ownership (Bernasconi, 2007). Bernasconi adds that the Chilean HE model shared historical similarities with the rest of the systems in Latin America in terms of the university sector. He states that the origin of the national university model, based on a mixture of what HE literature has termed the continental model (originating in post-revolutionary France) and a Latin American version, integrated democratic governance, national orientation (embodied in the function of outreach), greater autonomy and the establishment of a comprehensive or research intensive university—with

the task of teaching, research, and outreach. The Chilean HE model also followed the Latin American pattern of admission—with the exception of Argentina—based on restrictive access defined by high levels of selection rewarding academic merit. Similar to the other Latin American countries, the Chilean case has had a varying financing relationships between the state and the HE model over time. Free education, for example, has been usual when democratic governments have been in power, while dictatorships have tended to introduce fees during their periods of governance. Free education in the country was not restored after the last dictatorship, since the military junta carried out a HE reform that extended the self-funding of HEIs by applying tuition fees. It should be noted here that changes in the polity are strongly related to the HE model. In this regard, the evolution of the Chilean HE system has historically been affected by the transformations carried out at the state level. However, this state influence has not been experienced passively, as responses and proposals have come from the HE system regarding the economic development model (Brunner, 2015). Brunner divides this evolution into six periods which seems to be a useful analytical way to describe the relationship between the HE system and society, as well as the differing perspectives of this description.

4.3.1 The traditional HE system

Some scholars (Brunner, 2008; Zapata & Tejeda, 2017) argue that the first half of the 20th century saw the consolidation of what has been called the traditional organisational model. The autonomy to assess and graduate professionals attained in 1956 by the eight universities forming the system marked the starting point. Zapata and Tejeda add that the traditional HE system was the consolidation of a long process that began with the creation of the first university in the period of the Spanish colonisation. The *Real Universidad de San Felipe* was able to grant academic certificates in 1747. The new Republic of Chile established at the beginning of the 19th century converted the colonial university into the first Chilean university—*Universidad de Chile*—in 1842. At the end of that century, the growing secularisation of the state led to the creation of the *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile* (PUC), beginning a cycle of formation of new HEIs known as the *traditional* universities (Bernasconi, 2007). This group represented the beginning of the historical mixed provision model and it contained two state universities and six private ones (representing the Catholic Church, Freemasonry, and corporate interests). Since then, this group has been recognised as

the *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas* (CRUCH, Council of Deans of Chilean Universities), which have highly selective admissions. Their share of the enrolment rate of the population increased significantly from 0.31% in 1925 to 2.95% in 1960[3] (Brunner, 2015, p. 25), but still displayed an elitist tendency. According to Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018), the HE system was part of a more complex arrangement in which the university represented an educational possibility only for privileged groups, while popular sectors attended schools and the under-developed vocational area. Zapata and Tejeda (2017) also claim that universities established a privileged relationship with the state, which respected their autonomy and developed a policy of providing them with direct funding without accountability. Bernasconi (2007) adds that the low participation of the state helped to develop an autonomy orientated to professionalisation and the creation of an academic oligarchy. Although universities had a vertical organisation in which the deanship was responsible for the HEIs, this academic oligarchy was placed in intermediate bodies of universities, meaning that the power of the faculties and university authorities prevailed over the power of deanships. The marketplace had a reduced participation in the HE system. Competition for allocating the supply and demand of places in HEIs was the only characteristic that could be considered as an antecedent to the heavy process of marketisation carried out in the HE model in the last few decades of the century.

4.3.2. The modern HE system (1967-1973)

The HE reform carried out in 1967 resulted in the modern HE system (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). Although the model retained its elitist nature, the modern HE system correlated with the changes seen in the *compromise* period (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018), since there was growth in participation and the system internalised the political-ideological conflicts (Brunner, 2008) undergone by the *compromiso* society. Brunner adds that the mixed model of provision continued unchanged, but there was a significant process of internal differentiation linked to the increase in enrolment. More faculties, programmes, institutes, and associated external institutions were created to satisfy the higher demand for places. The enrolment rate rose from 2.5% in 1960 to the mass access threshold (15.3%) in 1973 (UNESCO, 2019). Politicisation led to greater enrolment because HEIs understood that larger numbers of enrolled students

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[3] Until the decade of 1960s it was not possible to find official data in terms of NER or GER. Due to this lack of data, Chilean scholars have estimated these ratios from state data of the period under the idea of participation in the system.

would give them greater social weight and access to more state funding—calculated based on student numbers. Therefore, the accelerated increase in enrolment led to steady growth in public spending on HE (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). Brunner (2008) describes this scenario as regressive because there was higher allocation of public funding to more affluent students in a context of a HE access mostly restricted to the elite groups still. In addition to the regression, the middle classes experienced greater opportunities for HE access, enabling the diversification of the composition of enrolment, where HE access was seen rewarding the merit of students. Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018) argued that this premature idea of meritocracy only reflected the dual nature of the Chilean HE model since the elites attended degree courses for top leadership roles, while middle-class groups accessed professional training for public and bureaucratic positions.

In terms of governance, there was a promotion of the internal democratic process of participation in state-run HEIs. Following the principles of the reform movement of 1918 started in Córdoba (Bernasconi, 2007), there was an organisational consolidation in which power was distributed among scholars, non-academic staff, and students (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018; Brunner, 2008). This new governance style challenged the old academic oligarchy and gave rise to the idea of professional academics at universities (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). Brunner (2008) claims that this shift led to greater research activities, complementing the almost exclusive teaching role performed in the traditional period. Due to the enormous politicisation of the institutions, the external political influence of social organisations on HEIs increased and universities became places of debate about the public interest (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). Brunner (2015) states that the university was a committed institution with a professional and militant orientation. In this respect, autonomy continued being the main tendency of HEIs, but ideology and politics became a constitutive part of their project and mission, while the state continued its weak intervention and its role as a provider of funds (Bernasconi, 2007). The markets were still outside the HE system and its competition-based selection mechanisms weakened because of the increasing number of places offered under the modern HE model. This period saw several transformations that were oriented towards beginning a transition from traditional elitism to a different model focused on greater access and familiarised with social change as an ideological project (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018; Zapata & Tejeda, 2017; Brunner, 2008).

4.3.3 The supervised HE system (1973-1980)

The supervised system began with the external intervention of the HE model under the new authoritarian state in 1973 (Brunner, 2015). This period also represented the end of the modernisation project initiated with the 1967 reform. The repression of the dictatorship led to the suspension of HEIs' autonomy (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). There were two interpretations of the loss of the HEIs' autonomy. On the one hand, Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018) claim that the universities were a particular case in the dictatorship period, since the traditional sector became a space of containment in terms of policy development. CRUCH student organisations quickly rearticulated as policy actors, developing a kind of reactive corporatist response to the repressive policy—prevailing even after the dictatorship—instead of a source of propositional policies for the system. On the other hand, Brunner (2008) argues that the disarticulation of academic and student organisations meant that the military junta assumed governance of the system through the appointment of deans with full power of intervention. The dictatorship labelled universities as politicised Marxist institutions not focused on their social role. The intervention sought to recover their *natural* educational role in order to boost research and HEIs' performance, not considering social demands. In addition, the extinction of internal participation replaced the academic prevalence for vertical bureaucratic means of operation.

While this important transformation took place in governance, Brunner (2015) adds that there were continuities in certain aspects of the system. Firstly, the provision model retained its *traditional* diversity. No new HEIs or programmes were created during the period. Secondly, the market maintained its role as an outsider. Competition only appeared in the supply-demand allocation of places in the HE model. The internal struggle within the elite—described in the section on the authoritarian state—to control the decision-making process affected the position of the market in the system. Indeed, when the Chicago Boys swayed the conflict in their favour, the market became a protagonist in the subsequent period. However, the supervised system mostly showed discontinuities oriented towards halting, and even reverting, the modernisation project (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018). In this regard, there was a reversal of the increasing enrolment seen before the coup. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) dropped to 12.4% in 1980 (UNESCO, 2019). This reduction in enrolment mirrored the attempt to restore the elitist HE model. Closely linked to this change, Brunner (2008) points out that

public funding provided for education halved, as state funding declined from 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1973 to 1% in 1980. The supervised period ended with the enactment of the controversial 1980 constitution, the appearance of technocratic bodies to control social ministries, and the expression of these transformations within the entire HE system through the 1981 reform.

4.3.4 The privatised HE system (1981-1990)

Zapata and Tejeda (2017) argue that the 1981 educational reform brought the most significant changes seen in the HE system in the last four decades. This transformation pursued the imposition of the neoliberal project based on the 1980 constitution. Brunner (2015) states that the reform was a discontinuity in terms of the project to restore traditional HE provision, entailing the creation of a new political economy in the HE model under the control of the dictatorship. The main tendency was the privatisation of provision to conduct a vertical reconfiguration of the HE system (Salazar, 2017; Brunner, 2015; Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). Intending to open up the HE model to private investors, the civic-military dictatorship divided HEIs into three organisations: Universities, Institutos Profesionales (IPs, professional institutes), and Centros de Formación Técnica (CFTs, technical-educational institutions). Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018) claim that the establishment of CFTs and Ips in the HE system showed a renewed effort to reproduce the historical divided tendency in the Chilean HE system. Short-cycle tertiary education (SC-TE)—involving Ips and CFTs—became the new educational supply for the popular sectors, while the elite continued attending the most prestigious HEIs. Ips differ from CFTs because they are able to provide short-term professional—but non-academic qualifications unlike universities—and technical certificates, while CFTs can only grant technical certificates (Law Nº 21.091, 2018). The admission requirements for SC-TE were minimal, and the educational provision of Ips and CFTs was exclusively private, allowing profit-making. The university sector banned profit-making, displaying its different status by granting the most prestigious academic degrees and qualifications (for more information, see Table 4.1). Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018) contend that the difference of status between HEIs demonstrated the targeted neoliberal influence—in its purest form—in the SC-TE sector to portray the university sector as a space untouched by neoliberal policy. Nevertheless, Salazar (2017) states that universities suffered their own process of internal differentiation in the period. There was a separation of the two state-run

universities into their regional faculties to create new state-run universities that resulted in 16 organisations. Similarly, some traditional private universities gave rise to another three universities in the regions, forming the so-called *G9 group*. By 1981, CRUCH included 25 HEIs. Finally, a high number of New Private Universities (NPUs) were created with different orientations and missions, leading to an explosive transformation of a system that included 302 HEIs (Universities, IPs, and CFTs) by 1990 (Brunner, 2015; Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018).

Table 4.1: Academic degrees and qualifications according to provision of HEIs

Academic Degrees	HEIs
Degree (4-year bachelor)	University
Master's Degree	University
Doctorate	University
Qualification (titles)	**HEIs**
Technical titles (2-year programme)	CFT - IP
Short professional titles (4-year programme)	IP - University
Long professional titles (5-7-year programme)	University

Source: Prepared by the author based on www.mineduc.cl data

The diversification of provision had an immediate effect on HE access, leading to the reversal of the downward trend in enrolment seen in the previous period. In 1984, the GER in the system surpassed the mass threshold again (15.3%) and reached 19% in 1989 (UNESCO, 2019). On the other hand, traditional HEIs saw their privilege reduced regarding the *Aporte Fiscal Directo* (AFD, direct fiscal contribution) and public funding halved compared with 1981 (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). The remaining 50% of public funding was allocated through the *Aporte Fiscal Indirecto* (AFI, indirect fiscal contribution), which represented the introduction of competition into the system: HEIs started receiving public money according to the number of students enrolled with high scores on the national admission test. Bellei et al. (2014) highlight that this policy shift was intended to introduce the subsidy-based principle based on demand and competition in the form of vouchers, obliging institutional self-funding by starting to charge tuition fees. Venegas (2016) stresses that the self-funding marked the end of free higher education, the beginning of the managerial steering of HEIs, and market interference in the system. Another significant financing change was the application of a state loan for low-income students attending CRUCH HEIs (Bellei et al., 2014).

In terms of governance, the dictatorship continued the supervised system until 1990. Nevertheless, the 1981 reform laid the groundwork for market participation in the system

even in a democratic context (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). The increasing predominance of competition for students challenged the governance steered by the state and HEIs after 1990 (Brunner, 2015). However, this is a process that is still underway and the control of scholars and students continued, while autonomy seemed an outdated notion. Brunner states that the return of democracy in 1990 and the consolidation of mass HE access represented the beginning of a new period. However, neoliberalism has retained its predominance in a manner similar to what occurred with the transition from the *Estado Subsidiario* to the democratic state.

4.3.5 The mass HE system (1990-2007)

Following the classification provided by Trow (1974), Brunner (2015) terms the next two periods the mass and universal HE systems. In this regard, it should be noted that the words chosen reflect the shift in attention towards issues of increasing HE access after the return of democracy in 1990. During the mass system period, HE experienced a strengthening of the provision model established in 1981 due to the significant expansion in HE enrolment— although the number of HEIs offering places began slowly decreasing over time. This moment was the beginning of continuous growth in enrolment that surpassed the universal access threshold in 2007. Chile's GER increased from 21.2% in 1990 to 53.9% in 2007 (UNESCO, 2019). The main driver of the growth in HE access was the market through privatisation and competition. Nevertheless, various authors (Brunner, 2015; Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018) agree that the increase in access was not homogenous. There was stratified access in which the Maximally Maintained Inequality (MMI) and Effectively Maintained Inequality (EMI) hypotheses operated together. MMI (Rafferty & Hout, 1993) describes the process of accessing educational benefits in a sequential order in which the wealthiest groups gain first access to privileges, saturate their participation at the educational level, and later leave room for the hierarchical integration of other social groups. As the Chilean case featured simultaneous access rather than achieving sequential saturation at point of access, the EMI hypothesis (Lucas, 2001) became an explanatory supplement to understand how the highest-class groups have historically had the opportunity to access the highest educational level first and, when it became universal, the best-quality education. The EMI provides an alternative perspective to the process of access saturation, since it interprets the stratified access to privileges as a continuous process of differentiation. That is, when HE access became

universal, elite groups needed to maintain their privileges by accessing new goods of worth. In this case, elite Chilean groups had the power to choose the best-quality HEIs, while the first generation of the other social groups had only just managed to access HE. MMI and EMI access informed a segregated mass model that received high-income students in the most prestigious HEIs, while non-selective HEIs admitted the most deprived students (Brunner, 2015; Bellei et al., 2014; Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018; Venegas, 2016).

Brunner (2015) points out that changes involved other aspects of the HE system, with governance being one of them. CRUCH HEIs regained their autonomy with the return to democracy, while the state restricted its action to a regulatory role and private HEIs steered the model through the operation of the market (Brunner, 2015; Zapata & Tejeda, 2018). Following Clark's triangle, Brunner (2015) highlights that governance reflected a new agreement between the state, HEIs, and the market in which the former had a dominant presence. Brunner states that HE policy sought to increase the regulation of the market during this and the following period through the development of quality assurance and accreditation projects at the end of the 2000s. Sanhueza and Carvallo (2018) argue that the culmination of this process would be the establishment of accountability to define quality. In addition, Brunner (2015) and Fernandez Darraz (2015) agree that funding became another form of coordinating and intervening in the system. Governments increased the public funds for students—both in CRUCH and new private sectors—providing loans and grants that were intended to guide the behaviour of the market in its search for greater resources. Despite the growth of public funding at the HE level, private spending predominantly financed the mass system. The cost-sharing principle and the logics of individual benefit prevailed (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). The OECD (2009) stressed that Chile showed the opposite trend to the other OECD nations, as its private spending was triple public spending in 1996, and was 4.7 times higher in 2007. The AFD provided to the traditional sector also declined during this period, while subsidies for demand—vouchers embodied in loans and grants—doubled their proportion of total public HE expenditure. In addition, a diverse battery of mechanisms of competition-based criteria were used to distribute the remaining public funds (Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018). The mixed nature of HE provision, the diverse quality of the supply, the manner of financing the educational projects, and the internal organisation gave rise to a rich variety of HEIs defined by the particular combination of those elements (Brunner, 2015).

4.3.6 The universal HE system (2007-2014)

Brunner (2015) suggested a new HE system by underlining the transition from a system with mass access to one with universal access (Trow 1974) when the HE model surpassed the GER threshold of 50% (UIS, 2019). Specifically, it represents the extension of the mass HE system with similar challenges and issues, but with higher access rates. According to UIS, the Chilean universal HE system featured a GER of 88.46% of the eligible population in 2017. The high rates of HE access also contains deprived students since Chile has displayed the highest upper secondary completion rates in Latin America for the bottom income quintiles. UIS (2020) estimated an upper secondary completion rate of 77.4% for the poorest quintile and 85.8% for the country as a whole in 2017. The HE enrolment involves the universities (56.5% of enrolment) and SC-TE sector, comprised by IPs and CFTs (43.5%) at undergraduate level (SIES, 2017). The distribution of enrolment has historically been divided among CRUCH universities (27.1%), new private non-CRUCH universities (29.5%) and the SC-TE segment (43.5%). They represent the big three groups in the system. The quality of these groups has been compared through the accreditation criteria. The SIES report (2017) claims that 86.2% of the SC-TE enrolment, 87.8% of students at new private universities (NPUs), and 99.8% of those at CRUCH universities attended accredited institutions.

Based on these data, Brunner (2015) argues that the main challenge for the universal system will be to manage the high diversity in terms of enrolment rate and its composition regarding household incomes and quality. All of these elements, even including the selective or more prestigious levels of HEIs, would be relevant to take practical decisions regarding funding criteria and classification for targeting policies. In addition, the evolution enrolment has demonstrated continuity with the previous period, as students increased their participation in all kinds of institutions (SIES, 2017). Nevertheless, there was an academic consensus (Brunner, 2015; Bellei & Cabalin, 2013; Bellei et al., 2014; Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018) asserting that structural problems—summarised in the continuous operation of MMI and EMI—define the type of HE access achieved by the country. In terms of governance, the universal HE system is very similar to the mass system, since the triad of state, institutions, and market continued operating with the preponderant role of the latter, although the state

Table 4.2: Continuities and discontinuities in the evolution of the Chilean HE model

	Traditional system (1950s- 1967)	Modern system (1967-1973)	Supervised system (1973-1980)	Privatised system (1981-1990)	Mass system (1990-2007)	Universal system (2007-)
Provision	Mixed regime defined by two state-run Universities and six private institutions grouped in CRUCH	A mixed regime of 8 HEIs grouped in CRUCH reinforced the autonomy of the system. There was a horizontal differentiation caused by creating more programs and academic departments	Horizontal differentiation stopped and the system kept its organisational structure and supply diversity. The end of the academic autonomy	Vertical diversification of the system: IP, CFT & university. Plus, new private universities started working & traditional HEIs were divided (CRUCH grouped 25 HEIs – 16 state-run HEIs and G9)	Consolidation of the organisational structure of provision, although HEI decreased its number over time.	Same provision frame with larger rates of students in SCTE & accredited HEIs. Higher diversity also challenged ways of classifying HEIs, entailing different allocation of resources & prestige within the HE market
Access	A high selection that generated an elitist HE regime	High enrolment growth (mass HE threshold) marked by institutional policies of increasing social weight and demanding more funding. Mesocratic and meritocratic model.	Reversion of the constant enrolment growth. It is the return of the elitist system	New enrolment growth anchored on the diversification of providers (especially CFTs) to get a mass system. The high selection remains within traditional HEI	Continuous strong growth of the enrolment, progressing towards universal access (52% in 2007). The HE access got the form of MMI & EMI reflecting stratified access.	Universal access caused by privatisation (71%) continued under MMI & EMI rules. Issues as profitability & retention became new problems.

Continuity with the previous period   Discontinuity with the previous period   Reactionary discontinuity with the previous period

	Traditional system (1950s- 1967)	Modern system (1967-1973)	Supervised system (1973-1980)	Privatised system (1981-1990)	Mass system (1990-2007)	Universal system (2007-)
Governance	More prestigious HEIs are dominant, but all of them are autonomous concerning the state. Internally, the deans are weak, but faculties led the HE politics (academic oligarchy)	Community governance characterised by sharing power between academic, non-academic staff and students. End of academic oligarchy. The start of internal politicisation of dominant faculties and the consolidation of autonomy	Under military control. Repression on academic community and students who lost their power. The military government appointed deans in a vertical formula where bureaucracy prevailed	It continued the military control and watching (appointed deans) over the system, although new legislation introduced in the period will be essential to understand the governance of the system after the dictatorship	Private HEIs drove the HE system. They acted within a market context and a limited state ruling the system. Accountability became the governance style and institutional autonomy returned. State-run HEIs came back to elect deans and internal culture was diversified.	There were no substantial changes in governance with greater participation of the market and calls for more democratic ways of organising HEIs within the state sector. State action kept its steering, overseeing and funding role.
State funding	Dependence on direct-subsidy-based state funding without accountability mechanisms	Higher public expenditure in HE system	State funding became a mechanism of control over the system. Funding was drastically reduced.	New state funding combines direct support to the CRUCH sector and indirect competitive support to the entire system. Also, loans were introduced	Similar state funding provision. Loans, grants and subsidy-based funds continued being the main mechanisms with high private funding and sharing-cost	There was an extension of grants and loans to new private HEIs through CAE. State funds were growly transferred to new private HEIs by accreditation criteria also.

| | Continuity with the previous period | | Discontinuity with the previous period | | Reactionary discontinuity with the previous period | |

	Traditional system (1950s- 1967)	Modern system (1967-1973)	Supervised system (1973-1980)	Privatised system (1981-1990)	Mass system (1990-2007)	Universal system (2007-)
State / Public policy	In harmony with the autonomy principle defended by HEI	Weak participation of the state in the definition of policy.	Authoritarian controller state steering reactionary-based policy	The authoritarian state keeps the coordination of the system through funding policy, although policy orientation opened up to market dynamics	Democratic state-oriented HE policy based on privatised mass access through funding instruments	Calls for policies more regulative of the system to control profit, accountability, quality (accreditation) & information. State policy kept its economic form
Market	Weak participation expressed in the allocation of HE places	Decreased its participation as competence by HE place is less due to broader supply.	The market is still out of the system and the provision/demand model is firmly ruled and constrained	Introduction of logics of the market in the possibility of undertaking new private HEI, the deepening of demand/offer model to allocate places and the competition for funds	There was the strengthening of the market as an actor of the system coordination and HEIs and state. Logics of the market prevailed despite state funding regulations.	Market strategies kept its prevalence, although contends around its operation started being linked to more significant social issues, especially to the national model of development
Relation with social context	Active participation of civil groups in the governance, but with public and non-profit orientation	Ideological penetration involved an active relationship with society characterised by the idea of militant university	An isolated university that should focus on own its mission of teaching and researching	Maintenance of the isolated university with weak links to other social actors or groups	The institutional nature of HEIs became relevant to understand links with stakeholders.	Growth of external actors interested in the HE system. It also enhanced the political-ideological struggles in terms of defining the HE system

Continuity with the previous period	Discontinuity with the previous period	Reactionary discontinuity with the previous period	Merge of previous discontinuities

has increased its power in recent years (Brunner, 2015). The public spending funding model explains the prevalence of the market, as the state maintained the subsidy-based logic and the competition for public funds according to performance criteria (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017; Sanhueza & Carvallo, 2018). Although it may seem contradictory, the public funding mechanism has been used to intervene in the system. The Chilean state increased the expansion of HE through public funding and the injection of scholarships and loans associated with certain allocation criteria, particularly institutional accreditation (Fernandez Darraz, 2015). This situation has meant that students obtain better information and can pressure the HEIs, which have pushed themselves to meet the accreditation requirements (Brunner, 2015).

Section 4.3 is an attempt to summarise the evolution of the Chilean HE system. In doing this, historical continuities and discontinuities appeared in a conventional manner of understanding both concepts. Table 4.2 shows the HE discussion about its configuration until the present under the umbrella of continuity as opposed to change and discontinuity assimilated with change. In this sense, continuities, discontinuities, restorations, and policy mergers were considered because of the complex evolution of the model. The proposed historical course is useful to observe the relationships between the state and the HE system in such a way that it enables the comprehension of the HE policies developed recently. It should be noted that various HE policies and policy proposals have been carried out in the universal system in recent years, with the rise of the 2011 social movement of tertiary students shaking up the HE debate about policy. However, these policy proposals require a specific section to understand the context of their emergence, success, and/or failure.

4.4. The implementation and return of the free HE policy

The implementation of free HE policy formed part of a more significant HE reform enacted in 2017. However, the second Bachelet government began applying it through a financing law in the 2016 Budget Law. Sanhueza and Orellana (2018) argue that the strategy of implementing FHE before the general reform was intended to simplify the debate and place the financing issue at its core. By doing this, the HE debate avoided discussion of the public nature of the model and facilitated that the government funding for the free places also went to private universities. FHE in the form of a financing law began in March 2016, involving only universities initially. The FHE funding system covered all fees of university students from the first five income deciles—advancing to the first six deciles the following year—covering those

universities that subscribed voluntarily to the reform (Ministerio de Hacienda, 2015). An economic calculation of a regulated tuition fee served to calculate the cost of fees covered by the Chilean government. These regulated tuition fees differed from the real fees required by every university. Therefore, some NPUs did not subscribe to the FHE reform. These non-subscribed universities usually received students from the wealthiest deciles of the population, so their subscription would have involved losing income from fees (CEFECH, 2016).

Figure 4.1: HEIs participating in free education policy according to provision

* CRUCH Universities
** New non-accredited HEI
*** Accredited private HEI
**** New CRUCH private HEI
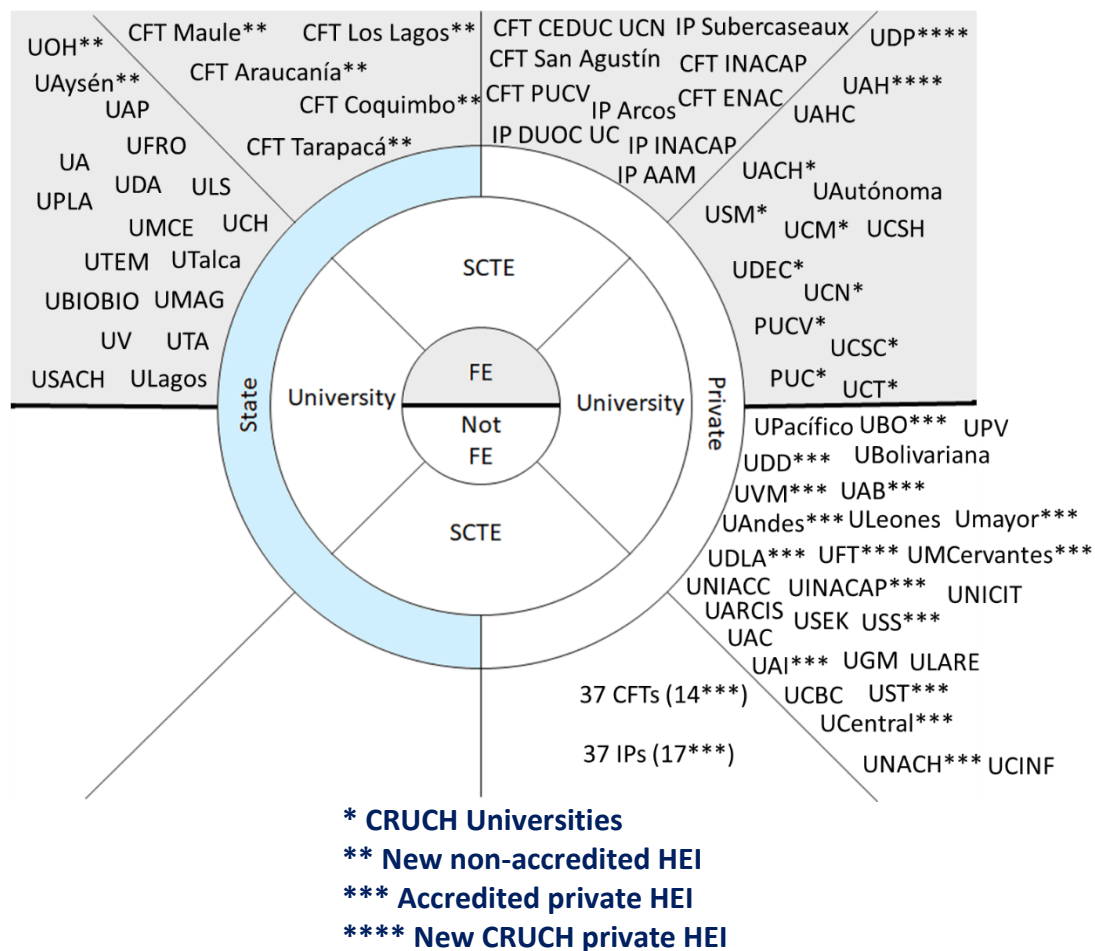
Source: Prepared by the author based on www.gratuidad.cl and www.mifuturo.cl data

The implementation of the FHE policy entailed state funds for all CRUCH HEIs—given their public nature—and for some new private HEIs meeting various criteria. In this context, the Chilean right-wing complained that there was discrimination against the new private sector. The situation was resolved by a mechanism that reflected the conservative neoliberal tendency of Chilean democracy: the Constitutional Court—whose members are appointed by the president—rectified the approval of FHE enacted by the representative parliament,

stating it was discriminatory. The FHE established therefore hampered access to state resources for deprived students attending new private institutions (Tribunal Constitucional, 2015). Therefore, there is no distinction in the reception of funds between private and public universities as long as new private HEIs meet quality criteria based on accreditation (MINEDUC, 2018). Given the problems to enact the HE reform, the application of FHE repeated the strategy of using a financing law in the 2017 Budget Law, but adding the participation of the SC-TE sector (Sanhueza & Orellana, 2018). When FHE was included in the enactment of HE law № 21091 in 2017, there was an implementation of what the two previous financing laws established with regard to funding. It confirmed coverage up to the sixth decile (60%), promising to increase it according to progress achieved in national economic growth. The law also defined the criteria to receive funds from free education: i) all CRUCH universities and new non-profit private universities with four years of accreditation and ii) non-profit—or at least in the process of conversion—SC-TE institutions with four years of accreditation. In addition, there was the requirement to participate in the national admissions system defined by the law and regulating enrolment approved by the Ministry of Education (Mineduc, 2018).

Along with the FHE policy, the HE reform (MINEDUC, 2018) contained aspects regarding regulation and quality of the HE model. In terms of regulation, while profit had been historically prohibited in the university sector, the non-university sector was enabled to make profit. Since FHE implementation, profit has been prohibited in all non-university and university institutions subscribing to the policy and a HE superintendence was created with special remit to ensure the profit prohibition in all HEIs adhering to free education. The main changes in quality involved corrections in the board responsible for controlling quality and new criteria for defining accreditation—setting three levels according to the years of accreditation for HEIs (2-3, 4-5, and 6-7). In addition, Sanhueza and Orellana (2018) describe a separated law devoted specifically to state-run universities. This law was initially part of the general HE law, but the government divided the reform in order to accelerate its enactment. The state HEI law encompasses the 18 state-run universities—including the two new universities created in 2015—and the new state-run CFTs. It regulates growth in enrolment, establishes the way to allocate public funds according to the annual budget law and reduces bureaucracy in the management of organisations. The authors add that these changes carried

out during the second Bachelet government transformed the configuration of the HE model, which could be classified according to adherence to free education. These changes blurred the former classical distinctions. Figure 4.1 summarises the current nature of the HE system according to adherence to free education (FE/Not FE), university or SC-TE character of HEIs, and state or private provision. Since all state-run HEIs receive funds from FHE, there is no organisation not receiving this benefit, while some private accredited universities decided not to adhere to the policy.

The FHE policy was received differently in the academic sector in terms of the idea of continuity and discontinuity with the previous HE model. Using Hall's framework (1993), Brunner (2015) refers to the changes brought about by the FHE policy as a crisis that has dragged on since 2011 at the paradigmatic level of the HE model. He points out that the last few years of HE policy demonstrated a split from the framework of ideas that guided Chilean policy between 1990 and 2010. The 2011 student social movement arose as a group of challengers interested in disputing policy decisions made by techno-bureaucratic actors who conducted policy in a monopolist fashion. However, Brunner is cautious and claims that this field is still in dispute, so the real change of paradigm can be only verified over time. Brunner and Labraña (2018) add that free education seemed to produce discontinuities in terms of funding instruments, since deprived students received state funds. However, according to the authors FHE had damaged HEIs' autonomy, restricted private funding to HEIs, increased the cost of students who are behind, and created issues concerning quality and equity. In this regard, discontinuities had only reached the level of instruments, since the paradigmatic level was not affected by this policy: the mixed model of provision and financing provision continued operating unchanged.

With regard to the discontinuities, Villalobos (2017) supports the idea that the FHE-oriented reform led to transformations in terms of governance, since students became an influencer in policy decisions. In addition, Espinoza and Gonzalez (2015) state that, despite some pending challenges and issues to resolve, the FHE policy changed the image of the HE system and represented a serious attempt to effect a discontinuity from the *Estado Subsidiario*. Gonzalez and Espinoza (2018) add that the FHE-oriented reform sought a new role of the state, orienting its action towards promoting social wellbeing, equity, integration, and quality. This changed role has defined a new HE model framed within the idea of education as a social

right. This shift in the conception of the HE policy can be observed in the 2017 electoral programme of Piñera, who maintained the FHE-oriented policy, even increasing it to 90% in the SC-TE sector. This standpoint understands FHE as a discontinuity at the level of a change in the policy goal, replacing the orientation towards equity of the first democratic governments. It should be noted that to position discontinuity at the third order of change—the goal level—proposed by Hall (1993) involves this thesis making a distinction between shifts in the policy goals and changes in the policy paradigm. Unlike Brunner (2015), who interprets Hall's framework sequentially—if the policy goal changes, the values forming the paradigm also change—this thesis argues that this formula loses its explanatory power to study FHE as a transformational goal. It contends that a policy paradigm can continue operating despite a transformation at the level of the policy goal.

Finally, Sanhueza and Orellana (2018) see a continuity between the FHE policy and the historical HE model. They argue that the Bachelet government co-opted the slogans proclaimed by the students through an HE reform that sought to keep the policy-making form limited by the *Estado Subsidiario*. There was a restriction of the policy instruments for regulating and formalising the voucher system. The neoliberal state integrated the student slogans by broadening state regulation to perfect the operation of the state subsidies for HE demand. In addition, CEFECH (2016) stresses that the funding of the reform required a reduction in educational scholarships granted by the government, since the financing aids allocated to the most vulnerable students were transferred to the FHE policy. Therefore, FHE would open a market space for those students from the sixth to 10th deciles attending adhering HEIs and those at non-subscribed universities. Since state scholarships were converted into FHE funds, the only alternative for these students would be to pay the increased fees with loans from the banks (Sanhueza & Orellana, 2018). In this regard, what would seem to be an equitable policy would make targeting of public expenditure official. There would be a legitimisation of the loan system operated by the market because 7th, 8th and 9th deciles—that are more similar to 6th decile than 10th decile due to social inequality in Chile—would fund their studies with state-guaranteed loans that transfer public economic resources to private banks (Kremerman & Paez, 2016; CEFECH, 2016).

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The implementation of the FHE policy seemed to be a strong response to the demands of students and society, but it raised certain questions about the true meaning of this reform given its demand-driven subsidy logics (Zapata & Tejeda, 2017). With regard to this thesis, the question arises about the nature of the change. Concerns about the transformations that this policy could cause can be interpreted according to Hall's (1993) approach, since implementation of free education has usually been conceived as a second-order policy instrument, while equity has represented an orientation or policy goal (third-order level). The question is whether a second-order (instrument) change can become a third-order element (goal) and, furthermore, whether this shift might change a policy paradigm. In addition, there is a question about the real scope of this shift in terms of the political content allocated in the FHE reform and why it favoured the other demands for public and high-quality education. Is it merely continuity with the policy oriented towards equity or is it aimed at a paradigm change?

To answer this question it is necessary to make extensive theoretical considerations that begin by exploring the nature of the relationship between *continuity* and *discontinuity*. Sociological analytical categories are used to frame this relationship as a dynamic one defined by the action of the concept of change. The notions of *critique* and *justification* are appropriate to comprehend the notion of *discontinuity* and *continuity* regarding policy. Moreover, the concept of change is critical to policy analysis as it becomes the main orientation to develop policies in the various social spheres. Education has not been an exception and Chapter 3 attempted to follow the debate about change in the sociology of the educational discipline. It is interesting to note that the initial technical conceptions about policy have given way to more constructionist and normative perspectives to study change linked to policy. With the intention of taking the potential and scope of the sociology of educational policy into account, Chapter 3 also rehearses a particular framework that allows the study of the dis/continuity relationship, maintaining a normative position oriented towards change and including the idea of policy as a constitutive part of the social totality. However, a previous stage was required, as the context acquires relevance for any study of the situation based on a sociology of critical capacity.

Therefore, Chapter 4 has examined the case of Chile and its HE model, emphasising its paradoxical model of development characterised by a high rate of economic growth and

increasing malaise in social groups. To understand this context, the evolution of the relationship between the Chilean state and society is described, highlighting the role played by social policy. It is interesting to observe that the Pinochet dictatorship began a new social project that was crystallised in the form of society ruled by the *market cité* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Rodriguez López, 2020). The prevalence of the *market cité* was the result of a growing process of privatisation that led to the transformation of the old social services into spaces of competition and exchange fixed by prices. The Chilean HE system was a relevant participant in this new society and its evolution showed close links with the changes undergone by the state. However, a response to the arrangement led by the *market cité* has emerged in recent years and the question remains open: can a *policy change* represent a *continuity* or *discontinuity* with the previous state of affairs?

5. RESEARCHING CONTINUITY-DISCONTINUITY IN CHILEAN HE POLICY

Since the dynamic nature of the relationship between policy continuity and discontinuity lies at the centre of this thesis, Chapter 2 suggested that the category of change becomes the key element to understand it. Along with Chapter 2, Chapter 3 explored how the literature has studied this triple connection between continuity, discontinuity, and change in educational policy. These efforts even go beyond the boundaries of the educational sector and include conceptual contributions from other disciplines. The search for new conceptual perspectives is intended to overcome the lack of systematisation of the literature addressing the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. After reviewing several perspectives, this work is based on sociological tradition, insofar as sociology faces a similar challenge in studying the relationship between social reproduction and production. In the sociological discussion, change would play the role of balancing and unbalancing the social (re)production relationship depending on the degree of change applied to it. Therefore, this project associates the notion of continuity with those processes of social reproduction, while it sees similarities between the processes of discontinuity and social production.

In particular, the categories of justification and critique (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) are used in regimes of justification to comprehend the possibilities of continuities and discontinuities in the HE debate. The adoption of this theoretical framework means directing attention to constructions of discourses oriented towards providing legitimacy to a certain image of society. This conceptual framework seems compatible with the policy analysis model proposed by Hall (1993), since it enables the study of policy discourses—in terms of justifications and critiques—at the different levels of policy development: paradigm, goal, instruments, and instrument settings. Therefore, Chapter 4 examined how these different policy levels articulate the Chilean HE model based on the policy debate. There is a description of how a neoliberal paradigm could coordinate itself with equity goals and cost-sharing financing instruments, discarding and reducing possibilities of developing free education until the 2011 student social movement. Chapter 4 showed that, after 2011, Chilean HE policy has advanced in the opposite direction to the worldwide trend (Ball, 2012b), proposing a free-higher education (FHE) reform intended to solve the failings of an HE model that promised equity in terms of access. The main research question addresses how the emergence of

student demands defines the dynamic relationship between policy continuity and discontinuity depending on the degree of transformation effected by the 2011 change.

The nature of the research question based on justifications and critiques—expressed as discourses of legitimation—leads us to consider the most appropriate way of approaching an answer to the initial issue of continuity and discontinuity. In this regard, this thesis uses a qualitative approach, because it enables interpretation of the discursive meanings and the justifications behind them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Generally speaking, the qualitative approach aims to provide an in-depth interpretation of the social phenomenon. In contrast, breadth is the primary concern of the quantitative approach (Bryman, 2012). This thesis seeks what Flick (2007) calls theoretical generalisation—instead of a statistical one—because the theoretical framework enables inference of the relationships in the data (Gibson & Brown, 2011), but not describing the relationships in the entire population. Moreover, the plan to obtain and analyse the data focused on answering the research questions in the form of non-numerical research (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In short, the qualitative character of this project lies in how it uses the data collected. In addition, the plan for collecting and analysing the data involved a recursive and interpretative process that was not as sequential and distributive as a quantitative design. This means that this study is "sensitive, flexible and adaptive to conditions in the field, and in this … open to new insights resulting from the first steps or during the progress of the research" (Flick, 2007, p. 20).

This chapter organises and summarises the research design process regarding both *the preliminary design* and *the working design* (Gibson & Brown, 2011) resulting from contingencies faced at the moment of addressing the subject of study. Firstly, Section 5.1 discusses the epistemological stance of the project and how this might affect the approach taken to the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. Secondly, Section 5.2 seeks to circumscribe the scope of this study temporally. It defines the period of analysis (2003-2016) to gather the relevant information included in the analysis. At this stage, it should be noted that this research produced data by collecting documents and interviews. Section 5.3 addresses the reasons underpinning the selection of documents and interviews as the main methods of addressing the information required to connect the research topic and data. Documents include public opinion columns and editorials in newspapers from 2003 to 2016, while interviews were conducted with policy-makers, politicians and scholars. The sampling

of these data is described in Section 5.4, and Section 5.5 reflects on the ethical commitment of the researcher to inform the guidelines that oriented the study. Subsequently, Section 5.6 provides details on the process of analysing the data produced, while Section 5.7 defines the criteria of quality that this research sought to meet. Finally, Section 5.8 features a summary of the main limitations of what has been described in the previous sections.

5.1. Epistemological standpoint: a sociological approach to study HE policy

This research aims to study policy from a perspective that understands it as social practices situated in specific situations that are justified and critiqued by the actors participating in them. The novel contribution of this thesis involves a particular perspective that draws on the pragmatic sociology of critical capacity to interpet policy. The starting point of this interpretation entails both ontological and epistemological consequences to conceive policies. At the epistemological level, pragmatic sociology redefines the object of study and the role played by the subject in the process of knowledge. With regard to the object of study, pragmatic sociology focuses on a social reality constructed by ordinary reflexive agents who "are equipped with critical, moral, and judgmental capacities" (Susen, 2015, p. 747). This definition of reality rejects any theoretical interpretations that explain the social world as a construction made *on the backs of the actors*. With respect to the subject of knowledge, it implies a new understanding of the role of the social scientist, who cannot ´*explain away' people's justifications* (Guerrero, 2011). Because the reality does not lie behind people— although they do construct it reflexively—there is no need to reveal a causal mechanism that would explain to them why they are doing what they do (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2006). Boltanski (2012) understands the sociology of the critique as an epistemological shift. The critical function is not only accessible to the social scientist, but is a capability of all actors positioned within the social world (Jacquemain, 2008).

Moreover, the pragmatic sociology perspective involves a redefinition at the ontological level. Since the pragmatic sociology of critique focuses on how people would adhere to certain values depending on the particular situation that they face, these values are not understood as an essential attribute embedded in the social agents. There would be no new principle in the sociology of critical capacity that explains the ´*whatness'* of the social world (Susen, 2015). In contrast, human action would differ according to the circumstances in which it is carried out, involving multiple ontologies of reality, which varies without a structural or cultural

aspect that defines it (Jacquemain, 2008). However, pragmatic sociology is not relativist. Although the allocation of the cognitive and moral abilities of actors would be unequal and defined by power structures, this sociology conceives of power structures as a realisation of a particular situation. The situational conception of power represents a substantive delimitation in that pragmatic sociology goes beyond the power relationships, encompassing them as a possible realisation among other ones. Therefore, although the articulation of society would not be a consequence of concealed interests and ideologies, it should be noted that constructions of critique and justificatory abilities of actors occur in a social context in which power relationships are operating (Guerrero, 2011).

The situational interpretation of power relationships also had specific epistemological implications for the interview process. Quaresma and Villalobos (2019) point out that conflicts might emerge when researchers interview elite groups due to the interaction's power structures. They argue that contact with people who have made use of their socioeconomic, cultural, and political advantages could lead to the emergence of prejudices in the form of critiques of the interviewees, affecting the interviewer's intended neutrality. Although conflicts did not arise during the interviewing process, I could feel how power relationships worked. Since most of my interviewees saw me as a student still, some of them kept a conversation at-a-distance with me to demonstrate their position as experts in the HE field who access to talk with a non-specialist in the area.

Additionally, as a supporter of the demands from the social movement of students, I reinforced my position as a student and viewed interviewees with suspicion in some moments before the interviewing process. Given their role as key actors in the construction of the HE model in Chile, I saw myself as a former undergraduate student who finally would have the chance to access an unveiled truth told by the same people who devised the Chilean HE system. In this regard, the power relationship between expert and student was also present on my side, mainly when I was contacting the participants. In my case, I would say that my identification with the students became more nuanced with the start of the interviewing process. Since I was a former student who graduated few years before the 2011 social movement, I was not directly involved in it and only participated in a pair of demonstrations. I think this situation facilitated taking some distance from my previous prejudices during the interviewing process and the subsequent analysis. Indeed, after interacting with the

interviewees, I was able to better understand their reasoning to make some critical decisions and their ideologies interpreting the HE model. This new experience was crucial to negotiate my prejudices during the analysis and make more reflexive the interpretation of the data.

There was another group of interviewees that showed their power structures by using their networks to help me find new interviewers. This situation was strange for me at the beginning because I felt that I owed a favour to these people. As a student receiving help from these important interviewees, I wonder how I might analyse their interviews with neutrality because a need to show gratitude emerged instead of critiques. This feeling disappeared over time and the analysis of interviews was not affected by it. Since I support the 2011 social movement, it was more complicated to manage my political prejudices when I interviewed conservative respondents—this task required me to be careful about my comments. Fortunately, no situation emerged that could have provoked a conflictive discussion with the interviewees.

Quaresma and Villalobos (2019) also highlighted that the researchers could be questioned back because elite actors tend to challenge the position of the researcher. The interview process would be a "status and power struggle between interviewer and interviewee" (p. 10), affecting the way of producing the data to interpret. Although it was not a regular occurrence, I did encounter some of these difficulties. For example, one interviewee started criticising the construction and articulation of my questions because, he claimed, they did not follow *the most relevant topics* tackled by HE policy nowadays. I experienced a strong feeling of discomfort and began considering the position of the participant critically. Although I remained calm and said nothing about this, another type of reaction may have comprised the data collection process. In this regard, it was useful to remember the prior warnings about how power relationships involve the situational context so I adopted a flexible position—based on a pragmatic perspective—in which the production of valid data was the aim. Therefore, this was not a neglect of the intention to follow the preliminary guideline, but an adaptive position to attempt to conduct the interview in line with my interests, being as pleasant as possible amid various critiques. In this regard, the power struggle was a lived experience but which was navigated with some success.

5.2. The period under study (2003-2016)

This study makes use of temporal and contextual criteria to define its corpus (Bauer & Aarts, 2000; Flick, 2007). The period under analysis comprises 14 years of HE policy development from 2003 to 2016. This 14-year period encompasses a range of different transformations that Chapter 4 describes, such as the consolidation of neoliberal structural changes. These transformations began under the dictatorship but continued in democracy, displaying their effects on HE policy during the 2000s. Camargo (2007) describes the period initiated during the 2000s as a new ideological matrix solidified after a historical process which affected public policies: the matrix of *growth with equity*. Chilean HE policy was reactive to this matrix. Fernandez Darraz (2015) points out that HE policy during the 1990s was dependent on the political cycles and bipartisanism without significant policies until the implementation of CAE—aimed at improving HE access—in 2005. Although CAE was the first significant top-down reform introduced into the HE model, there was another bottom-up policy affecting the orientation towards equity in access: the transition from the PAA to PSU in 2003 described in Chapter 4. Therefore, the implementation of the PSU in 2003 marked the starting point of the period analysed.

Chapter 4 looks at the discussion on the transition from the PAA to PSU as the arrival of the national policy oriented towards equity in the HE sector. Therefore, 2003 became the starting point of what this thesis will address as the first sub-period of analysis. This first sub-period began at the moment in which equity became the focus via the PAA-PSU discussion until 2011 when the student social movement emerged, criticising the HE model. The students' demands were a turning point in the 14-year period. The social movement condemned the model that had failed in its promise of equity and defined a second sub-period involving HE discussion about policy during 2011. This second sub-period saw an explosion of critiques and justifications both to defend and condemn the HE model. Finally, the end of the 14-year period coincides with the beginning of a new sub-period defined by an HE debate resulting from the students' demands, namely the discussion of FHE. The third sub-period took place between 2012 and 2016, embodying the response of the HE policy field to the student social movement. FHE became the centre of the debate about HE policy, since there was a promise of conducting a reform to articulate a new HE model. In summary, the 14-year period contains three sub-periods, marked by the emergence of the student social movement in 2011. The

time limits had a methodological use, as they enabled the analysis of the continuity-discontinuity relationship in the HE debate to be addressed within a reasonable scope and budget.

5.3. Working with documents and interviews

Since the focus of this research referred to the *practices of justification and critique* expressing *continuity-discontinuity* in the debate about HE policies, this study considered those elements that allowed an understanding of these practices as discourses mobilised by agents who participate in the HE debate. In this regard, documents and interviews became the two primary sources to produce empirical data. Both data collection strategies focused on the sub-periods outlined in Section 5.2, emphasising the debate about topics related to equity and free education.

5.3.1. Opinion columns and editorials: documents as a source of information

Opinion columns and editorials represent relevant documents in which participants of the HE debate could express their justifications and critiques in the public sphere. These sorts of documents contain public arguments that are intended to build practices of legitimation by influential agents in the HE policy discussion. Moreover, these mediums provide records about how reality has been documented (Flick, 2007) at certain times. In doing so, documents become what Boltanski (2011) called a filter of those objects of the *world* to construct an *institutional arrangement* that we know as *reality*. Opinion columns and editorials enable "exploring the ways in which different contingencies or contexts place different requirements on how particular issues are to be recorded, represented or talked about" (Gibson & Brown, 2011). Gibson and Brown add that the secondary nature of documents—understood as mediums used to contextualise information—can acquire a primary tendency when they involve politicised discourses referring to the research question. Since the continuity-discontinuity relationship could be tracked through these kinds of documents, they were treated as both secondary and primary sources. In this regard, although discourses contained in opinion columns and editorials referred to actual events, policies, or even other discourses (*secondary data format*), they formed part of a debate generating data to understand how continuity and discontinuity are related in the HE policy discussion (*primary data format*).

However, the decision to use editorials and opinion columns was not immediate. The next question involved which sections of these sources *filtered the data analytically* (Gibson & Brown, 2011). Given the absence of a list of news concerning HE issues during the period, theoretical and practical considerations were used to support the choice of using opinion columns and editorials. With the aim of avoiding the supposed objectivity in news reports and the lack of space to deploy reasoning in the section of letters to the editor, opinion columns and editorials seemed to be appropriate sources to express ideas about the topics concerning the HE model. The format of these documents avoids mere descriptions through interpretations aligned with the views of the newspaper editorials based on the construction of political claims. Opinion columns and editorials are explicitly a means of shaping the information and, in some measure, go beyond the requirement to sell the product. Indeed, given the newspapers' influence in the country, the Chilean academic field on education has paid attention to editorials and opinion columns to analyse the public educational debate several times (Cárdenas et al., 2017; Cabalin, 2014; Cabalin, 2015; Simbürger & Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2020). In addition, these types of documents have the practical advantage of comprising a smaller number of published documents in comparison with news reports and letters to the editor.

Nevertheless, this research did not solely use documents as a data source. Interviews were considered as an *analytically focused* (Gibson & Brown, 2011) and *flexible* (Bryman, 2012; (Louis Cohen et al., 2017; Punch & Oancea., 2014) method to address the research topic. The combination of methods represents a remarkable difference with the Chilean literature using newspapers documents since they did not integrate other data sources to the analysis. This situation has also implied that Chilean scholars (Cárdenas et al., 2017; Cabalin, 2014; Cabalin, 2015; Simbürger & Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2020) focus their academic lenses on the power relations behind newspapers documents by using mostly critical discourse analysis (CDA) to break down the data. Instead, although power relations are still important for this thesis, the combination of documents with interviews was intended to examine the "research setting in a comparative way, and help them to look at their setting from more than one perspective" (Gibson & Brown, 2011, p. 69).

While the documents were created with purposes different to the aims of this research, interviews generate information focused on the research question. They are analytically

focused, whereas the main challenge of using documents involved selecting—or filtering— the appropriate data concerning the research question. This combination of methods was helpful, since the documents tracked the data— the memory cannot do this as accurately— while interviews generated discourses regarding the research topic by asking the interviewees specific questions. In this regard, data from interviews complemented the documentary information by exploring the meanings, aims, and interpretations of policy-makers and other relevant participants in the HE debate. Although both methods can address discursive practices, interviews show more reflexive ways of approaching them. They provide a special environ where interviewees can express their proximity to, or distance from, the official arguments.

5.3.2. Interviewing the elite: challenges and possibilities to access privileged data

Interviews became the other side of the coin. While documents enabled the context of the production of critiques and justifications to be tracked, interviews provided the possibility of studying implicit content in discourses put forward by actors in the HE sector. Semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews were intended to ensure the invitation to talk without a rigid plan so as to avoid the process becoming a structured interview. This type of format was also intended to avoid a totally unstructured nature and questions were used that resulted from the construction of a topic guide. Following Gaskell (2000), the interviews were expected to gather data regarding the "understanding of the relations between social actors and their situation" (p. 39). In this respect, the interview process became an appropriate method to comprehend the life worlds of policy-makers, politicians, and scholars influencing HE policy. Moreover, interviews were an appropriate method to reach the participants since they occupy positions of power. Since elites often claim they have a lack of time and therefore cannot participate in academic research, the time constraint meant ruling out focus groups since it would be more difficult to bring busy elite interviewees to the same place at the same time. Instead, the interviews conducted set "a time and place convenient to the respondent" (p.48). On the other hand, the possibility of conducting open-ended qualitative interviews was more appropriate than close-ended questionnaires to enhance the *receptivity* of interviewees. Several authors (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Quaresma & Villalobos, 2019) argue that elites usually feel uncomfortable with structured questions because they make it difficult to articulate and reason their responses.

The interview process involved several stages. Firstly, a topic guide was constructed to establish casual conversation in which the interviewee felt comfortable and relaxed in order to facilitate a relationship based on confidence and trust (rapport). Secondly, carrying out a pilot interview with a policy-maker allowed flexible understanding of some of the topics included in the guide. This experience was also helpful to address the subsequent interview process since it provided new insights and the need to be adaptable to different situations in the conversations. Thirdly, contributions made by other scholars researching elites were helpful to find the best way of approaching participants. The stage of *obtaining access* implied redoubling efforts that went beyond the formal advice recommended by other researchers (Goldstein, 2002; Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). The literature in the field (Quaresma & Villalobos, 2019) tends to advise the researcher to be formal and procedural when approaching elites. However, in this study I successfully gained access to interviewees with a different strategy. The research followed these suggestions initially, but the lack of success led me to discard this tactic. Instead, direct contact was made with potential respondents through phone calls or WhatsApp messages; they showed a willingness to talk about the topic, even after explaining the academic nature of the work and the aims of the project. As a consequence, this was the general strategy used to reach out to the interviewees henceforth.

With regard to the locations where the interviews were to be conducted, the time of year in which the interview process started determined a large amount of the decisions made. The fieldwork began at the end of the year because it was more likely that potential respondents would be free of some of their duties due to the proximity of the annual holiday period in Chile. While the collection of documents was done in parallel, some of the people contacted responded by agreeing to participate in the research. However, they still claimed there were time constraints for conducting face-to-face interviews. When it was possible, face-to-face interviews were conducted, usually agreeing to go to the interviewee's place of work. Nevertheless, the 4-month fieldwork period ran out with only 10 interviews having been conducted. The solution to the time constraints—both for the respondents and myself—came from a particular interview with a person who had been minister of education. He was in France when he was contacted. Although he was willing to participate, the only possibility was to talk via the software Skype. Given that he was a critical interviewee, I took the risk of having a conversation by videocall. The conversation turned out to be engaging, with the

medium of internet working as a facilitator instead of an obstacle to the rapport (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014), making it similar to an in-person interview. Therefore, those interviews carried out after my return to the UK were also carried out via Skype. Nobody raised problems about using this method as a means of conversation when there was a request for an online interview. They also had the possibility of choosing places where they felt comfortable and relaxed, these mainly being their offices and homes. In agreement with Deakin and Wakefield (2014), the experience of online interviewing was satisfactory and the production of data was very similar to face-to-face conversations in terms of depth and reliability.

Finally, it should be noted that I conducted all of the interviews. The interview process was similar for in-person conversations and online interviews. Regardless of whether the interview was face-to-face or online, the process started with the provision of relevant information to the interviewee (Quaresma & Villalobos, 2019). Even though the respondents received these details when they agreed to participate, I reiterated that the information would be anonymous, mentioned the intended length of the discussion, the relevance of the informed consent, and that the interview would be recorded (Gaskell, 2000). The interview process began with an open question asking about their current position and their broad relationship with the educational sector. This first question was rather useful since it enabled the interviewees to gain confidence and their subsequent responses entailed greater reflection and involvement. Following Gaskell's suggestions, I took special care to demonstrate my interest and attention to the content shared by the participant. Coming to the end of the conservation, I asked the participants to add any comments if they so wished. Lastly, the interviews ended on a positive note, with the expression of my gratitude and switching off the tape recorder. In addition, I reiterated the commitment of what was stated in the informed consent.

5.4. Sampling and the selection of participants

The selection of documents and the interviewees involved intentional sampling aimed at prioritising the particularities of the data providing information instead of its representativity for a broader population (Gibson & Brown, 2011).

5.4.1. Sampling media: newspapers, opinion columns, and editorials

In the case of documents, the sampling involved taking a selection of opinion columns and editorials from the most influential Chilean newspapers. The selection of newspapers instead of other communication media was the first decision in the sampling process. Newspapers in Chile have become the main space of influence to create the public agenda (Couso, 2012; Sapieżyńska, 2015) despite the emergence of other forms of media (Lochard & Boyer, 2004). The HE debate has formed part of this influence. In this regard, the sample of documents contained editorials and opinion columns from newspapers referring to HE policy from 2003 to 2016. With respect to the three sub-periods, the first period covered documents from daily newspapers published between 2003 and 2010, while the second comprised documents published in 2011, and the third using documents published between 2012 and 2016. The definition of the sub-periods had some consequences for the selection of the sample. Whilst in the first sub-period the most influential newspapers were published daily in the form of physical newspapers, digital newspapers gained a position as significant spaces for public opinion during and after 2011 (AAM, 2020; Godoy & Gronemeyer, 2012). This change in the form of newspaper circulation led to the replacement of one source with another in digital format in the sample after 2011.

The selection of newspapers considered four of them due to their national circulation: (i) *El Mercurio*, (ii) *La Tercera*, (iii) *La Nación,* and (iv) *El Mostrador*. These four groups were the most significant companies in the newspaper market during the period under analysis. Several authors (Monckeberg, 2009; Sapieżyńska & Lagos, 2016; Cortés, 2015; Couso, 2012) have even highlighted that the two former newspapers accounted for much of the ownership and advertising of the market through the creation of a duopoly based on press holdings. Moreover, the *Overview Prensa Annual 2019* (AAM, 2020) points out that *La Tercera* and *El Mercurio* are the communication media with the highest penetration among elite readers in the population. Along with the aforementioned duopoly, there was a third newspaper included before 2011. The digitalisation of the press affected the selection of this third newspaper during the last two sub-periods. Therefore, the first sub-period included documents from newspapers El Mercurio, La Tercera, and La Nación, while the second and third sub-periods included the replacement of the latter with El Mostrador. Apart from their

public influence, the selection of these four newspapers was in line with the particular political views of Chilean society:

- *El Mercurio* (2003-2016): It has historically echoed the thought of the political, economic, and social elite (Lagos & Mellado, 2013). It became the disseminator of conservative right-wing views. Baltra (2012) adds that its close relationship with the Pinochet dictatorship and the national Opus Dei movement consolidated its conservative character.

- *La Tercera* (2003-2016): It became the main competition for elite audience against *El Mercurio* after 2003 (Lagos & Mellado, 2013; Cortés, 2015). Cortés (2015) highlights that since its owner comes from a non-traditional sector, it takes a liberal editorial line to differentiate itself from its main competitor (Lagos & Mellado, 2013).

- *La Nación* (2003-2010): This newspaper represented the sole counterbalance of the right-wing concentration during the 2000s. Its state ownership meant that its editorial content was aligned with the *Concertación* governments between 1990 and 2010 (Baltra, 2012). *La Nación* halted physical circulation in 2010 (Godoy & Gronemeyer, 2012).

- *El Mostrador* (2011-2016): This was the first virtual newspaper in Chile and it has gained influence to set the agenda for opinion influencers (Godoy & Gronemeyer, 2012), especially since the events of 2011. It has become the new counterbalance of power to the duopoly in the sample. This publication has a liberal-left perspective (Nicklander et al., 2019).

The collection of these documents involved personal visits to the Chilean National Library and hiring an assistant due to time constraints, as well as for downloading online resources. Table 5.1 shows the total volume of opinion columns and editorials referring to HE issues collected for the period, distinguishing between those collected in each sub-period (C) and those sampled for analysis (S). Initially, I had the intention of coding every document collected. Therefore, for the first few years almost all of the sources were coded. Practical issues concerning time led to my deciding to sample the information gathered, although those documents already coded were kept in the selection because they served as a baseline to characterise the whole period under analysis. The main difficulty of sampling these sorts of

documents involved their power of changing the agenda, so some topics became repetitive because of the influence of a new newsworthy event. Also, the frequency of writing opinion columns for one columnist is usually set for one particular day in the week, meaning that certain participants can affect the heterogeneity of opinions sought to describe the HE model. Sampling was used that was aimed at avoiding the repetition of columnists, broadening the heterogeneity of opinions, and covering a longer period of news beyond the limits of particular events instead of seeking representativity. The total number of documents selected to analyse was 529, with 243 of those being editorials and 286 being opinion columns.

Table 5.1: Documents collected and sampled by newspaper and sub-period of analysis

Newspaper	Sub-period 2003-2010		Sub-period 2011		Sub-period 2010-2016		Total	
	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S
La Tercera	196	104	120	25	496	52	812	181
El Mercurio	450	139	160	20	611	50	1221	209
La Nación	116	64	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	116	64
El Mostrador	N/A	N/A	86	25	497	50	583	75
Total	762	307	366	70	1604	152	2732	529

5.4.2. Sampling interviewees: the characteristics of the participants

Like the sample of documents, the selection of interviewees involved sampling guided by practical and theoretical criteria. With the aim of collecting data from subjects close to positions in the policy-making process, the people interviewed included policy-makers working in the different governments between 2003 and 2016, politicians from different standpoints, and scholars from institutions with influential opinions in the HE debate. It was crucial to include these subjects in the sample because they represented the positions closest to the centres of decision-making or with the expertise to influence the direction in which educational policy could be carried out.

Concerning those potential interviewees who did not form part of the sample, there was a combination of pragmatic decisions and the most appropriate scope for the study. Since the research intended to collect discourses from people close to the policy decision-making process, I decided to exclude some actors for prioritising a sample size within the study scope. Additionally, some relevant stakeholders were not included because they played a hybrid role in the HE debate. For example, some interviewees included in the final sample were former student leaders who are prominent politicians or academics today. Therefore, their

discourses and experiences formed part of the data collected indirectly. These practical issues and the need to focus on the research questions helped me to privilege the inclusion of the three groups described above in the sample (politicians, academics and policy-makers).

The primary challenge in the selection involved difficulties in contacting potential interviewees. Access to them emerged as a first difficulty, but the identification of facilitators aided identification of and access to interviewees. Two facilitators were vital to help contact people: i) an academic actor who had also worked as a consultant on HE policy in the past was conducive to arrange potential interviews with scholars and policy-makers. ii) One close contact is a professional journalist with various contacts of colleagues working in the spheres of academia and politics, so it was possible to access interviewees through phone calls and WhatsApp messages. Both strategies were aimed at the voluntary participation of the subjects. When some of them refused to participate, there was no insistence on my part. Once access was gained to the first interviewees, a linear snowball (Etikan et al., 2015) strategy was applied to collect data in order to broaden the potential candidates to interview. Practical constraints related to access to interviewees and the saturation principle determined the end of the sampling process and the number of interviews. The saturation principle establishes that the interview process finishes when there is no further significant information provided by new interviewees (Bauer & Aarts, 2000). Therefore, the final sample of interviewees comprised 25 people who had worked—although not exclusively—as policy-makers, scholars, and/or politicians during the 14-year period.

5.5. Ethical considerations

Data from interviews entailed special ethical considerations. Confidentiality of the identity of all participants was a commitment stated in the informed consent provided to respondents, with the only information given being on their positions in the educational debates. Pseudonyms were used to protect their anonymity and ensure them that the data collected was not intended to question their positions. Quaresma and Villalobos (2019) stated that anonymity becomes relevant since elite groups tend to be afraid that the findings of research could become criticisms of their positions.

However, anonymity is a challenge because the identity of participants could easily be ascertained due to the public profiles of the interviewees. When I presented the idea to

participants before the interview, some of them immediately pointed out that pseudonyms could not be effective due to their labour trajectories identifiable in the discourses. However, I insisted on making them feel comfortable by keeping their anonymity during the conversation. As a result, all the interviewees accepted even when some people assumed it as an almost impossible goal. Although this situation could discourage using pseudonyms, the project maintained this commitment because it led to other associated benefits. Indeed, the confidentiality of identities helped facilitate the conversation and rapport. Some interviewees explicitly declared that they felt free and relaxed when they talked about certain colleagues and their policies and/or papers from a position of anonymity.

The commitment established between the interviewer and the respondent in the informed consent was another ethical consideration. The informed consent sought to assure the voluntary character of the interview process and guarantee that the data collected would only be used for the purposes of this research. A signature sealed the commitment and ensured that the participants had a brief explanation about the content of the research (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). The explanation of the subject of the study focused on the phrase ´higher educational policies' contained in the informed consent. When some of the potential interviewees requested more information, I provided more details, but taking care to ensure that any further information did not affect or have implications for the potential responses.

Another concern focused on the way of recording the information. Each interviewee was asked if they minded the conversation being recorded. There was special care with online interviews because participants did not have the opportunity to see the tape recorder so I explicitly stated that the conversation was being recorded (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Although nobody refused to be recorded, there was a protocol to follow. The protocol established that if one interviewee decided to withdraw amid the interview process—turning off the software— this would be understood as a refusal to participate. This measure was intended to be careful and flexible with the decisions made by the respondents, seeking to balance the situation with the possibilities that this might occur during a face-to-face conversation. However, it should be noted that nobody withdrew before, during, or after the interviews. The informed consent also established an agreement between the participant and myself to have the possibility of withdrawing up to one year after the conversation, if the respondent so decided. Regarding the document collection process, a label with reference

symbols was used for each document. This practice was intended to enable readers and future researchers to track both the source of the document and the day and place they were collected.

5.6. Analysing data: transcription, translation, and coding

5.6.1. Making decisions about transcribing and translating the data

After collecting the documents and conducting the interviews to produce the data, I started the long and time-consuming process of transcribing the interviews and certain documents—those collected from images from the National Library due to the inexistence of online resources when the period under analysis began. The transcription of documents was literal since it followed what had been published in the newspapers. The interviews were conducted in Spanish—my native language—but the work of transcribing them involved more reflection about the appropriate way to carry out this task. Concern about recording pauses, laughter, interruptions, or overlaps formed part of the transcription process (Gill, 2000) since they aided the memory to help interpret the data later. Also with the aim of enhancing my memory (Gaskell, 2000), I transcribed almost all of the interviews and hired an assistant to transcribe only five of them. The transcription work became an excellent opportunity to build familiarity with the data (Balarin, 2006).

Once the data was transcribed, the next decision was to continue working without translating the information into English (both sources in Spanish). This decision fitted practical and interpretative considerations in order to save time and ensure no distortions of meaning. It was also helpful that the two supervisors spoke fluent Spanish, insofar as they could evaluate and discuss the progress of the thesis without the need to translate the quotations from interviews and documents at the beginning of the analysis. This strategy was adopted during the first stage of discussion with the supervisors, but translated quotations formed part of the writing-up stage. Moreover, to proceed in this way provided the possibility of discussing the data in their context and avoiding altering their meaning by presenting them after translation. Although there was no translation of all the text, this approach provided a feeling of security about the appropriateness of the quotations included in the final analysis.

5.6.2 The coding process through themes

During the tasks of transcription and translation, I began coding the data using the software NVivo 11. The coding process entailed two stages to work out the primary justifications and critiques during the 14-year period. First, there was a thematic analysis aimed at interpreting the manifest and latent content of the data collected from documents and interviews. Following Gibson and Brown (2011), thematic analysis was understood as a set of procedures to manage the coding stage. Secondly, a discourse analysis approach helped conduct and improve the analysis of the information collected. Gibson and Brown add that discourse analysis could provide an interpretation focused on the details about interviewees and their context, which could be lost if thematic analysis tends to concentrate on similarities and generalities, ignoring the relevance of the differences in the data.

The choice of using thematic analysis in the first stage lay in its strength to interpret meanings through the emergence of themes. The definition of themes refers to those patterns found in the data concerning the research topic (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006). Joffe and Jardley (2004) add that themes might be used to prove a previous theory or study new relationships within the concept to study. Therefore, the aim was to examine patterns in terms of principles of educational justifications in the 14-year period. Since the study intends to conduct an internal analysis between different periods, the potential commonalities, differences, and/or relationships between them became significant to follow changes in the debate about the HE policy field. This data analysis was a starting point as it was expected to explore the emergence of themes and the dynamism of continuity/discontinuity in the shift between the sub-periods.

Concretely, the possibility of working with previous theory and new relationships within the data was crucial for this study since codes were defined from the literature on HE policy and through the multiple iteration of emerging themes present in the newspaper documents and interviews. In this respect, there was a use of code hierarchies in which the policy literature delineated the content of three parent nodes (equity, free education and policy-making) with several respective child nodes coming from the literature, but also from the data. For instance, equality of opportunities was a theme defined by the policy literature in the parent node of equity, but demographic or geographical inequalities emerged as potential themes from the data collected. This strategy of analysis meant that each parent code registered

more than 600 reference, achieving even 3621 references in the code about equity. Besides, there was a use of the memo tool of NVIVO to recall those reflections arising during the coding process.

Additionally, the coding followed the contributions of what Attride-Stirling (2001) called *thematic network analysis*, which encompasses "web-like illustrations [networks] that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text" (pp. 386). The use of this procedure was aimed at analysing the salient themes of the data through three levels of systematisation: i) the most immediate textual themes in the data called *basic themes,* ii) the grouping of these defined for complex patterns termed *organising themes*, and iii) a more abstract form of grouping the organising themes called *global themes*. Thematic network analysis thus enables a graphical representation of the information as a large tree, in which the trunk is the *global theme*, the branches are the *organising themes*, and the leaves depict the *basic themes*. This graphical representation facilitates interpretation by making it feasible to observe how the data fit with the theory or new relationships within the same data. In practical terms, thematic networks were built according to each sub-period of analysis for each topic present in the debate about HE policy. For example, with data from the documents, there were three thematic analyses about how the HE debate discussed the notion of equity before 2011, during 2011, and after 2011 (examples of these thematic networks can be found in Appendix 3). The description of the debate about free higher education and the policy-making process involved the repetition of similar analysis procedures.

5.6.3. Integrating thematic analysis and discourse analysis

Following the strategy adopted by Balarin (2006), who reconciled thematic and narrative analysis, in this project something similar was done between thematic and discourse analysis. Since the entire text was not amenable to produce just themes and discourses, a hybrid method of analysis was used regarding their differences. Given the different nature of the textual elements from the documents and interviews, some elements would be better captured by codes and themes, while more open pieces of text allowed the data to be interpreted in the form of discourses. The inclusion of discourse analysis enabled refinement of the interpretation of the initial patterns revealed by the thematic analysis, connecting it better with the context of the participants in the HE debate.

In specific terms, discourse analysis is a product of what has been called *the linguistic turn* in the epistemological debate. This tradition understands discourse as a type of action since subjects *do things with words*. There is an immediate linkage between language and reality, as the former would allow the construction of visions and versions of the latter (Willig, 2014). Upon recognising the power of language, the contribution of discourse analysis rests on providing the possibility to comprehend "these processes of discursive construction and their social consequences" (p. 342). Dunn and Neumann (2016) state that "a discourse entails the representational practices through which meanings are generated" (p. 2). Behind this view is the idea of knowledge as a social construct built through the attachment of meanings and values, in which discourses are essential participants in this construct. Discourse analyses would thus involve studying how this knowledge is taken for granted (Gill, 2000). Discourse analysis focuses on the relevance of the language as a social construct, not to reveal fundamental truths in discourses, but to interpret how subjects produce meanings that are, in turn, attached to other subjects or objects (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). In this regard, discourse analysis emerges as an appropriate method for this project since it questions the persistence, transformations, and disruptions of social representations expressed as discourses. These discourses should be understood as social practices that orientate action, although not totally, giving space to other discourses and possibilities to construct society. Therefore, the recurrent question addressing discourse analysis is about the conditions of possibility to produce discourses that create a range of potential actions by precluding others. "[I]t is not that nothing exists outside of discourse, but that in order to exist for us, phenomena have to be grasped through discourse" (p. 9).

Given the myriad of different methods claiming to be a type of discourse analysis, I followed Gill (2000) to avoid pigeonholing the project in one tradition. I used different traditions (speech-act theory, poststructuralist, and rhetorical analysis), but not in a narrow sense. Taking into account the broadest definition of discourse analysis, the analysis of interviews thus involved grasping the meanings associated with debates about policy from relevant actors in the HE debate. This exercise enabled an exploration of the correspondences with and distances from the idea that actors have of how things should have been done in the 14-year period. Specifically, the strategy of conducting the analysis drew upon the procedures described by Dunn and Neumann (2016):

- Firstly, after becoming familiar with the texts (Gill, 2000), I identified different discourses by what the Dunn and Neumann (2016) called double reading. For instance, I could identify a predominant discourse that *naturalised* that supply privatisation enhanced HE access during a first reading. Following the authors, however, I re-read the text seeking to denaturalise this discourse and find alternative ones. This doubling reading enabled me to identify discourses resorting to international experiences in which state HEIs led the accessibility process.

- I also used *predicate analysis and the creation of subjects* to identify discourses characterising elements in the debate. Thereby, in the case of access example, traditional HEIs were usually connected with a predicate defining them as selective, prestigious and elitist universities hindering access for deprived students, while new private universities (NPU) were predicated as an alternative subject to boost the social mobility. On the other hand,

- I used the strategy of *subject positioning* and *inventorying representations of subjects* to identify discourses with differential power within a dominant representation. These discourses intertwined themselves by constant references to other discourses in the debate reflecting a scheme beyond bipolar positions. In the example of access, the dominant representation stressed the inevitability of relating access and privatisation. However, another representation defending access by privatisation, but with more power of the state to regulate the privatisation power, started gaining support within the dominant discourse over time and even left room for another position claiming for an HE access enhanced by state-run HEIs.

- The inventorying process provided the possibility of *mapping discourses* insofar as the representations established relationships in and between discourses. Positions above mentioned can be mapped in order to discover relational aspects of discourse analysis. In the case that the alternative representation criticising the dominant discourse started gaining support, it would be probable that the dominant discourse about access and privatisation would become flexible. The flexibility strategy might mean continuing with the privatisation project, but incorporating more regulation from the state.

- The mapping process gave rise to the process of *layering discourses* by examining their differential historical depth. "Certain representations in a discourse will thus be slower to change than others" (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 121).

5.7. Quality in qualitative research

The issue of quality in the qualitative approach has been a longstanding topic. While postmodernist voices call for a deconstruction of the idea of validity as a synonym for quality in qualitative research (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2000); which has even become an aim for interpretivist research; other currents (Tracy, 2010; Gaskell and Bauer, 2000) within the qualitative inquiry have attempted to conceptualise quality as a specific frame of markers of quality. This section will consider the latter standpoint, although critiques from the former perspective will contribute to promoting reflection on some contentious methodological debates about quality markers. Firstly, Gaskell and Bauer (2000) assert that it is possible to make quality in qualitative research comparable to general quality in social research if there is a development of what termed functional equivalent criterion. The functional equivalence would fix comparable rules of method and standards by converting the issue of quality in research into a topic of accountability. Social science and its pretensions should be subjected to public backing, the basis of which would be empirical evidence that "must go beyond mere conjecture or intuition" (p. 344). In this respect, accountability would be not an issue linked to management definitions but a way of producing public knowledge scrutinised by a public audience that has methodologically reflected the idea of carrying out social science.

By the same token, Tracy (2010) points out that a frame regarding quality markers would be suitable to delineate a general conceptualisation of qualitative quality beyond the boundaries of different qualitative paradigms underpinning research. Keeping in mind the controversies of using the notion of criteria for conceptualising quality in qualitative research, the author underlies its pedagogical value for guiding *best practices* in the qualitative approach. By detaching *end goals* understood as *universal hallmarks of quality* from mean methods materialised in *practices, skills and crafts* (p. 89), she endeavours to provide a quality frame that respects the differences among paradigms. This separation entails a critique of other qualitative quality conceptions since they have tended to understand quality by focusing on the end goal or the mean methods. Instead, the criteria for quality would lie in the *universal*

and straightforward conflation of both elements that are manifested through quality markers.

Following Tracy (2010), this study considered eight criteria of quality in qualitative research. Firstly, this project made the effort of devising a *worthy topic* by becoming *relevant, timely, significant and interesting*. Indeed, the research topic is a consequence of a particular political atmosphere in which a specific policy appeared as the response to a socio-political issue that affected the instability of the Chilean model of development. Besides, surprise and questioning to well-accepted ideas orientated the process of this qualitative approach. Tracy points out that surprise is a crucial element for worthy studies since they become interesting and Gaskell and Bauer (2000) highlight its importance and utility to contribute to theory and common sense. Surprise also was included in this project by avoiding falling into prejudices and selective interpretation. As a preliminary project, this research focused on how continuity might co-opt discontinuities to maintain dominant representations' legitimacy. However, when analysing the data, new insights emerged, requiring an open mind to new interpretations in which discontinuity and change emerged as essential elements to study. The surprise factor extended the possibilities of the research and enriched the findings presented in the following chapters.

A second quality criterion to follow was *rich rigour* (Tracy, 2010). This criterion involves using a *requisite variety* of *theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, sample, context, data collection and analysis processes*. More variety of theories and richness in data would enable the researcher to interpret it with *nuances and complexity*. This study made the effort of including a diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Furthermore, the rigour is traceable through the previous description of different procedures and its transparency regarding the data treatment. Thirdly, this research sought to meet the end goal of *sincerity*. *Self-reflexivity* and *transparency* guided the thesis. Understanding the importance of decentring the researcher's particular standpoint (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000), I gave particular concern to *self-reflexivity* in Chapter 2 and the epistemological section (5.1) since there was a discussion of multiple ways of theoretically addressing the subject of continuity and discontinuity. On the other hand, *transparency* was intended by resorting to documentation about what was done would contribute to improvements in quality by providing material for

future validation or replication of the research. I tried to support the decisions made and how the collection and analysis of the data were done.

Additionally, there is a concern on the *credibility* criterion (Tracy, 2010) since *thick description, triangulation and multivocality* were constitutive part of the research process. *Thick description* would provide credibility to the qualitative approach by giving detailed and in-depth representations of the contextual meanings whereby study participants construct their worlds. Even though Richardson & Adams St. Pierre (2000) argue that this criterion assumes that there would be a true knowledge to discover through the participant voices, I followed the idea of Tracy (2010) of thick description as a practice to show details of the context to potential readers by what (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000) advised as reporting text in a verbatim manner. Likewise, although there was a consideration of what Richardson & Adams St. Pierre (2000) called crystallisation, this study mainly followed what Tracy (2010) described as *triangulation* by using different methods to increase the scope and help awareness of contradictions (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000). The use of documents and interviews in this project led me to consider the actual content of the information collected. Sometimes they did not coincide when referring to the same event, so there was a need to reinterpret data. Finally, Tracy (2010) points out that *multivocality* foster credibility by respecting the participant voices and their differences with the researcher. This project offered interpretations that might be challenged not only by participants but also readers who think differently. This criterion sought to provide credibility by complementing transcriptions to respect the participants' world lives.

Lastly, this thesis met the quality criteria of *resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence* (Tracy, 2010). In this regard, resonance links to the influence of the project on the target audience. Although this quality marker is difficult to discern, I hope that readers of the thesis may transfer my experience to their contexts associated with policy or the different challenges faced when people promote change in diverse social situations. *Transferability* would be the quality marker of the resonance criterion. Since *ethical criteria* were broadly discussed in Section 5.5 and significant contributions are an important element in this study's introduction and conclusion, *meaningful coherence* is the last criterion to meet in this section. The whole research has met the ambition of being coherent in terms of decisions and integrating the different stages of the research. These stages encompassed a

theoretical development interconnected with the research design, data collection, and analysis and among themselves to achieve the thesis's initial purposes.

5.8. Limitations and considerations for an ad hoc qualitative design

This chapter outlines a research design to answer the questions about the continuity/discontinuity relationship in HE policy. In this sense, this project followed what Gaskell and Bauer (2000) call *the indication of the method* because there would be a similarity between the issues faced by medical science and social sciences in defining their methods: while some methodological designs are appropriate for certain social issues, other methods would be less appropriate for the same issues. Going beyond the medical metaphor, Gaskell and Bauer go on to say that any decision made—just like a medical indication—might involve a certain degree of contraindications. That is, the choice of a certain method has benefits and limitations. Although Chapter 5 highlights the decisions taken to address the issues of continuity and discontinuity, each of them tries to deal with the potential limitations caused by the exclusion of alternatives. Firstly, limitations and exclusions formed part of the definition of the period under analysis. Secondly, the decision to leave some actors out of the samples of documents and interviews means there are constraints for the findings. In addition, there was a manifest concern to describe the decisions taken in terms of practical constraints, meaning discarding alternatives of data collection and analysis. Finally, there was a description of the opportunities to increase quality by making it clear which quality criteria intended to be to met. With regard to epistemology, there was a search to highlight how a new perspective could contribute to the policy analysis, which could mean that other approaches with more stable foundations might produce different findings—as valid as those obtained by this research. In this case, the limitations became an opportunity since the heuristic tendency of this project provided substantial potential for future contributions.

Assuming these limitations, this thesis focused on what McCowan (2008) called an *ad hoc* approach. That is, the project did not follow "a single method—such as content analysis—or a single approach —such as ethnography—although some methodological unity" (p. 71) was achieved by the integration of methods. The subsequent analysis chapter is intended to show how the *ad hoc* approach fits with the data from the information collected. During the progression from the theoretical framework to the methodology chapter, there is an exploration of different approaches to the data in order to address the dynamic relationship

between continuity and discontinuity. Decisions at the theoretical and methodological levels have displayed practical criteria to acquire flexibility in order to approach the subject of study. This flexible approach has involved a particular combination of theory and data, suggesting hypotheses and findings different to those considered at the beginning of the project. Needless to say, the following chapters include my interpretations of the data and, rather than a single solution to the study problem, they seek to invite discussion and challenge these interpretations to enrich the debate on the continuity and discontinuity of HE policy.

6. THE HE DEBATE ABOUT EQUITY: THE ACCESSIBILITY TRAP AND ITS TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

The initial question of this thesis refers to the possibility of understanding the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity* in the HE policy field. This work intends to respond to this question by borrowing conceptual elements from the sociological debate about social reproduction and production. This sociological debate provides insightful tools that enable an interpretation of the dis/continuity relationship through a dynamic perspective instead of a static perspective that has conceived of it as a mere opposition of terms. The dynamic condition of the relationship would depend on the action of the concept of change. The notion of change operates as a driver that provides nuance to the emergence of continuity and discontinuity in terms of degrees. It is a theoretical debate that allows *continuity* and *discontinuity* to be outlined with a gradual perspective, which also includes the possibility of studying them as coexistent elements. It highlights the contribution of Boltanski mainly to analyse the *dis/continuity relationship*. In this regard, the concept of *regimes of justification* (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2006) and the sociological distinction between *institutional reality* and *world* (Boltanski, 2011) will be applied to analyse the Chilean policy *continuity* and *discontinuity* in the following chapters.

While Chapter 2 provided an intentional framework of interpretation, Chapter 3 looked at the educational and HE policy debates from this theoretical starting point. Therefore, Chapter 3 showed how the educational research debate tends to address the relationship between *continuity* and *discontinuity* as an opposition. Moreover, educational researchers seem to contrast *continuity* with change and make *discontinuity* equivalent to change. Apart from a few exceptions, this shift reflects a static relationship. Change loses its power of acting as a catalyst of *continuities* and *discontinuities*. Although the HE policy analysis debate intends to overcome this dichotomy by adding conceptual frameworks from other social sciences, the different approaches restrict the understanding of *discontinuity* to individual responses disconnected from opportunities of developing collective actions of transformation. This situation reflects a conceptual trend that has tended to abandon the ambition of providing a totalising explanation of social phenomena. In this context, this thesis draws on the contributions of Hall (1993) on policy analysis, which conceive of policy development as a totality entailing different orders of change within a broader paradigm. Chapter 3 adapted this contribution and rehearsed an interpretative formula that considers neoliberalism as the

paradigm, equity as a policy goal (the third-level of policy orders), and cost-sharing and free education as potential policy instruments (the second level of policy orders). This particular arrangement of policy levels is significant to understand the evolution of the Chilean HE model during recent decades in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 suggested that Chilean HE policy has been closely linked to an evolution of the national state and society marked by the neoliberal shift undergone by the country during the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. The adoption of neoliberalism influenced the post-secondary model by boosting the privatisation of education supply, increasing self-funding of HEIs and leading to greater demands for better opportunities of HE access. After the 1981 reform, the Chilean HE model underwent an accelerated transformation that followed a similar pattern even after the return of democracy in 1990. Over time, both the country and tertiary education started showing side effects because of the neoliberal modernisation. Equity-oriented political slogans promised to balance and redress the failures of HE policy since the end of the 1990s.

Chapter 6 represents the effort to grasp how the debate about HE policy translated this national promise of equity, seeking to analyse the main *justifications*—which provided legitimacy and order to a model—that resisted the *critiques* and tried adapting them to the neoliberal project. In the words of Hall (1993), this chapter addresses how the Chilean *neoliberal paradigm* can coexist with *the third-order level* of HE policy expressed by equity as a *policy goal*. Chapter 6 analyses the HE debate about equity and equity-oriented policies between 2003 and 2016. As Chapter 5 defines it, the length of the period under analysis involves a situation in which democratic policies consolidated their position and HE policy became more active in comparison with the previous democratic period between 1990 and 2002.

The transition from the PAA to PSU in 2003 defined the starting point of the period to analyse. This bottom-up policy from CRUCH was accompanied by other relevant top-down HE reforms such as the introduction of CAE in 2005 and compulsory accreditation in 2006. Chapter 6 thus aims to describe how *critiques* and *justifications* of HE policy helped to construct a legitimate model based on the equity concept (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). HE equity is an issue discussed broadly in the Chilean HE debate. Newspaper documents provide interesting information to describe how different topics of the debate linked to one another to

conceptualise a certain way of understanding equity in the national context. On the other hand, data from interviews explores certain justifications and critiques arising from those topics in depth. It should be noted that the names signing the quotations from the interview data are pseudonyms to meet the anonymity requirement described in Chapter 5. On the contrary, the names signing the quotations from the newspaper documents are real names given the public character of its authorship.

Since it seeks to provide an interpretation of how the HE policy debate integrated a national demand for equitable development into the HE sector, Chapter 6 works as a reference category to compare how policy changes activate processes of continuity and/or discontinuity in the evolution of the HE model. This exercise was useful because it enabled observation of the establishment of equity as a policy goal that started losing prevalence in the HE debate after the emergence of the 2011 student social movement. Before 2011, equity was more than an orientation in the form of a goal for policy development. It also reflected the unity of the political and technical content of the HE model. The distinction between political and technical content is a topic that emerges from the data. It refers to the image of society (the political content) and the social means (the technical content) to progress towards that political horizon. While the policy orders developed by Hall (1993) entail an inward analysis of the policy field, the political-technical unity of the content could be summarised as the contribution of the HE model to society (Ntshoe, 2003). This emerging topic distinguishing between the political and technical was relevant because it assumes that the strength of an element acting as a policy goal stems from the unity of both political and technical elements.

Chapter 6 suggests that the HE debate about equity separates political-technical unity, ignoring its political content and becoming a discussion only about technical issues at the end of the period. The shifts in the HE model lead to several questions that will be addressed in the subsequent chapters. Chapter 7 describes the possibility of the promise of free higher education (FHE) unifying the technical and political content of the debate in order to become a new policy goal. The HE discussion tends to agree that FHE seems to occupy the position vacated by equity, but with few clues about whether this change leads to continuities or discontinuities in the debate about HE policy. With the intention of conducting an analysis in terms of continuities and discontinuities, Chapter 8 addresses the inward action of change in

Figure 6.1: Summary of the evolution of the Chilean HE debate about equity between 2003 and 2016

	2003-2010 The accessibility principle	2011 The access with quality and regulation	2012-2016 The technical feasibility of access

6.1. The position of HE in society and its response to social inequalities

6.1.1. HE as a bridge for social inequalities originating in secondary schools

6.1.2. The exoneration of HE from inequalities originating in society

6.1.3. The intermediate position of HE regarding social inequality

6.2. Improvements in HE access as an effect of policies oriented towards privatisation

6.2.1. The private expansion of the diversity of supply improved HE access

6.2.2. Privatisation has been the driver of improving HE access

6.2.3. HE equity still depends on privatisation

6. THE HE DEBATE ABOUT EQUITY: THE ACCESSIBILITY TRAP AND ITS TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

2003 2016

6.3. Equity as a problem: converting the merit issue into technical issues

6.3.1. Merit and talent: the technical-political unity of the HE model

6.3.2. HE equity should be understood in terms of quality

6.3.3. HE equity as a technical problem

——— Lagos` government (2000-2006)   ············ First Bachelet`s government (2006-2010)   — · · — · · First Piñera`s government (2010-2014)   — — — — Second Bachelet`s government (2014-2018)

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Chilean HE policy regarding the evolution of the policy-making process. On the other hand, Chapter 9 takes into account the continuity and discontinuity of the policy paradigm—which could be understood as the action of the outward change of the policy goal in Chilean HE policy.

In practical terms, Chapter 6 represents the beginning of analysis with various points. It starts with an interpretation of the discussion about the Chilean HE policy through a diverse range of topics contained in a 14-year period. At the same time, this 14-year period is divided into three sub-periods marked by the 2011 student social movement. This division is intended to make a difference between the documents and interviews referring to moments: i) before 2011, ii) in 2011, iii) after 2011. The sub-periods allow us to follow the shifts and adjustments regarding equity at different times of the HE policy debate, delimiting special relationships between policy debate and equity-oriented justifications. Chapter 6 thus attempts to examine how *continuity* and *discontinuity* in the equity-oriented HE debate may be traced back in terms of *justifications* to and *critiques* of the HE model. The elaboration of justifications and critiques of the HE model stem from participants in the HE debate who have held social positions with an influential opinion on the development of Chilean HE policy.

Loosely speaking, there are five broad perspectives that characterise the HE debate throughout the analysis chapters depending on the content of the discussion. These perspectives emerged from the data analysis since the pre-existing hypothesis of two large groups rooting for continuity and discontinuity of the HE model became many nuanced positions at the moment of analysing the information. Thus, for example, those defending the HE model and its success do not inform a homogenous cluster. In this regard, their openness to integrate policy changes allowed for recognising a variety of distinctive perspectives within the data.

Three of these perspectives could be grouped into a larger *conservative* cluster that entails defence or support of the equity-oriented model (*status quo* for this thesis). This cluster contains a group of participants that back elitist-selective measures which may be compatible with the new private sector under a mixed supply model. A second group is linked to the interests of the new private HEIs that counteracted the CRUCH interests, especially those of state-run universities. The boundary between these two groups is blurred, and they usually act as a single bloc due to the conservative-neoliberal unification described in Chapter 4. A

third position in the cluster of supporters of the HE model could be described as a reformist group. Politically, they are centre-left participants who defend the HE achievements in recent years and advocate for policy adjustments to fine-tune them. This perspective is grouped into the conservative cluster because they argue that the HE model is perfectible through small changes that does not touch the essence of it.

On the other hand, there is another large cluster reflecting critical positions regarding the HE model. This *critical* cluster contains two groups with different perspectives. One of them is linked to centre-left stances calling for changes in HE. They have seen the equity achievements of the *Concertación* as insufficient. This insufficiency could be considered as an antecedent explaining the crisis highlighted by the students in 2011. The second group in this cluster involves outsiders of the political system demanding structural transformations in HE. They are members of civil society, social movements, and, in some cases, academia. This analysis chapter and the subsequent ones attempt to describe how the themes—concerning a certain policy issue—created by these participants intertwine to inform the Chilean HE model based on the HE discussion about policy.

Each analysis chapter has a figure summarising the emerging themes that define the evolution of the HE discussion during the 14-year period. Figure 6.1 shows the articulation of themes of an equity-oriented HE debate that was almost exclusively dominated by opinions from the sector defending the HE model. Specifically, Figure 6.1 summarises the three main themes garnering most attention among the participants of the policy debate about HE equity: the position of HE in society and its response to social inequalities (6.1), the improvements in HE access as a positive effect of policies oriented towards privatisation (6.2), and equity as a problem: converting the merit issue into quality and technique issues (6.3). These three topics reflect the horizontal interpretation of the figure in the sense that they are themes that evolve throughout the three sub-periods. This horizontal interpretation takes every theme as a sub-section of Chapter 6 in order to show how justifications and critiques form the equity-oriented debate.

However, there is an alternative interpretation of these themes: the vertical interpretation that interprets the articulation of the three themes under analysis but limited to one specific sub-period. In this regard, the sub-period before 2011 shows that the Chilean HE debate focuses the discussion on equity almost exclusively around what McCowan (2016) called the

accessibility of applicants to HE. The second sub-period, involving only 2011—as a turning point—enables the observation of a new understanding of equity because of the themes articulated differently when the student social movement emerged. Finally, the sub-period after 2011 encompasses a new arrangement of the themes involving to how potential technical solutions emerged in response to the demands that arose in 2011. The following paragraphs mainly describe the horizontal interpretation of the data, but Section 6.4 uses the vertical interpretation to summarise the transformations—in terms of continuity and discontinuity—of the Chilean HE debate about equity.

6.1. The position of HE in society and its response to social inequalities

Chapter 4 suggests that the policy oriented towards equity conducted by the new democratic government at the beginning of the 2000s was the main mechanism devised by the *Concertación* to address inequalities due to the neoliberal project. With the aim of working out what HE's potential contribution is to overcome social inequalities, this section explores the position allocated to post-secondary education in the social order and its inherent inequalities. It seeks to describe how the position assigned to the HE model—in broader spaces of social inequality—affects the equity goal pursued by the HE policy. Identification of the position of HE in this framework of social inequalities has become significant since it provides an understanding of how participants in the debate outline strategies oriented towards improving HE equity. Therefore, the goal of equity emerges as a response to social inequalities, but entails different definitions depending on the position of HE in terms of the framework of social inequalities. Therefore, Section 6.1.1 begins by considering HE as both an effect and source of social inequalities so equity improvements could show beneficial effects if it reduces its role as a source of inequalities. However, the emergence of the student social movement in 2011 generated a reaction to this idea. The notion of HE as a source of inequalities loses impetus when it becomes a mere effect of prior inequalities (6.1.2). Finally, Section 6.1.3 takes an intermediate position on HE in the framework of social inequalities subsequent to 2011, but the HE model becomes an inanimate element that is part of a bigger problem in the social fabric. The mobilisation of these definitions is a reaction to the 2011 social movement, since supporters of the model responded by denying the relationship between HE and society. They related the lack of equity to the problem of access due to

segregated secondary education, leaving out the problem of HE as a source of unequal economic returns in the job market.

6.1.1. HE as a bridge for social inequalities originating in secondary schools (2003-2010)

Prior to the 2011 social movement, there was debate about higher education's reproduction of social inequalities. In this regard, most of the opinions were that inequalities originating in secondary school influenced the opportunities of HE access. There would be two major factors hindering HE access: quality differences between secondary schools and the socioeconomic status of students. The initial diagnosis agreed that poorer students attended low-quality secondary schools—usually state-run institutions—and lacked funding to pay for HE, affecting the equity of HE access. Policy efforts should therefore be aimed at improving equity of access to address this situation.

> [T]he political discourse of radical shifts in education sound excessively rhetorical. There are plenty of young, poor people who are marginalised by their poor-quality secondary education. Even those who overcome this obstacle lack funding for HE, and the eligible ones must cross their fingers to avoid being be broadly discriminated against. That is still our Chile.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 05-01-09*
> *Carlos Williamson, Vice Chancellor, PUC, CRUCH*

In addition, opinions linked to conservative views expressed that HE extends inequities to the organisation of the job market. People who can access HEIs obtain higher economic returns than workers with fewer years of study. HE also acts as a source of material inequalities.

> The economic return for HE is very high. While a person with 12 years of education earns only 70% more than another who did not attend any educational level, a person with 18 or more years of education earns 4.3 times more than the former person. This does not happen in developed countries and it is the cause of our large wage differences.
>
> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 11-09-07*

Participants with a more reformist view shared this diagnosis and argued that the HE model reproduces inequalities due to its selection procedures—crystallised in a national test. Selective HE access allocates more deprived students to low-quality HE institutions. This

situation is the result of a vicious circle in which most vulnerable secondary students—attending low-quality state schools— have to compete on an unequal footing with the wealthiest students, who attend private schools with greater economic resources to prepare them for the PSU:

> The PSU outcomes are strongly associated with the type of school, the economic background of the family, and the educational climate at home. The scores inevitably end up discriminating against young people with great talent, but educated in less favourable environments.

> *Opinion Column, La Nación, 27-01-05*
> *Pamela Díaz-Romero, Director Foundation Equitas*

An active policy-maker during the first Piñera government analysed the connection between HE social inequalities and the definition of the school. From a position related to the right wing, she avoided blaming the payment capacity for inequalities in HE access and stated that schools transferred the differences in learning to the HE level.

> Studies show that the reason why people have been left out was wrong. They were left out because of their capabilities, because they studied at a low-quality secondary school, because nobody prepared them for the PSU and various other things. There's a small group that's left out because they don't have enough money to pay for it, but it's not the majority of people who are left out. I'm thinking of those who were left out, the majority who didn't enter [HE], why didn't they access it? Because they did poorly on the PSU, not because they had no cash, money.

> *Interviewee*
> *Blanca Zuñiga, ex MINEDUC advisor during the Piñera government*

Another former policy-maker from the Concertación governments and current dean of a new private university (NPU) stressed the role of school inequalities at the HE level, but including the socioeconomic factor as a determining factor to access HE.

> If you have a bad education, you will necessarily have a low score. It seems crazy, but it's a matter of asking what the per capita income of the family is of a child who's going to take the PSU. You tell me what the per capita income of the family is and I'll tell you the PSU score, and I'll only be wrong by a few points.

Interviewee
Ignacio Durán, former head of Higher Education Division (DIVISUP) and dean of UNAB, NPU

Section 6.1.1 addresses the intermediate position of HE in a chain of educational inequalities that starts with secondary education and ends up with positions in the job market determined by the possession of HE certificates. The reaction to the student social movement from the supporters of the model implied detaching HE from the inequalities in the job market. Section 6.1.2 addresses this shift in the debate in order to identify HE inequalities as an effect of events taking place at the secondary level.

6.1.2. The exoneration of HE from inequalities originating in society (2011)

When the student social movement emerged in 2011, those defending the HE model reiterated that PSU scores had deepened inequalities originating at the secondary education level. PSU scores reflect differences in quality levels in the school system and students attending public schools have lower chances of accessing HE. Although the diagnosis was similar to that in the period before 2011, it was possible to observe the exoneration of the HE model from any social inequality caused subsequent to the HE level.

> The PSU was aimed at achieving greater equity, among other goals, but the results have been totally contrary to what was intended. The tests are aimed at identifying those who are most capable and will be most successful in higher education. In our case, the PSU measures the knowledge acquired in the four years of secondary education and, in this process, many schools, mainly state ones, do not cover all the curricular content. That sole reason, regardless of the depth of the level of knowledge or the quality of the teachers, already puts the students who attend these institutions at a disadvantage.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 04-01-11
Rodrigo Castro, Economist

In addition, the debate about HE policy included critical voices that shared the analysis of regarding inequality. The difference lies in the interpretation of the main factor determining inequalities. A scholar from a state-run university connected social inequalities and HE by highlighting that economic power and social networks become a significant precedent to decide who accesses HE. The social class of students defines equity in terms of access.

With or without expansion of access to higher education, children of families at the top of the social hierarchy have better access to the most prestigious university qualifications because they have additional resources of support and social networks that underpin their privileged position.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 02-11-11
José Miguel Salazar, scholar, PUCV, CRUCH

Both views entail the idea of understanding HE as an effect—but not necessary a source—of inequity caused by prior educational inequalities and relationships of power. A critical scholar from a state-run university even saw the situation as the same now. She used a Chilean colloquialism—the *pituto*[4]—to describe how Chilean students take advantage of social networks, based on social class positions, to define a path of privileges that ends up with HE access.

Well, that's one of the most famous lies, because obviously there was an increase in students. A couple of days ago, *El Mostrador* published an article from a researcher in the United States who conducted research on the networks of, as they say, *pitutos*, or something like that, right? In Chile, they start at school, right? And then there's basically a network between the family of origin, the school, and the university, isn't there? And well, the university only strengthens those existing networks.

Interviewee
Denisse Thompson, scholar, UV, CRUCH

Section 6.1.2 shows that the conception of HE as a source of inequalities expressed in the job market disappeared during the year when the social movement emerged. In this regard, if HE forms part of the framework of social inequalities, its participation is reduced to the point of access to HE. Access to HE would be an effect of prior social inequalities based on the prior economic, social, and cultural resources of the students. Section 6.1.3 examines the issue of the position of post-secondary education regarding social inequalities. It explores a new discursive articulation that reinforced the intermediate position of the period before 2011, but recognised the existence of a paradox with the quality of the HE model that has existed until the present.

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[4] Chilean slang for being well-connected or 'pulling strings'.

6.1.3. The intermediate position of HE regarding social inequality (2012-2016)

During the period subsequent to 2011 it was recognised that post-secondary education is part of the problem of social inequality, but not its leading cause. In the context of the free education debate, there was a return to the understanding of HE as a bridge for external social inequalities. HE would form part of a chain of social inequalities that surpass it. This chain begins with the family background and ends in the job market. The HE model would thus be in an intermediate position between the school and the job market since it can reproduce external inequalities from the school or cause differences in terms of wages because of the higher economic return of HE. However, after 2011, this intermediate position in social inequalities implied that conservative opinions acknowledged a paradox in terms of quality. Because there is a need to maintain selective procedures to achieve high levels of quality at this level, these are simultaneously the source of inequities in access.

> The current system has several advantages, but it suffers from serious flaws that mean that there can be no assurance that the best performing students will enter university. Young people who come from the poorest households, even though they have the aptitude and desire to study, are less likely to do so at universities of excellence— which are the most selective—as the PSU attempts to measure the knowledge acquired in secondary education. Furthermore, it is known that these families settle for free high schools, subsidy-based, or municipal schools, which do not offer the same quality of education as private schools.
>
> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 09-01-12*

The paradox of the intermediate position would also define the HE debate about equality-oriented solutions after 2011. There was an expansion of the range of alternatives to address the social inequalities seen in the model. The need to correct these inequalities became a source of justifications to both extend and change the model. The discussion focused on how maintaining or changing the HE model might affect social inequality. On the one hand, critics advocated for changing the model. A scholar from a CRUCH HEI argued that the state-guaranteed loan (CAE) was the best example to demonstrate that maintaining a model governed by the market was a bad idea. The prevalence of the market could become a source of social inequalities due to a large number of students with debts.

Direct financing to the institution, without charging its students, without indebting them and their families, is the appropriate way to ensure HE, its meaning and its quality, works. This is not achieved with scholarships or the disastrous CAE, both of which are forms of voucher, but with simple and flat universal free education. It is also the correct form of financing throughout the country!

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 22-12-15
Roxana Pey, former dean of Universidad de Aysén, CRUCH

On the other hand, those who rejected changing the model doubted the right response to solve inequalities. An influential scholar, politician, and policy-maker claimed that free higher education (FHE) stopping the market from funding HE might lead to new sources of segregation. He warned that although an FHE policy could eliminate the accumulation of debts, it could cause a situation in which the most deprived would access low-quality institutions more easily.

At the same time, unsustainable or outrageous proposals proliferated, such as the complete free provision of higher education, which would mean transferring a billion dollars annually to young people from the wealthiest quintile of society. Or, failing that, reserving free education not for the poorest and most deserving, but for the relatively richest in cultural and school capital who access state-funded universities.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 14-04-13
José Joaquín Brunner, UDP, NPU

Section 6.1.3 shows another shift in the HE debate on the position of post-secondary education regarding social inequalities. Subsequent to 2011, the idea prevailed that HE does not have an active role in maintaining social inequalities. Although participants in the HE debate recognised that tertiary education is in an intermediate position between school and job market inequalities, its position is surpassed by the social context in which it participates. The chain of social inequality starts with the differential backgrounds of families and HE is only one link in that chain. Moreover, since HE has promoted access to reduce social inequalities, it has reduced the quality of the model. This quality decrease will be responsible for deepening social inequality in the long-term. There would be a paradox of the model of developing HE that would offer two opposing solutions: adjustments to perfect it or radical changes to transform it. These polarised alternatives are included in the complete analysis in

the following chapters, so Section 6.2 will only focus on the efforts of the equity-oriented HE debate to channel and legitimise a tertiary model which addresses the social inequalities that transcend it.

6.2. Improvements in HE access as an effect of policies oriented towards privatisation

The position of HE described in Section 6.1 focuses on what Section 6.2 describes as the core aim of equity-oriented policies: the issue of access. While Section 6.1 covers the issue of equity regarding social inequalities, Section 6.2 addresses how the HE debate devised the role that the HE model should play to reduce these inequalities. This role mainly involves an understanding of post-secondary education as an effect of school and socioeconomic inequalities, so its contribution to improving equity would be linked with the transition from an elitist model to a universal model. With this objective in mind, the discussion on HE concentrated on providing justifications to develop privatisation policies to expand access for more deprived students—ignoring more robust participation of the state. The strategy was successful until the 2011 social movement, when this expansion started receiving criticism. The following describes how these justifications resisted and addressed these critiques. There was mainly a defence of the accomplishments provided by the productive participation of the private sector in democratising HE access.

6.2.1. The private expansion of the diversity of supply improved HE access (2003-2010)

Prior to 2011, there was a strong view within the conservative sector claiming that more extensive diversity of provision would improve HE access. A policy-maker participating in a right-wing think tank and former minister in the first Piñera government stated that expansion of HE coverage depended on greater participation of NPUs and short-cycle institutions.

> The same has happened in higher education, whose increase in coverage of more than 400,000 students in 20 years is 66% due to the incorporation of the private sector into higher education.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 10-08-06
Cristián Larroulet, Libertad y Desarrollo and former minister in first Piñera government

The benefits would even exceed the improvement of HE coverage, since broader HE provision would boost social mobility by enabling HE access for everyone. An editorial in *La Tercera*

claimed that diversity of supply challenges inherent HE elitism because universities became democratic spaces that allowed access to the first generations of students from families.

> It is not true that some [new private HEIs] display evident deficiencies, including well-founded doubts regarding their main motivations to operate, but none of this can hide or be used to ignore the fact that during the last quarter century they have acted as a notable democratising driver of higher education. It is not uncommon for a large number of their students to be the first generation of their families to enter university, a key situation to reducing the strong elitist sense that local higher education has historically had.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 12-01-06*

In addition, supporters of more diverse HE provision claimed that privatisation in HEIs has boosted diversity and improved HE equity through the access of the most vulnerable students. The private diversity of the HE model would become a promoter of social mobility for a large number of first-generation HE students.

> The answer lies in the possibilities offered by private universities, IPs, and CFTs, which enrolled more than 200,000 new students in 2009. This provision, along with that of traditional universities, is what has allowed many young people to be the first in their families to reach higher education.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 06-01-10*

Interviewees also recognised the importance of considerably more diversity in provision for HE access. A scholar from a private CRUCH university established a direct relationship between greater supply and HE access. He stated that privatisation became the primary vehicle to undertake this task, but accompanied by an active state reduced to financing this educational level.

> I mean, I think that if you look at politics during what one could call the 1990s, I believe, until the mid-2000s, there was a focus on expansion, and I would say that's a characteristic not only of, I mean, it's mainly in HE, but it has a more general background … the policy was that the state basically promoted the market. It wasn't that the state would move away, but become an active state, but active in producing mass higher education, that was it.

Interviewee
Bruno Zambra, scholar at CEPPE, PUC, CRUCH

Given the growth of private sector participation at the HE level, state participation was limited to acting as a funding distributor to improve HE access with equity and avoid the emergence of new educational inequalities. The state would thus fulfil the role of correcting inequalities due to privatisation and the market, but is not responsible for anticipating them. This idea of HE equity activated by the state suggests a direct link with the concept of the *Estado Subsidiaro* described in Chapter 4. State support is allocated to disadvantaged people, but leaving the rest of the population out of this support. The equity-oriented HE model was thus not the exception in a deeper relationship between state and society.

> The commission comprised of the Ministry of Education and the students of the 25 CRUCH universities made it possible to reach an agreement so that next year 150 billion pesos [£150 million] will be allocated to guarantee access to higher education for all Chileans able to do so. The students who belong to the 60% poorest families in the country will have their university admission assured.

Editorial, La Nación, 15-09-05

Section 6.2.1 describes how participants in the HE debate—mainly those defending the model—saw the participation of private providers to achieve equity improvements as something valuable. Privatisation was considered to have led to greater HE access, less elitism, and the efficient funding support of the state to redress inequalities. This link between private provision and equity seemed to operate as a source of legitimacy for the Chilean HE model, since the figure of access became a form of expressing the *common good* in society (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). In Boltanski's words, the HE model based part of its legitimacy on justifications from the *market cité*, since private provision provided a sense of justice in access for those students historically excluded from participating in HE. A regime of justifications based on the *market cité* supposes that social actions are coordinated through the marketplace: competition and exchange work as activators of social coordination by providing a common identification of elements based on the price of exclusive goods. Regarding this framework, the privatised nature of the HE model offered a sense of justice in access when excluded students saw a fair price to pay in the form of tuition fees that ensured they could experience HE without academic selection barriers. Section 6.2.2 shows how the

interpretation based on *market justifications* became the main argument to challenge the ideas of change from the student movement in 2011.

6.2.2. Privatisation has been the driver of improving HE access (2011)

When students expressed their demands in 2011, the supporters of the model responded by arguing that there have been remarkable accomplishments in HE in recent years. They highlighted the role played by privatisation in the improvement of HE equity in various directions. Firstly, they defended the claim that new private and SC-TE institutions had broadened the HE offer, enabling the increase of enrolment, especially in the most deprived sectors. Secondly, instead of refuting the anti-private arguments from the student social movement, supporters of the HE model preferred to underline the benefits and accomplishments embodied in the enormous amount of *first-generation* HE students representing social mobility in the country. This situation entailed a new challenge for the HE model because deprived students mostly accessed the private sector. A demand emerged for more equitable state funding for the HEIs bearing the brunt of increased access, that is, the private ones.

> Student financing discriminates according to the institution to which students apply, generating a concentration of the poorest students in one type of university and restricting access to vocational-technical training.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 05-09-11*
> *Rodrigo Fernández, HE consultant*

There was also an attempt to interpret the demands from the student social movement positively. Therefore, a former armed forces representative supporting the HE model interpreted claims for equality of opportunities as a consequence of the progressive economic development of the country. These claims would stem from a type of middle-class demands that have been consolidated ahead of popular ones.

> The problems that begin to affect the population of a country when the average annual income is around $15,000 are of a different nature to those faced in the previous stages of development and, in the case of Chile, they are essentially related to a perception of a lack of opportunities to continue progressing at the desired pace.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 04-11-11*
> *Hernan Cheyre, former vice president of CORFO*

The interviewees helped to understand the link between access, social mobility, and increasing enrolment encompassed by the process of privatisation, but focusing it on the funding of HE policies. Some interviewees even went further and analysed how equity-oriented proposals would historically depend on fairer allocation of state resources for the entire HE provision.

> Undoubtedly, the great task was to provide access and ease the burden on parents. What was the situation in the second half of the 1990s? The pressure for higher education began to grow, but only students from state-run universities. The CRUCH universities had financing, but financing that had some limits. We had an agreement, that agreement was so powerful that in the following period of Michelle Bachelet, there was never a demonstration or protest by HE students. Between 2006 and 2010 there were none. We reached a very powerful agreement. And then, for ´the private students', the pressure from the parents started growing, who began to say, 'I have two children, one goes to the state-run university and has a loan' … or to the public university, including La Católica or La Católica de Temuco, or La Católica de Valparaíso … They received state funds for the young student to study and could give them a scholarship or a loan at 2% [interest], but ´these ones, my second son, he was accepted at Diego Portales University which is accredited', at that time 'and nothing, why?' So that discussion began to permeate into the debate [in 2011]. ´Why are we not going to give access to these other children?
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Rodrigo Cumsille, former Minister of Education in Lagos government*

The sector supporting the HE model saw the equity-oriented debate as a source of justifications to demonstrate the benefits of privatisation in terms of HE access. The reality of the HE model was far from facing a crisis because the student demands were a consequence of the achievements generated by privatisation. Students would be the *first generations* experiencing HE in a context of increasing social development that enabled them to demand more opportunities. Section 6.2.3 addresses how this interpretation based on the greater educational precedents to demand opportunities became predominant in the HE debate about equity.

6.2.3. HE equity still depends on privatisation (2012-2016)

After 2011, the HE debate about equity reacted differently to the social movement demanding public, free, and high-quality education. Supporters of the model saw a possibility in the students' demands for equitable access with quality to demonstrate the benefits generated by privatisation and diversity of provision. A lawyer linked to a right-wing think tank reiterated that a model characterised by privatisation, profit, and broad diversity in the educational offering helped to provide more opportunities for access to vulnerable students who could not attend high-quality institutions otherwise.

> For 20 years, higher education has multiplied several times, giving untold opportunities to thousands of young people thanks to private entrepreneurship. This educational level must be non-profit, but permits—and does not yet prohibit—the use of business related to the supply of infrastructure; that is, the market operated and in a good way.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 16-12-12*
> *Axel Buchheister, Libertad y Desarrollo*

There was also a demand to recognise the role played by a policy focused on grants and loans to extend privatisation and offer diversity. Defenders of privatisation and targeted funding policy argued that failures in the HE model were an effect of the fear to increase market influence and disparage the benefits that it generated.

> This approach [to increase funding to the state sector] ignores the current reality of Chilean education in which the majority of students study at private establishments, and because, if it were to take place, it could generate serious distortions in the system, which would mainly affect young people from the low and middle classes, who would see their access to education affected. The latter has been made possible precisely thanks to the role of private entrepreneurs, who have allowed the expansion of educational coverage.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 25-02-13*

However, the period subsequent to 2011 saw a new position in the debate. This standpoint recognised the mixed nature of the Chilean HE model, but stressed its lack of regulation. This is a moderate position that might could be considered a reformist standpoint. It aimed to

equalise opportunities through broader supply that also involved greater power of state agency. This view takes into account the advances in HE access accomplished during recent years. However, it looks suspiciously at the deregulation of the private sector because it is aware of the failures caused by the same HE model.

> A diversified and rationally-planned education system of the state, incorporating private actors in a regulated manner, will not leave any Chilean without opportunities. On the contrary, it will multiply them according to the real demands of the nation's development.

> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 20-12-12*
> *Juan Ayala, scholar, UTFSM, CRUCH*

Although there were some opinions linked to the student social movement calling for exclusive state control of the HE model in the mainstream media, they were somewhat lukewarm and failed to convert the HE discussion of equity into a convincing critique. Therefore, the concept of equity based on privatisation was dominant in the debate. A former policy-maker active during the *Concertación* governments and current scholar at a new private HEI summarised the acceptance of private supply in post-secondary education. He argued that any proposal involving improvements in terms of equity should consider the private reality of the evolution of national enrolment during the last two decades. In this regard, despite the alleged rejection of the market presence in the HE debate, it would also be necessary to recognise its connection with the reality of higher education through access, funding, and participation in enrolment.

> The Chilean higher education model undoubtedly has a high market component. Again, in order not to make an excessively ideological analysis, we have to look at the figures. I mean, we take three important parameters: enrolment in private institutions, a percentage that families finance regarding the total cost of HE and the composition of the system. The private presence in both the enrolment component and the expenditure component is very high at a comparative level. So, if there is an eminently state system in the region, the closest is probably Cuba. And, if there is a system that is very close to the market system—not including the US—in the region, it's probably Chile. In this sense, it's present and I believe that the design of policies

must be aware that the market is an element that's present. It is not sufficient to eliminate it from the system.

Interviewee
Andrés Alonso Gallo, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former Concertación policy-maker

The HE debate about equity tended to define the content of equity regarding the benefits of broader access produced by private sector participation and diversity of supply. There would be operation of a legitimate HE model that resorted to market justifications to conceive of HE justice as an issue of access (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). In McCowan's words (2016), the HE debate about equity focused on the issue of *accessibility*, since the process of privatisation would have met the requirement of *availability* by providing more places in the HE model. The private solution to the problem of offering more HE places led to framing the discussion in terms of access with equity. In this regard, it is unsurprising that the dispute about the concept of equity displays a near monopoly of perspectives from those defending the HE model—even reformist opinions form part of this cluster. The notion of HE equity thus acquires a private definition. The content of the definition of equity is addressed in Section 6.3, which describes how the notion of merit becomes relevant to establish an image of society.

6.3. Equity as a problem: converting the merit issue into technical issues

After understanding the position of HE in terms of social inequalities (6.1.1) and how policy assumed that equity depended on achieving universal access via privatisation (6.2.2), Section 6.3 analyses how the meaning of HE equity changed during the period. In this regard, before 2011, HE equity displayed a unity of political and technical content, since its definition implied an image of society in which social mobility was a goal based on the merit of applicants (6.3.1). The situation was a little different during the discussion conducted in 2011, because the debate shifted to focus on the differential quality in the access experienced by students (6.3.2). The equity discussion in this period seemed to advance towards a discussion about the issue of *horizontality* instead of *accessibility* (McCowan, 2016), maintaining the concern about social inequalities and mobility. After 2011, there was a new shift, as the concern of equity with quality became a problem of a technical nature, ignoring the political content based on merit (6.3.3). The concept of equity lost its content on social inequality and mobility, and debate started on remedial solutions that led to the notion of an issue of measurements

instead of an image of society. The policy jeopardised its political aspect by shifting entirely to the technical side.

6.3.1. Merit and talent: the unity of the technical and political content of the HE model (2003-2010)

Prior to 2011, the debate about HE equity focused on the appropriate mechanisms to ensure fairer access to this level of education. In general terms, the discussion addressed how to find an accurate means of selecting students with merit. The issue of selection with merit represents the political-technical unity of the concept of equity in the debate. While access rewarding merit reflects the desired image of society, the discussion about selection procedures demonstrates the technical aspect regarding the appropriate means of meeting that purpose. In this context, HEIs would have the task of promoting admission procedures based on the merit of the students. An influential scholar, former policy-maker, and politician claimed that HE access should reward applicants who show high levels of effort during their secondary education.

> The public competition to reward talent, as the ideal of meritocracy was called in the 18th century, was a principle of selection broadly recognised by contemporary democratic societies. It means that opportunities for progressing in life depend uniquely and exclusively on the effort and skill of people, regardless of their place of birth, sex, and other inherited characteristics.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 18-01-06*
> *José Joaquín Brunner, scholar, UAI, NPU*

The recognition of merit was relevant to the HE debate since it would involve promoting personal development. Supporters of the model argued that skills and tools learnt in post-secondary education would enhance the possibilities of better performance in a modern and democratic society.

> Achieving objectives by merit, progress thanks to effort and personal skills, is a selection principle that must prevail in modern societies, as it should in Chilean society. For education, this principle is essential: through it, skills are obtained that, throughout life, will allow people to perform in accordance with their skills and knowledge.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 18-12-06*

In technical terms, there was a particular concern about how to select students fairly. Since admission to traditional universities involves taking a national admissions test, the HE discussion focused on selection procedures. Given that the previous national selection test—*Prueba de Aptitud Académica* (PAA, Academic Aptitude Test)—had already shown difficulties in promoting equitable access, HE saw the implementation of the *Prueba de Selección Universitaria* (PSU, University Selection Test) as an opportunity to reward knowledge learnt during secondary school. At the beginning of the sub-period, the most conservative opinions in the sector supporting the HE model displayed a cautious position. They claimed that the transition from the PAA to PSU should not involve flexibility in HE selection procedures. Flexible ways of selecting students would directly affect the quality of the model, since new private HEIs associated with low levels of quality adopted this strategy to select applicants. This was an elitist stance, arguing that flexible mechanisms of new private admission had immediate consequences for low-quality CRUCH universities. Since they had a disadvantage to compete with the new private sector—because they were mandated to select by test scores—this disadvantage led lower-quality CRUCH institutions to change their admissions procedures. They incorporated flexibility, which affected the quality of the model due to differentiated access.

> Those institutions [traditional universities] are of unequal quality and some of the private ones could surpass them in a serious accreditation system. They have lowered the minimum academic requirements to apply in an evident effort to recruit students, whatever their preparation. They followed the path of the bulk of the private ones, which aspire to increase their students to exploit economies of scale and they virtually do not select.

> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 04-06-03*

However, the implementation of the PSU did not become a solution and the intrinsic failures of selection continued. At the end of the sub-period, a dean from a new private HEI questioned the suitability of the PSU as the primary mechanism of HE access. This questioning of the PSU not rewarding equity became a shared discourse in both elitist and neoliberal groups supporting the HE model.

> For several years we have been discussing whether the PSU's questions really measure knowledge. It is time to open the discussion towards the validation of other forms of

selection for the different entities. They should respond to the mission of each institution, transparently communicating the principles that govern them.

A scholar from a traditional Catholic university who was interviewed explained the importance of merit and selection prior to 2011. He summarised the link between merit and equity according to the possibilities of obtaining funds that enable access to HE. The justification for rewarding merit and talent of students would be essential to build the HE funding system based on loans and scholarships.

By equity, what was understood is what Lagos once said: that no student with capability, with merit for higher education, should be left out because they don't have the money to pay the fee. That was the concept of equity; it was very simple. And in that sense, I think that we've all been deepening what we understand by equity.

Section 6.3.1 suggests that the HE debate mobilised an idea of a society that sought to reward merit. The definition of equity acquired political content that aimed to provide access to those applicants who deserve to study at the HE level. The HE discussion also showed technical concern regarding the selection procedures used to meet the aim of access with merit. Both the political and technical aspects of the HE debate involved a unity of content to develop HE policy. The relevance of merit established a *figure of compromise* with the justifications based on the market *cité* described in Section 6.2.1 (Boltanski & Thévenot). Arguments in favour of rewarding merit became another source of legitimacy. Payment of fees that base access to private HEIs on *market justifications* was supported by a complementary sense of justice in merit to explain why some students accessed the most selective HEIs. Merit in Boltanski's framework of values emerges as an element belonging to the *industrial cité*. It is a demonstration of the efficiency of those *beings* that support it. Furthermore, it is valuable because it enables the prediction of the success of industrial procedures oriented towards production. The idea of merit present in the HE debate about equity contains meaning and links merit to the individual capability of students. Students with merit in their secondary education would have more chances of graduating at the HE level. The figure of compromise

between market and industrial justifications gave the HE model stability that associated the *principle of accessibility* (McCowan, 2016) with the common good of society (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). This balance was challenged in 2011 with the emergence of the student social movement, which led to demands that seemed to encompass the *principle of horizontality* (McCowan, 2016). Section 6.3.2 describes this movement in the HE discussion.

6.3.2. HE equity should be understood in terms of quality (2011)

The association between merit, selection, and equity based on access weakened in 2011. Instead, the issue of providing similar quality to students accessing HE was a focus of attention. Some participants in the debate challenging the student social movement recognised that the increase in coverage was not sufficient to overcome inequalities. Although the diversified quality of HEIs was the crystallisation of these inequalities, the political system was working appropriately to provide solutions.

> There is sufficient consensus that the most important challenge to achieve effective equality of opportunity lies in more equitable access to quality education and, consequently, the proposals designed by the [Piñera] government are oriented in that direction.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 04-11-11*
> *Hernan Cheyre, Executive Vice President of CORFO*

This new concern about quality led to a new conception of the idea of selection as having to incorporate quality criteria. Even a critical scholar from a state-run university suggested that there was a direct relationship between the level of selection and the quality of different institutions.

> It is not surprising, therefore, that higher academic requirements for admission to these institutions also translates into granting more prestigious diplomas. It is not by chance, either, that the most prestigious universities in Chile have maintained or decreased their size in recent years, while less reputable institutions have tried to capture most of the expansion that higher education has undergone, aiming to benefit from economies of scale.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 02-11-11*
> *José Miguel Salazar, scholar, PUCV, CRUCH*

The academic world recognised the new position of quality not only as a potentially conflictive element in the HE debate in 2011, but as a challenge to the entire HE model. In this sense, quality appears connected with justice and equity issues since the articulation of these elements seemed to be a source of popular demand that recurrently generates malaise and mobilisations calling for change in the HE model and society.

> [A]nd then in 2011, I do analysis that explains the same thing. We've written enough about it when there are conflicts in this neoliberal society; this education grows. There are conflicts. The state with its policies is trying to govern these conflicts. It's trying to give it rationality, to make the system comply with certain maxims of justice, equity, and quality. But in doing so, education ends up being tied even more closely to the state, to this mass lucrative system, to this market system and, therefore, it ends up consolidating it, and as it consolidates it, it ends up promoting mobilisation, not preventing it. So, every time, I think every solution, every stop-gap is a disease and you're building a kind of snowball of malaise.

> *Interviewee*
> *Tomás Uribe, scholar, UChile, CRUCH, and, politician and former student leader*

Section 6.3.2 represents a turning point in the discussion. The connection between equitable access and quality seemed to bring a basic conception of the *principle of horizontality* (McCowan, 2016) to the HE debate since the differential quality in HE access became a social issue to solve for stopping the reproduction of socio-economic inequality. Furthermore, the demand for high-quality access led to the problem of a new *regime of justification* being brought up again and reconsideration of the political-technical unity of the HE debate. In Section 6.3.3, those defending the model responded to this scenario by removing the political content from the equity-oriented debate in order to opt solely for a technical perspective to conceive of equity in access. In addition, the introduction of quality as a policy issue meant that the HE debate began a search for the legitimacy of the model outside the limits of the debate on equity.

6.3.3. HE equity as a technical problem (2012-2016)

The period subsequent to 2011 saw a new way of understanding equity. The HE debate reduced the political-technical unity to technical problems and solutions concerning HE access. In this regard, the discussion about how to construct society based on merit began

focusing mostly on selection issues to improve the access of students with merit. For example, equitable solutions to HE access took the form of affirmative policies or new proposals for distributing funds. Both solutions were welcome for participants in the debate, even if they were based on principles in the model that already been criticised. In terms of affirmative policies, there was one which became common in the debate after 2011: the application of a ranking of marks in the selection process. This ranking was a policy devised by CRUCH HEIs, which gave a special bonus in terms of PSU score to secondary students who were in the top 10% of graduates at each school. Those defending this ranking of marks argued that it was a way of rewarding hardworking deprived students with merit.

> The increase in the weight of the [mark] ranking for admission to Chilean universities aims specifically in that direction. In highlighting personal effort above any other consideration, it is a way of recognising those young people who, despite having all the ability, see their options undermined as a result of having grown up in an educational system in which the type of establishment that accepted them is decisive in terms of the opportunities they will have in the future.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 22-09-13*
> *Sergio Lavanchy, former dean of UdeC, CRUCH*

On the other hand, detractors claimed that there was a lack of evidence to apply the policy, showing certain improvisation and limitations in terms of its implementation.

> The preliminary results are not conclusive as to whether this instrument has effectively favoured the most talented students. This confirms that the application of the ranking was hasty and it would have been more advisable to have full clarity on its effects and scope before launching it.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 16-01-13*

Although the ranking of marks in the form of an affirmative policy seemed to bring the issue of merit back to the HE debate, there was a difference from the period prior to 2011. Merit-based access now appeared as a technical issue linked to efficient funding instead of a political issue aimed at social equality. Indeed, supporters of the model highlighted the importance of rewarding the merit of students through the proper and fair allocation of state funding.

Affirmative policies targeted at applicants who deserved to access HE would become the appropriate way of rewarding merit.

> Moving towards a single financing scheme that operates on the basis of variables such as merit and that does not discriminate between types of HEIs is a measure that should also be prioritised.

Editorial, La Tercera, 25-02-13

The ways of facilitating admission thus focused the HE discussion on equity. In this regard, critiques of PSU from supporters formed an increasing consensus. The PSU process was claimed to be annual discrimination in terms of equity. A scholar from a private CRUCH university pointed out the failure of the PSU to meet equitable access requirements when it replaced the PAA. He proposed that solutions should consider comparative international experiences to make it more flexible — supported by alternative tests— such as writing essays. At this point, It should be noted that the mobilisation of justifications of international comparison will be a recurrent argument within the conservative position —and within the transformative position sometimes. The international comparison works as a resource to underpin opinions but with weak understanding of the context in question.

> The inclusion of a writing test is in line with similar changes made to the university selection tests in the USA. Reports indicate that writing tests predict academic performance in college and add new information about applicants to that already collected by conventional tests. Therefore, it is expected that this test will enrich the university selection process.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 17-01-12
David Preiss, scholar, PUC, CRUCH

The shift in the form of understanding equity could be observed in the specific call to support any policy proposal with technical data. The value of data would lie in the possibility of making realistic diagnoses of the current situation of the HE model. In this respect, any solution concerning the equity of the model should involve empirical studies to avoid affecting the levels of equity already achieved.

> The conclusions and proposals of the ´Committee on Student Financing for Higher Education' have generated a profound debate on the challenges facing our country to

generate more and better human capital. The diagnosis and proposals are well oriented towards greater efficiency and equity and dispel several myths, many of them established during the student movement last year.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 24-04-12
Rodrigo Castro, scholar, UDD, NPU

Section 6.3.3 suggests that the belief of conceiving the equity improvements through admission procedures became predominant in the HE debate. It is also significant that the HE debate about equity was dominated particularly by opinions defending the HE model. Even when the student social movement brought criticism of the model, the actors criticising it did not form part of the equity-oriented debate. The loss of its political content could convey this lack of interest in disputing the concept of equity on the part of detractors of the HE model. Since equity no longer contained the political-technical unity of the HE debate, it would not be surprising for critics of the HE model to focus their efforts on other topics, such as the free education reform promised by the political system. In general terms, the emergence of the demand for *horizontality* unbalanced a HE model that threatened its legitimacy and undermined the correspondence between the political and technical content. Section 6.4 attempts to expand on these shifts in the HE discussion by providing an analysis of the prevalent discourses integrating the themes of the HE position (6.1), privatisation (6.2), and the concept of equity for each sub-period (6.3).

6.4. The disintegration of the equity-oriented arrangement in the HE model

The vertical interpretation of the debate enables comprehension of the interplay between the themes analysed in the previous sub-sections. Therefore, once privatisation met the requirement of *availability* by expanding the number of places offered by HE provision prior to 2011, the arguments focused mainly on the problematic HE *accessibility* (McCowan, 2016). HE access took the form of a common good for an HE model that based its legitimacy on the *market and industrial justifications* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2011). In this context, it seemed to be more relevant to increase enrolment regardless of the quality and prestige of the institutions accessed by the students.

So when public education was wanted in a mass system, or rather education in the CRUCH group, the old state university credit fund was constructed. Later, when they realised that this policy was insufficient, MECESUP was built, for example. MECESUP

came from the competition, but also provided funds to build infrastructure, funds for big issues. Later that had some repercussions, for example, in the science and technology policies of CONICYT, everything was mass HE, mass HE in general. I think that was like a great orientation. That seems to me like the great logic behind it.

<div align="right">Interviewee
Bruno Zambra, scholar at CEPPE, PUC, CRUCH</div>

In 2011, the equity-oriented debate moved towards a new understanding of equity regarding HE access. The supporters of the HE model mainly interpreted the issue of equity in access as a promise met by private educational provision that increased net enrolment at the HE level. They called for defence of the achievements to address the criticism from the student social movement. In practical terms, there was a recognition of the problems related to quality access, but changes were scorned in the admission process or the ownership of the educational provision. Specifically, selection and privatisation became the only alternatives to achieve equity for accessing HE with quality. This represented a reactive response to the students' demands by reinforcing justifications in the *compromise between market and industrial cités* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Even those participants of the HE discussion that criticised privatisation recognised that private provision had led to improvements in HE access. The main difference from the period prior to 2011 lay in an emerging concern about quality on the part of students. A scholar that advocated for a policy of greater state participation organised these concerns and described how the quality issue became more relevant after coverage improved in the HE model. It seemed that the *horizontality principle* was here to stay in the HE debate.

In other words, the expansion of Chilean higher education, particularly the expansion of the private sector from the second half of the 1990s until now—which has been impressive and catastrophic at the same time—has led to systematic thinking on the subject of quality. So, a series of public policies have been created aimed at generating ministerial capacities, generating capacities in organisation, generating quality control in the other institutions, in the institutions, with the express objective of guaranteeing that the training provided, and which produces public goods, generally meets minimum quality standards.

<div align="right">Interviewee</div>

The focus on quality meant that the *accessibility principle* lost importance in the HE debate in 2011. This shift meant that the HE discussion encapsulated accessibility in specific arrangements of efficacy and efficiency after 2011. Quality did not become a goal and privatisation, as the expression of the neoliberal paradigm, seemed to remain untouched. In addition, given that HE was positioned in a chain of social inequalities—in which any alternative proposed could produce worse effects for the HE model—there was a call to conduct policy considering a correct diagnosis of the situation and respecting the reward of student merit. Internal solutions to the social divide highlighted by students should therefore follow technical criteria that would shape a new concept of equity in the HE debate. This new concept of equity would shed the political content that was intended to achieve an image of a society facing social inequalities as described prior to 2011. The breakdown of the political-technical unity of content raised the question of the position of equity as a goal. The definition of the concept of equity after 2011 lay in the instruments—akin to elements forming part of the second level of the policy (Hall 1993)—implemented in pursuing the policy rather than political substance seeking to affect society.

> You have to go a little bit further in policies that allow you to have these conditions [of access] with equity, or more reasonable equity, with smaller inequality gaps, in order to be able to enter the most selective universities. So, I like policies like emblematic schools[5] specifically because they're a shortcut. It's like an injection into the vein of the policy of greater equity. I don't think having bicentennial schools is the solution for the whole system, of course not. But it does mean that those students who were born in *San Bernardo*—which is my district—can be admitted to study medicine at '*La Chile' [Universidad de Chile]*. And I don't like the idea that the most selective universities are only elitist in economic terms and not in intellectual terms.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Hernán Rossi, right-wing former MP and minister in second Piñera government*

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[5] Emblematic school (*Liceo Bicentenario* in Spanish) was the term used to name an HE policy implemented during the first Piñera government. The aim was to provide support to a certain number of state secondary schools to maintain and improve high quality standards. They started as selective institutions that were intended to improve the HE possibilities of their students by increasing their PSU scores.

Conclusion

The justifications and critiques describing the HE debate about equity suggested a particular orientation concerning HE policy. This orientation could connect with what McCowan (2016) called *accessibility*, as described in Chapter 3. This theoretical framework enables an interpretation of the equity-oriented debate prior to 2011 in terms of *accessibility*. Although the *availability principle* seemed like a previous achievement led by the privatisation that expanded HE places, the HE discussion appeared reticent in terms of *horizontality*. The debate prior to 2011 thus concentrated mainly on factors increasing HE access. The Chilean HE discussion focused on how to increase enrolment without incorporating the new obstacles and challenges produced by the solutions implemented. There was a promotion of privatisation, targeted policy, meritocracy, individual funding, and anti-elitism proposals, but without questioning the legitimacy of an HE model based on these values. The efforts to demonstrate the benefits of privatisation led to HE being interpreted as a *regime of justification* ruled by the *market cité* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). The achievement of equity would depend on how fair the exchange was between access to *an exclusive* good—crystallised in HE—and the price needed to achieve it—expressed as tuition fees. However, the data suggested that privatisation based on *market justifications* was not sufficient. The legitimacy of the model required another source of justification. The market polity needed to establish a *compromise* with the *industrial cité* to resist critiques addressed at this level. In this regard, access to privatised HEIs integrated with access to selective HEIs under a figure of social justice represented by the merit of students. While the marketplace enabled the access of historically excluded students if they had purchasing power, merit operated on a justification based on efficiency for the students accessing the top-quality selective universities. Targeting policies, reward for merit, and individualised funding demonstrated that the policy decision was based on justifications of effectiveness to respond to criticism. In this scenario, the *accessibility principle* (McCowan, 2016) worked as a common good (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) to seal the *compromise between industrial and market cités.*

In 2011, the equity-oriented HE debate attempted to respond to the main demands of students, especially those related to quality in terms of access. The defenders of the HE policy claimed that the model already met quality demands through private efforts established in policies for funding and increased supply. The demand for quality from students seemed to

include shades of the *horizontality principle* in the HE debate. However, the supporters of the model reacted by avoiding developing the dispute about access with quality and converted the topic of access into a technical discussion. Equity separated the political-technical unity of the content in such a way that it began displaying a questionable position as a policy goal. After 2011, the debate focused on equity sought refuge in its technical justification so the question arose regarding whether there was another principle that could take its place in discussion on Chilean HE. In this regard, although equity continued being a fundamental theme in the debate through technical arguments, this issue has the possibility of transferring its political content to another factor that can acquire it. Chapter 4 suggests one possible candidate, since the first offer made by the political system was an HE reform focused on the application of a free policy. There were doubts about the capability to transform the free education policy into a goal. As Chapter 3 indicates, free education policies around the world involve financing decisions in the policy field, so they form part of the policy instrument level (Hall 1993). The issue thus addresses the possibility that the free education policy could become a goal even though its conceptual definition limits it to the field of instruments. Chapter 7 attempts to respond to this by following how justifications and critiques about free HE evolved during the 14-year period in the Chilean HE model.

7. THE HE DEBATE ABOUT FREE EDUCATION: A NEW POLICY GOAL

Although technical elements linked to equity continued to be recurrent issues in the Chilean HE debate after 2011, Chapter 6 suggests a shift in the political centrality of equity as a goal pursued in the policy discussion. By drawing on Hall's framework (1993) of policy orders, it was argued that the position of equity as a goal in a neoliberal paradigm meant eliminating its political content, thus resembling more of a debate about the most suitable instruments to develop a policy than a goal to be met. The reduction of this to the order of *instruments* (Hall's *second-order level*) cast doubts on whether equity could be considered a *goal* (*third-order level*) and what the new goal would be if there was a change at this policy level. On the other hand, in the event that a change of goals occurred, questions would arise about whether this change might be a *discontinuity* in terms of leading to a transformation at the level of the neoliberal paradigm dominating the development of the policy. Chapter 7 addresses the first series of questions by analysing the debate about free higher education (FHE) between 2003 and 2016. It refers to the mobilisation of justifications and critiques regarding FHE to work out its possibilities of becoming a goal to organise and legitimise decisions made in the policy field.

Specifically, the study of the FHE debate seeks to explore how it intertwined the relationships and disruptions with the equity-oriented debate during the three sub-periods under analysis. Special attention is given to the shift in the FHE debate based on an encapsulation of the limits of the equity-oriented debate prior to 2011 towards a more liberated and independent nature after 2011, suggesting that it gained a new political and technical centrality in the HE policy debate. The appropriation of the political content neglected by the equity-oriented debate in the final sub-period suggests that a change of goal took place after the 2011 student social movement. However, the findings do not indicate that this change was necessarily a *discontinuity* in the policy field. Indeed, a large number of participants in the debate started complaining that the FHE project acquired the form of a reformist critique—rather than a radical one (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005)—that substituted one goal for another without affecting the neoliberal paradigm in which HE policy operates. The question about *continuity* and *discontinuity* in the HE policy remains open. Chapter 7 is, therefore, the halfway point on an analytical route that also considers the description of the policy instruments and the decision-making process (Chapter 8), while the final chapter (Chapter 9) seeks to assess how

continuity and *discontinuity* have developed a particular relationship in the Chilean HE policy paradigm.

Regarding the first series of questions derived from Chapter 6, the possibility of converting free education into a policy goal involves overcoming various challenges for a policy understood as belonging to the level of funding instruments. Firstly, since the beginning, the decision to implement an FHE policy was a political response to student demands that also included public and high-quality education, which seemed to have been neglected as policy alternatives by the political class. Indeed, the process of dividing policy, separating free education from the potential goals of high-quality and public education, remained a significant factor defining the current HE debate. Another issue involved the technical possibilities of developing such a type of reform. Free education seemed like an old desire from the times of elitist higher education and no longer suited to an HE model struggling to improve enrolment rates in pursuit of universal access—although this image did change over time. However, perhaps the most crucial challenge came from the political compromise that free education entailed: the potential conversion of the FHE reform into a goal that could change the paradigm encompassing the whole of society. Under Hall's framework (1993), this compromise at least represents a difficult dilemma since it would require some flexibility to explain how a policy instrument might become a policy goal. In contrast with cost-sharing policies, Chapter 3 shows how free education represented a discussion contained at what Hall called the level of policy instruments or the second-order of policy development. Free education as an instrument belonging to the second level of policy development would need to combine with what the author called a policy goal.

In general terms, Chapter 7 is an attempt to examine these issues by describing how the Chilean HE debate addressed the topic of free higher education between 2003 and 2016. As Figure 7.1 shows, the 14-year period involved the same three sub-periods analysed in Chapter 6, emphasising the 2011 student social movement as a turning point in the HE debate. The main theme to analyse entailed the possibility of the FHE reform becoming a policy goal that would replace equity's role during the previous period. Its conversion into a goal would assume that the FHE policy would be able to represent a particular image of society, filling the political void left by equity. This potential change of free education into a goal also relates to the central question of this research, since the replacement of one goal for another would

Figure 7.1: Summary of the evolution of the Chilean HE debate about free education between 2003 and 2016

2003-2010 The political predominance of equity still	2011 The popular demand of free education	2012-2016 The installation of the FHE debate

7.1. The incompatibility between free education and equity

7.1.1. Free higher education as an inequitable policy

7.1.2 FHE as a regressive policy in the mainstream media debate

7.1.3. The overused resource of contrasting free education with equity

7.2 FHE as a popular demand

7.2.1. Rejecting and supporting FHE policy

7.2.2. The conversion of FHE policy into a popular demand

7.2.3. FHE as a policy issue

7. THE HE DEBATE ABOUT FREE EDUCATION:

2003 **THE HE DEBATE ABOUT FREE EDUCATION: A NEW POLICY GOAL**

2016

7.3 FHE as an ideological-political issue

7.3.1. The debate about free education as a political-ideological shift

7.3.2. The critiques of a potential FHE policy oriented towards the market

Lagos government (2000-2006) ·········· Bachelet government (2006-2010) — · · — · · Piñera government (2010-2014) — — — — Bachelet government (2014-2018)

open the door to establishing a *discontinuity* in the policy field.

Like Figure 6.1 on equity in Chapter 6, Figure 7.1 represents a summary of the evolution of the Chilean HE debate about free education between 2003 and 2016. Similarly, the FHE-oriented debate can be interpreted in two different ways: i) the horizontal interpretation, regarding the transition of different themes transversely for the entire period considering the changes in terms of justifications and critiques, and ii) the vertical interpretation, concerning the interlinking of the same themes but limited to each sub-period to which they pertained. Chapter 7 mainly describes the content of the debate about FHE considering the horizontal interpretation but looking at the vertical relationships between the themes in Section 7.4. The horizontal interpretation of the FHE debate involves three topics: 7.1) the persistent conservative view of free education that places it in opposition to the equity goal and denies that the political content can be transferred from equity to the FHE debate; 7.2) the transformation of the free education debate from a weak technical proposal prior to 2011 into a social demand in 2011 and a political reality seeking technical alternatives after 2011; and 7.3) the complete absorption of the political-ideological content by the FHE debate after 2011. The two first topics were transversal elements insofar as they were present in the three sub-periods, while the third only appeared in the sub-period after 2011. Despite its absence in the two first sub-periods, its emergence in the period after 2011 showed the FHE reform's potential conditions to become a new goal in the Chilean HE model.

7.1. The incompatibility between free education and equity

Chapter 6 shows how the equity debate started a transition with the loss of its political content, although retaining technical relevance at the end of the analysis period. While there was a monopoly of both types of content during the first period between 2003 and 2011, the 2011 student movement affected the HE discussion, leading to their separation and throwing doubt on the possibilities of reuniting them. In this context, the FHE debate also experienced the influence of this policy shift and, due to political circumstances, emerged as a candidate to fill the political void left by equity. Below is a description of how supporters of the HE model understood the political content of the FHE debate according to the evolution of the equity debate in each sub-period. Although policy arrangements encompass countless possibilities of relating policy instruments and goals (e.g., the alternative of combining equity with cost-

sharing, discarding free education), those defending the model rejected linking equity with FHE alternatives due to equity considerations.

Section 7.1.1 highlights the basis of this reasoning by reflecting how the political foundations of the equity debate defined the limits of the FHE debate prior to 2011. Although there were some references to FHE as a policy alternative, they were contained within the political boundaries of a HE debate in the mainstream media that understands equity as the image of a desirable society. Section 7.1.2 extended this political perspective by resorting to the idea of the regressive economic risk that FHE could entail. The regressive argument's focus meant a strategic response to a student movement that devised an FHE demand to solve the broken equity promise made by the democratic governments. Finally, Section 7.1.3 describes the last equity-based justifications opposing the FHE reform but drawing on the overused reasoning already analysed in Chapter 6. The interesting point in this section involves the shift in the most conservative positions, which recognised that the political debate had been dominated by the call for free education. In this regard, it should be noted that Section 7.1 only considers the political view of those defending the model since it demonstrated transversal significance during the entire period. The technical debate about free higher education seems more varied in terms of perspectives and requires a section of its own (Section 7.2 of this chapter).

7.1.1. Free higher education as an inequitable policy (2003-2010)

Prior to 2011, the HE debate almost unanimously agreed that free education would be an inequitable policy. Free education policy would not be advisable because HE provides social and economic privileges. As a consequence, students should have to pay for these advantages. Free education would be wrong because it would reinforce the inequitable nature (Section 7.1.1) of HE as a source of future inequalities seen in the job market. Even the Chilean politicians forming part of the centre-left alliance ruling the country before 2011 shared this consensus.

> First, it must be said that higher education cannot and should not be free. There is no reason for the state to give away degrees for lawyers, surgeons, architects, sociologists, or social worker. A diploma is a tool that will allow the holder to earn a living in much better conditions than the rest of their fellow citizens.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 24-06-03
Jorge Schaulsohn, former MP of the Concertación coalition

In addition, the participants in the debate claimed that free education would not contribute to improved access. Achieving universal access would require less support from state resources and cost-sharing funding based on privatised supply was promoted instead. Moreover, universal HE access under an FHE policy would stop the process of privatisation that increased the opportunities for enrolment among the population that has been historically discriminated against.

> The agility and versatility demonstrated by private institutions is further proof of the management capacity of people if the institutional framework gives them space to exercise their entrepreneurial freedom. The demand for *university for all* that can only be channelled through fiscal disbursement has been ruled out.
>
> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 02-01-03*

Also related to equity, the HE discussion rejected the free education policy because of its elitist and regressive nature. Free education would be an anachronistic policy that had historically been demonstrated to lead to lack of coverage, equity, and democracy.

> This seems to be the case of intellectuals, artists, and bureaucrats in academia, who want to maintain their positions of privilege, preventing competition. They descend from those who advocated free higher education, paid for by the poor people for a few children from the wealthiest sector. They don't understand democracy, freedom, and respect for human rights.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 30-10-03*
> *Álvaro Bardón, scholar, UFT, NPU*

The criticism of any argument promoting free education because of its elitist and regressive tendency was even the reason to defend projects oriented towards cost-sharing policies, as in the case of the CAE reform.

> For those who have opposed this project [CAE], the reform would be inserted into a mercantile tradition or through the privatisation of higher education. Appealing to our republican tradition, more than a few have argued that higher education should be understood as a public good. The state cannot separate itself from its financing if it

wants to expand coverage. Isn't that what happened in the 1960s with higher education for all, when all meant an exclusive 3% of students?

The perception of the FHE alternative as an inequitable policy was seen across the board in the entire political spectrum. The following statement, made by an interviewee who was a student leader in 2011 and who is now is an important left-wing politician, expresses this idea clearly.

> To give you an example, I don't know if this works for the thesis, but I used to think, when we demanded 'free and free-of-charge University of Chile' in the marches [before 2011], I didn't yell the free-of-charge part because it seemed unfair to me. I believed that those who had the most should have to pay. And then I realised later and changed that conception.

During this sub-period, therefore, the equity debate restricted the limits of the FHE debate. Contrary to what Carpentier proposed in Chapter 3, there were no defenders of a free education model supported by funding through taxes to achieve equity, nor were there any recognition of higher education's public benefits. Since HE was seen as an exchangeable good with the capacity to generate economic value after graduating, the market *cité* became a source of critiques of any FHE alternative (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006). Politically, FHE was an impossibility as equity improvements monopolised all of the policy efforts in the Chilean HE model. In addition, the left-wing sector historically linked to the promotion of FHE policies did not dispute the hegemony of the set of cost-sharing instruments by calling for higher taxes to finance FHE, nor did it claim public benefits stemming from this type of policy.

7.1.2 FHE as a regressive policy in the mainstream media debate (2011)

In 2011, when the student social movement demanded free education (along with public and high-quality education), the HE debate in the mainstream media reacted immediately, remarking on the policy's regressive character. Although there was a reinforcement of the political perception linking free education to inequalities between HE graduates and non-graduates in the job market, there was also an expansion of these critiques. Firstly, supporters

of the model stated that free higher education took state resources that could be allocated to other educational levels.

> These are the main arguments by which most economists argue against the free policy at this level. Since public resources are scarce, it is better to prioritise the other educational levels. For example, to improve the quality of preschool care from the age of three. Also, to increase the resources available to schools by starting with those that serve the most vulnerable population and the first few years.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 04-10-11*
> *Pablo González, former policy-maker in Frei government*

Secondly, there was an in-depth development of the anti-elitist argument conceiving of free education as a regressive policy already provided prior to 2011. Free HE would be regressive because it would focus resources on an elite of privileged students who mostly attend the most prestigious state-run universities. The lack of funding would even lead to a reduction in the admission possibilities of poorer students to private and SC-TE institutions, with access becoming unfair and inequitable. Indeed, the first Piñera government initially made the idea of *free higher education as a privilege* the primary strategy to confront the students' demands. A liberal political analyst described the articulation of the discourse adopted by the government in the following terms:

> This week the efforts were concentrated on another central issue: the free education that CONFECH [Confederation of student unions of Chile] is demanding leaves out 70% of students in higher education, those attending private universities and short-cycle tertiary education. That is, what the government [the first Piñera government] did was to draw attention to the fact that the demands of the student movement only represent the interests of a certain pressure group and do not provide a response to the debts of the vast majority of Chilean students. This majority don't attend the CRUCH institutions.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 28-10-11*
> *Cristóbal Bellolio, scholar, UAI, NPU*

Finally, those defending the model argued that the free education policy was regressive, as people receiving free funds have higher chances of dropping out of HE, while those who pay would have better incentives to finish their degrees.

There are also other problems associated with free education. If the use of resources is not paid, the institutional costs of not graduating are reduced. Universities also have fewer incentives to take care of their enrolment, since their financing does not depend on it. Although this could be addressed on the supply side through institutional financing systems that encourage graduation and retention, what is observed is that the average years for graduation and dropout are higher in free institutions.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 04-10-11
Pablo González, former policy-maker in Frei government

Some interviewees summarised the regressive view of the FHE student demand by reiterating that previous policies on equity were the right way to develop HE.

From that point of view, on the contrary, one could say that the student movement and its impact on the discourse of equity had regressive effects because, let's say, it interrupted a path that was beginning to be corrected and that allowed us to start removing the cobwebs, and to say 'well, actually, it doesn't make much sense to discuss free HE while we have children in conditions of complete inequality or, worse still, in conditions of vulnerability, like in SENAME [National Service for Minors], until we manage to do something decent there'. So, what's the sense of having this other discussion? Well, it seems to me that from that perspective there was a kind of regression of the educational discourse.

Interviewee
Miguel Ángel Smith, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former minister of the Concertación coalition

7.1.3. The overused resource of contrasting free education with equity (2012-2016)

After 2011, the most conservative opinions in the HE debate criticised the FHE reform, resorting to the use of inequity arguments to reject the implementation of the policy from a slightly different perspective. They saw a political threat in their monopoly of the definition of free education and expanded the criticism of it with justifications from previously unexplored ground. Since the 2011 social movement weakened the political position, conservative discourse strove to maintain the state of affairs by drawing on an equity debate that was increasingly devoid of legitimacy. Firstly, as mentioned in Section 7.3.3 with regard to the merit issue, there was a call from conservative scholars to separate the FHE policy from access to HE with merit.

That emotional speech is a half-truth. It conceals that attending university doesn't provide inclusion or social mobility if students don't make an effort and if teachers don't have academic quality. Did you know, dear reader, that the government's free educational proposal removes academic merit as a condition for obtaining financial aid? Will there be social mobility for those who attend free education, without having or gaining academic merit? No.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 20-12-15
Salvador Valdés and Carlos Williamson, scholars, PUC, CRUCH

Secondly, the former members of the Concertación opposed to the FHE policy also suggested that even if FHE were to be universal in terms of coverage, its regressive character would prevail since high-income students would be the main beneficiaries of a universal allocation of HE public funding.

Proposals like this [universal free education] acquire –oh, paradox!– the status of progressive alternatives. However, they actually constitute a flagrant retreat towards practices typical of the elitist university and its hidden plan to make cheaper the price paid by wealthiest class to accumulate of human capital.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 14-04-13
José Joaquín Brunner, scholar, UDP, NPU

Thirdly, there was a rejection of targeting free education at the 60% of the most impoverished people since it would enhance segregation in the model: the most deprived students would only be able to attend institutions participating in the policy. In contrast, wealthier students might isolate themselves in private high-quality, tuition-fee-funded institutions that do not participate in the scheme.

The most likely scenario is a general deterioration in quality, a massive transfer of poor students to free universities that are not prepared to receive this contingent, and eventual segregation from private universities not adhering to the free education policy and receiving only higher-income students.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 11-08-16
Carlos Williamson, dean of USS, NPU

The above argument became the source of justification for a new position regarding the FHE policy. When FHE reform became a political demand subsequent to 2011, the private sector and defenders of the HE model gradually started redefining the relationship between FHE policy and equity. They used equity-oriented arguments and began demanding free education for institutions forming part of the privatised provision. They claimed it would be unfair to only allocate public resources to traditional institutions because new privates HEIs received the most deprived students, reflecting the inequitable tendency of the policy. This shift seemed to be the last step in conflating the FHE policy with the previous aim of improving equity by improving access to HE. Free education became a political triumph and an image of a desirable society.

> It can be observed that the highest-income students are highly concentrated in the most selective universities in the country, among which the largest ones are those belonging to CRUCH, which are both state and private. The few students in the lowest quintile are, for the most part, in IPs or CFTs, and are the ones that most require support. This support is not included in the proposed policy.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 17-10-15*
> *Hugo Lavados, former dean of USS, NPU*

The political shift adopted by those defending the HE model was also observed among scholars who supported the demand for FHE from the student social movement, reflecting the significant change from the conservative perspective.

> Today, taking advantage of their dominant position [new private institutions] in the higher education market and the poor governance of the system by the state, they—and their representatives in the political system—also demand free education, arguing that otherwise lower-income students, who also study in their classrooms, would be discriminated against.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 17-12-15*
> *Marco Kremerman, scholar, USACH, CRUCH*

A right-wing politician assuming the political defeat over the FHE reform commented how equity—linked to elements from the civic cité expressed as constitutional laws—became the final death rattle and a mere instrument to soften the change in policy.

I mean, a lot of things happened. There was a *political demolition*, but it was a mini-demolition compared to what happened before. So we were able to go to the constitutional court to demand that free education also had to consider the universities, the students from private universities, etc. A critical social mass was formed that allowed us to present our points of view, which would otherwise not have been possible. If the government had started off with free education as the primary policy, it would have been very likely that it could have been approved without any problem. It wouldn't have been possible for the opposition [the right-wing] to form a defence for, for example, vulnerable students from private universities or technical training centres such as that made considering the situation.

Interviewee
Pedro Pablo Swett, former right-wing MP

The last attempts to contrast free education with equity seemed to be another expression of the loss of the political content in the orientation towards equity as the primary goal of the HE model prior to 2011. Since family payments became an obstacle to universal HE access, FHE started gaining terrain in the mainstream debate to meet the access goal. In this regard, defenders of the equity-oriented model recognised the political defeat, while the FHE-oriented debate seemed to absorb the political content of the HE discussion.

7.2. Free HE as a popular demand

In contrast to Section 7.1, Section 7.2 focuses on the HE debate regarding the actual possibilities of implementing an FHE policy. These possibilities are understood as a technical debate to differentiate from the political debate defined in order meet a particular image of society. This decision meant that the political debate about free higher education is divided into three parts in an attempt to align with the temporal transversality of the analysis. While Section 7.1 shows how conservative discourse tried to limit the FHE issue to the equity debate, Section 7.2 examines the political contributions of supporters of the social movement and the technical response to discuss free education in 2011. Finally, Section 7.3 shows a distinct structure due to the emergence of political-ideological considerations about the HE model. The tripartite shape of the political debate about free education affected the approach to the technical discussion depending on the political limitations imposed on the potential alternatives to develop an FHE reform in each sub-period. Section 7.2.1 shows how the

conservative discourse tended to unanimously reject any technical FHE alternative prior to 2011—there were few opinions backing any real possibility of implementing FHE, but they were aware of the risk of producing inequitable effects. Section 7.2.2 explores how those defending the model reiterated the impracticalities of the students' demand for FHE in 2011, but stressed that the social movement changed the political context to enable free education to be considered a technical possibility. Considering the political change, Section 7.2.3 describes how the technical rejection of implementing the FHE reform gave way to a debate regarding the correct way of proceeding with a policy that seemed established.

7.2.1. Rejecting and supporting FHE policy (2003-2010)

The political debate about free education prior to 2011 ruled out any possibility of carrying out an FHE reform. The right-wing, former Concertación members defending their political oeuvre and conservative scholars argued that an FHE reform would involve moving away from the image of an equitable society. However, in contrast to the political agreement, the technical discussion about the possibilities of implementing FHE involved a wider variety of perspectives on the potential realisation of the policy. Firstly, those opposed to the FHE policy highlighted its unfeasibility due to the excessive state funding needed to implement it.

> Students are on the streets to reject the new university student financing law, demanding a system of differentiated fees, greater payment facilities and, in many cases, demanding free higher education. Although all these demands are legitimate, it is necessary to take into account that public resources are scarce and, therefore, certain priority areas of investment must be defined.
>
> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 08-07-05*

Moreover, international experience—in developed countries—had shown a historical trend towards ruling it out as a practical policy.

> Student organisations, prone in many cases to the confrontational handling of this discussion, could make a significant contribution by recognising that education cannot be free for everyone. This is not even the case in the most developed countries.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 01-07-03*

Although there was not sufficient articulation, the novelty during this period was the emergence of a few opinions linked to the left-wing that supported FHE policy in technical

terms. They argued that FHE could be an acceptable policy given past experiences limiting it with criteria of quality but recognising its elitist tendency.

> Education was not universal, but it was free and high-quality. In the third cycle, university education, coverage was below 10% of the population of the age to study. But, once again, it was free and of great quality.

> *Editorial, La Nación, 20-06-08*

Also, left-wing voices called for free education in relation to national development. FHE policy would form part of a strategic decision to promote the public orientation of the HE model.

> Free education is not the same as public funding. Public funding simply means that the source of resources for professional training and scientific development is part of fiscal policy. The economic growth and social development strategy depends on the success of this fiscal policy. In other words, public and free university must be articulated with a policy of stimulating careers in areas or sectors that are part of the national strategy for development.

> *Opinion Column, La Nación, 02-06-04*
> *Francisco Lovolpe, scholar, Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora (Argentina)*

One of the scholars interviewed analysed the possibilities of FHE policy before 2011. His discourse indicated that free education was an impossibility and beyond the scope of the HE debate.

> They are people who talk about the politics of possibilities. And if someone had said 'free is possible in 2005', to give you an example … it wasn't possible. It wasn't possible because the political actors disagreed that it would work that way. On the contrary, the political actors, and here the influence of the World Bank is very strong, and I believe that from the year 1997, Chilean politics was highly affected by that. It was the idea of loans linked to the future wages of graduates. Therefore, HE policy was always how we maximise the use of resources to reach more people. It never assumed that higher education was going to be free for everyone. So it wasn't a question of how it was understood, but of how feasible or non-feasible it was to think of such a hypothesis in the past and, secondly thinking about higher education in a scenario

where it's more and more massive because this means that it is more and more expensive.

Interviewee
Luis Enrique Rozas, scholar, PUCV, CRUCH

Section 7.2.1 discusses an FHE-oriented debate in a different light to that seen in Section 7.1.1. While the latter views the political debate limiting the FHE discussion to the constraints of equity, the former discusses the technical possibilities of implementing FHE. Section 7.2.2 shows that political actors and scholars saw FHE as a realisable demand, but also bearing other policy priorities in mind. It is a description of how lukewarm opinions on FHE moved towards a popular demand, converting it into a political basis in order to develop it as a technical possibility.

7.2.2. The conversion of FHE policy into a popular demand (2011)

In 2011, defenders of the HE model reacted to the social movement by reiterating the negative view of free education policy. Specifically, they stressed the technical difficulties of implementing it according to various themes. Although there was a repetition of international evidence to criticise FHE alternatives, those defending the model devised an internal critique based on evidence. They highlighted its anachronism and remembered that the origin of the current inequalities came from the application of FHE during the elitist HE model. Therefore, the demand for FHE would not be appropriate for current society.

> Many proposals outlined in the recent demonstrations reflect nostalgia for an educational system very similar to the one that was in place for much of the 20th century and which is undeniably responsible—not on its own—for part of the problems in our education. For example, the lack of equity in the school system has significant blame for the enormous education gaps in our adult population, the origin of which cannot be completely separated from free higher education that consumed large amounts of resources to finance a minority. In contrast, much of the population was unable to attend secondary school.

> *Editorial 2, El Mercurio, 02-07-11*

In this regard, the possibilities of implementing an HE policy should take into account the national reality and the available resources to fund it.

The requirement of totally free education formulated by the students means the adoption of unachievable commitments for the state. Free tertiary education for students would represent a cost of US$3.6 billion per year. If free education were extended to the whole higher education system—also including technical training centres and professional institutes—that amount would rise to US$4.5 billion annually.

Editorial, La Tercera, 07-10-11

However, another position in the HE discussion emerged from the data in the documents. Some people started suggesting that the emergence of the student social movement may have opened up the possibilities of implementing an FHE policy because of a change in the political context. Students would have converted FHE into a social demand that would break free from the limits constraining the topic to issues of equity. The social movement presented free education as something other than a funding policy, giving it a political content embodied in the attempt to be an alternative to the private and profit-making HE model.

A free education reform to the traditional university system would allow an end to socioeconomic segregation and would contribute to social integration. These costs of greater integration are exceeded by the awareness of coexisting in a university system in which education is not conceived by the ability to pay. It would mean detaching lower-income families from undesirable financial mechanisms such as loans and, at the general level of the social strata, it would mean strengthening a collective project. In any case, it would contribute to regulating the fees of the private system to the benefit of the students of those schools, being the best control of profit-making in higher education.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 30-10-11
José Manuel Zolezzi, dean of USACH, CRUCH

The political demand meant that HE policy was considered differently, so the student social movement expanded its demands beyond the educational sector. The FHE demand became a demand that had the potential to claim a new relationship between state and society, since the principal complaint was against the targeting instrument used to build Chilean society.

In addition to the huge expense, a reform such as the one proposed by the students would mean breaking away from the guiding criterion of Chilean social policy in recent decades: targeting.

A scholar from a state-run university who was interviewed acknowledged that students had converted free education into a popular demand and were breaking the boundaries of impossibility imposed by the equity debate. This was a political change that became the starting point for imagining the implementation of an FHE reform.

The thing is that this is the point. Ultimately, free education, and this is not just my opinion but also that of the student movement, was the thing that formulated this demand. It's not just a requirement of equity. It's that insofar as university is free, everyone can potentially access it, so free access is obviously a consideration of equity, but it's not reduced to that. If it were reduced to that, as the economists say, damn, it's more appropriate to give them money directly. And no, equity is also constituted insofar as you remove the economic considerations from the higher education space, particularly the university space. So, insofar as higher education is not coerced by the market, let's say, by who has the most money or because they have less money because their degree is more or less lucrative, it's understood that, on the one hand, education is going to be more meaningful. On the other hand, when students graduate, they will be freed from the pressure of having to earn money, or having to mediate their decision of what to study in terms of how much money they will earn in order to return the investment. So, in this way, professional work, intellectual work is freed from this pressure. It's emancipated in some way. So, that's the meaning of free education: effectively, it's that higher education is a space not governed by the market. This goal, obviously, has been less achieved now, but it still helps.

Interviewee
Marcel Gordon, scholar, UTA, CRUCH.

Section 7.2.2 explores the tension between the technical defence of the model and the political emergence of FHE as a social demand in 2011. Supporters of the model argued that any student demand entailed addressing the challenge in connection with the policy reality experienced by the country in recent decades. Therefore, the needs of other areas of society

would make it difficult to meet the demand of the students. On the other hand, the most critical academic and political sectors saw the 2011 social movement as a political-technical contribution by questioning the economic conditions determining HE access and the role played by the market. These questions would, in turn, lead to questions about deeper issues concerning the relationship between HE and society. This policy shift led to a new discussion about the technical alternatives to implement FHE once the political system promised and institutionalised the FHE reform subsequent to 2011.

7.2.3. FHE as a policy issue (2012-2016)

The political feasibility opened up by the social movement became an independent topic subsequent to 2011, since its discussion embraced political-ideological critiques and justifications. Although this discussion is covered in Section 7.3, it had a high impact on the technical aspects in the HE debate. The technical debate displayed more variety regarding the possibilities of implementing the FHE policy—as the reaction to the electoral promise of free education made by the favoured candidate and subsequent President, Michelle Bachelet. Firstly, supporters of the HE model reiterated the difficulties of implementing FHE by referring again to the international experience and the dangers to the national economy as it would involve more state resources. However, there was not only a reiteration of the arguments from those supporting the HE model; former members of both Piñera governments defending the participation of the market in HE argued that free education was a possibility that had already been accomplished and implemented under previous policies. According to this perspective, the FHE project would be a similar instrument to the prior model based on loans since it would imply targeting funds linked to future taxes from graduates.

> However, something surprising happened this week. This newspaper published a story in which it pointed out that the government is considering collecting a tax from graduates of higher education to finance its universal free education project. It doesn't require a financial expert to realise that a loan system like the one that currently exists is equivalent to a system in which tuition is free and a tax is charged later. In practice, university through loans is free because it is paid with the money from the loan. The student must then pay the loan with a portion of the income earned in the future. The same thing happens when graduates are taxed.

> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 03-04-15*

Juan Ramón Valente, former Minister of Economy in second Piñera government

Even free education would be a reality regardless of the taxes from graduates, since the targeting of the FHE project would cover the same proportion of deprived students in the HE model.

> Second, and most important, public funds invested in higher education today are not considered. Currently, between scholarships and the *Fondo Solidario*, the state spends nearly US$1 billion each year, which goes entirely to the first three quintiles—this happened without considering the expense of the CAE that is counted as a loan. Currently, this means that the treasury already directly finances a large part of the education of the families with fewest resources.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 02-07-13
Ignacio Parot, policy-maker in first and second Piñera governments

The attempts to conflate free education with prior funding policies led to an innovative proposal that merged these two types of policies into an intermediate formula.

> We propose an intermediate option called 'free scholarship with limited co-payment'. On the one hand, the 'free scholarship with limited co-payment' has the money granted by the state to all students who meet the criteria of vulnerability and personal merit. These resources will be allocated to HEIs through payments for tuition fees. On the other hand, it forces the educational institution to limit the co-payment to zero— or to a moderate amount set by the state. There are three differences with the current scholarship. First, it requires a limit on co-payment for the scholarship student, so there is regulation of tuition fees, although only with respect to scholarship students. Second, for higher levels of vulnerability and academic merit, the co-payment is zero. This is the case of fully free [education]. Third, the minimum attributes required do not discriminate between students according to the legal quality of the higher education institution.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 20-12-15
Salvador Valdés and Carlos Williamson, scholars, PUC, CRUCH

On the other hand, opinions from academia supporting the student social movement were interjected into the HE debate to defend the possibility of achieving universal FHE. They

argued that FHE policy was feasible to implement, but in the long-term through intermediate stages that would end up with full coverage of HE students.

> Market education is in retreat, while free education is a reality. We can state this because those same 1.5 trillion pesos (£1.5 billion pounds) are enough to immediately cover 50% of all current students in the system with free education. In other words, it is not a matter of scarcity of resources, it is a matter of the mechanism and model. In other words, public education versus market education. The CRUCH public system that includes state-run universities versus the private sector. The system of free, high-quality, and public higher education is beginning to become a reality. They can slow down the process, but nothing can stop it.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 22-12-15*
> *Roxana Pey, former dean of Universidad de Aysén, CRUCH*

Although the articulation of the arguments involved different and sometimes strange proposals about the possibilities of implementing the FHE reform promised by President Bachelet, the proliferation of alternative views manifested that the political shift that occurred in 2011 defined that it would be a policy applied as a point of no return. Specifically, the Deputy Minister of Education—and one of the people responsible for the policy—during the second government of Michelle Bachelet spoke about how free education had become a political arrangement and how the next debate should focus on its implementation.

> That is, the reform clearly shifted the limits and it framed a completely different field, but that's a question that has not `fully matured yet. But I think it's the idea of installing education as a right… I think it started becoming real with the demonstrations of 2006 and 2011, through slogans referring to the implementation of education as a goal, that is, free education. Now, you have to make the issue happen regarding the free education issue. President Piñera is finally looking at how to expand free education. In other words, the issue is clearly consolidated. So, I think now we have to wait for it to mature. I think it will take a while to mature and it will advance depending on the implementation of the reform. But I would say that our problem now is not about agreeing on what the priorities are. I believe that this is a fight that has happened and was won. I believe that the problem now is how it's done.
>
> *Interviewee*

Section 7.3.3 discusses the shift in the HE discussion towards the consolidation of a technical dispute over the implementation of the FHE reform. The opening of the technical debate was an immediate effect of the political shift caused by the student social movement that broke free from the discursive limitations imposed by the conservative participants supporting the HE model prior to 2011. The consideration of the technical issues, along with the conservative political defeat described in Section 7.1, gave rise to a possible new political-technical integration at the level of the policy goal. This possibility is be the of analysis in Section 7.3.

7.3 Free education as an ideological-political issue (2012-2016)

Given that the student social movement in 2011 moved the question about the feasibility of implementing an FHE policy towards its political content, both defenders and critics of the HE model started debating the political-ideological aspects of the reform announced. During the period subsequent to 2011, the HE debate about free education shifted away from the simple distinction between technical and political feasibility and it became a political-ideological topic that challenged the institutional arrangement of the model. Positions in the HE discussion strove to define the policy in terms of its political-ideological meaning. Section 7.3.1 addresses the bifurcation of the political-ideological debate about free education in order to understand the justifications and critiques of the FHE policy. Finally, Section 7.3.2 draws attention to a third ideological line of argument, which involved a continuity between the new HE model proposed under an FHE reform with the prior HE model based on the articulation of the market.

7.3.1. The debate about free education as a political-ideological shift

Those defending the model had to resort to ideological principles that supported the universal access achieved by the Chilean system prior to the reform. In this regard, the FHE project would be an erroneous policy since it would represent the loss of freedom of actors in the HE model. In this regard, criticisms referred to the increased power of the state to finance free education. If the state governed the accountability of the HE system, HEIs could lose their autonomy.

> The Ministry of Education maintains the document 'Basis for a reform to the national system of higher education' in public consultation, through which the government

seeks a comprehensive reform to the system. An examination of its main contents allows us to note the deep ideological bias that permeates this reform, since, in the effort to ensure universal free education with public funds, the intention is to provide the state with an interventionist role that threatens the autonomy and diversity of educational projects.

Editorial, La Tercera, 12-08-15

In addition, since the state would allocate public funds from the FHE policy, there would be a risk of affecting the students' freedom of choice due to the enormous power of the state in HE provision. Free education policy could therefore threaten the freedom achieved by market regulation.

The students know, I hope, that they are giving up their freedom to choose; the quality, price, educational project, and even career, in exchange for the promise of free education. And apparently, they are ready for it.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 03-04-15
Juan Ramón Valente, former Minister of Economy in second Piñera government

Critical scholars and students criticising the model also followed the trend of equipping the HE debate about free education with political-ideological contents. Although they started this political shift during the emergence of the student social movement, this sector translated the students' demands into expectations for structural changes. These expectations sought to convert those demands into the core element to end the legacy of the HE model created during the dictatorship.

It should be remembered that, in the midst of her campaign for her second term, one of the great promises with which the president aspired to reach *La Moneda* was to strengthen public education and achieve universal free education in higher education. Great expectations were forged around a project that promised to generate profound changes, which could bring down—albeit belatedly—the legacy left by the military dictatorship.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 26-09-16
Juan Manuel Zolezzi, dean of USACH, CRUCH

The demand for structural changes would go beyond policies reforming HE, since policy would also need to contain ideological proposals. In this regard, recovering the articulatory role of the state in the HE model and ensuring the idea of education as a right became political alternatives for those most closely linked to the social movement.

> Transforming the model firstly implies building a system as such, which therefore operates as a duly articulated structure, governed by common standards and purposes connected with the country's development requirements and considering the diversity of educational needs of communities. This system, in order to function as a guarantee of fundamental rights in the long term, must be dependent on the state and financed entirely by it. It should be in accordance with baseline criteria and guaranteeing its autonomy with respect to the governments in power, as well as free access for students and the democratic-deliberative participation of its actors.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 22-09-16*
> *Miguel Caro R., scholar, UMCE, CRUCH*

The first point of view, fearful of the ideological shift in terms of free education, was summarised in detail by a right-wing former member of parliament.

> There are two things: the left-wing talks about free education, but when you see the law they proposed, it's not free education. It's free education, but if you want to open a degree programme at the university, you have to ask me [the state], if you want to open an HEI branch, you ask me, if you want to have a law programme, you ask me, if you want more money, aha!, you ask me, and if you don't do what I want, I put you in jail through the superintendency. So, free education ultimately has many complications. And those complications lines are 'I as the state, force you to give the education that I consider'. So, one thing is free education, to which I am open, and another is free education as President Bachelet has presented it, which is free education without autonomy of universities and without being concerned with academic freedom.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Pedro Pablo Swett, right-wing politician, former MP*

On the other hand, a former leader of the 2011 student social movement analysed the possibility that the FHE policy could lead to a reconfiguration of the HE model.

Yes, I believe that the concept of free education is in dispute today in the student movement and the new left. Above all, what's said when we talk about free education, it's free education for the citizen, but not … well, free education for citizens regardless of their social status. That is to say, a completely free education without considering social background. The second thing I was going to say was that free education, this is important, at least as I see it, is a right that the state should guarantee, that each institution recognised by the state would be public, guaranteed. And not something like a free education that you carry in your pocket like a voucher to benefit any institution existing in the market. It's free education that an institution guarantees and not that you guarantee as a resource for a private institution, for example.

Interviewee
Enrique Gómez, left-wing politician and former student leader

Section 7.3.1 shows the ideological-political shift regarding the content of the HE model generated by the discussion about the FHE reform. There was a split between the most conservative positions that felt the threat of losing the principles supporting the HE model and those critical opinions requiring a relationship between the state, society, and HE by recognising the right to education. Although it seemed that the debate on FHE absorbed the political and technical content of the HE discussion, it was not clear that the effects of this shift, in terms of continuities and discontinuities, led to the new policy goal. Indeed, Section 7.3.2 describes the critiques from a sector that advocated for implementing an FHE reform, but cast doubts on the potential policy continuity that this reform might involve.

7.3.2. The critiques of a potential FHE policy oriented towards the market

After 2011, there was another position regarding the political-ideological shift in the FHE debate. This position claimed that FHE policy could become a source of ideological continuity with market-government HE. They were detractors of the model who were linked to the student social movement who complained that free education seemed to be a new way of implementing a voucher system. Since funds coming from the FHE reform 'follow' the choice of deprived students, it would maintain the model of financing demand by disregarding the type of institution they chose.

An increase in public spending on education could have been positive, but insofar as it strengthened public education and progressed towards effective free education ….

Unfortunately, the transfer of resources continues to be the same as the current system. It continues financing according to the number of students and not by direct contribution of free choice, maintaining the logic of the voucher.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 06-10-15
Valentina Saavedra and Nicolás Fernandez, former student leaders

The continuity with the market-oriented HE model would also imply maintaining the targeted nature of the reform. As funds concentrated among a certain proportion of students accessing HE, it opened up a market space for the CAE. In this space, banks and loans would continue operating for those students left out of the FHE policy.

The situation becomes even more concerning if one considers that the higher education reform project doesn't mention the possibility of changing the conditions under which the CAE has operated until now, but leaves the door open to become the formula for financing those students who cannot access free admission.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 04-09-16
Alvaro Rojas and Hugo Salgado

Finally, the last critique, which saw a new political-ideological arrangement that maintained the HE model based on the compromise between the market and industrial cite, argued that the FHE reform could transfer resources from the state to the private sector, extending the process of privatisation. Since the leading detractors of the FHE policy—private HEIs—began asking for free education funds, the FHE reform could thus become a new way of legitimising the appropriation of state funds by the private sector. In this case, given that the allocation of FHE resources would work according to the accreditation criterion, the legitimacy of private access to state funds would rely on a technical tendency established upon meeting a quality requirement.

But also, as was expected, the private sector not belonging to the CRUCH managed to access the free education resources. It used a political argument as effective as that in the first stage: 'You cannot discriminate against poor students in terms of the institution where they decide to study'. This argument can be acceptable if we assume that what is really at stake is the future of the students. But it is not, insofar as that sector did not make any mention of other situations, such as those mentioned above,

except for the only one convenient to them: accreditation. In other words: there is access to resources under certain conditions. It is the best of worlds.

Among the interviewees, the doubts about the real effects of the FHE policy and the chances of continuing previous policy procedures formed part of the whole spectrum of positions. A scholar from one of the prestigious new private institutions and a former Concertación policy-maker linked to the regulatory improvements summarised a reform aimed at making changes without altering the current situation.

What reform? [Laughs] Look, let's examine the reform that's underway. It's what I've called free education without reform in some opinion columns. One of the effects that free education without reform has had is that the institutions with greatest growth in enrolment aren't state-run universities and this project is supposedly meant to strengthen the state presence in every way that we talked about before. It doesn't achieve that, so that's why I told you before that poorly designed free education like this could even reinforce the market characteristics that our system still has. Which are the institutions quickest to react to the incentive? Which institutions are better adapted to the new incentives? They're private. That's what I was referring to before with the fact that there's no presence, a greater role of state coordination. When I talked about regulation, I was also referring to this.

Interviewee
Andrés Alonso Gallo, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former Concertación policy-maker

Section 7.3.2 includes an attempt to describe an HE discussion that shed some light on doubts emerging from critical opinions of the FHE reform. Although the HE debate about FHE financing will be explored in depth in Chapter 8, its inclusion in this section is intended to be the cornerstone to consider a policy that could lead to greater participation of HE quasi-markets, privatisation, and less regulation. The risk would lie in the possibilities of continuing to operate under the same paradigmatic umbrella. The potential contradiction between the occurrence of a discontinuity at the level of the policy goal and the continuity of a policy paradigm are at the core of the discussion in Chapter 8. However, before moving on to the next chapter, it was necessary carry out a revision of the vertical interpretation of the data in

order to establish a baseline that provides another perspective to describe the complexity of the change in the policy goal.

7.4 The consolidation of a new policy goal

By tracking the topics comprising the HE debate horizontally, it is possible to explore how the free education debate started separating from the discussion of equity, as shown in Figure 7.1. This could also be done through a vertical view of the topic, allowing a general interpretation of the data. In this regard, the vertical interpretation suggests that (i) there was a political constraint prior to 2011, ruling out the technical possibilities of implementing an FHE policy, (ii) the 2011 student social movement led to the possibility of imagining a different society, enabling the end to the political deadlock and allowing the emergence of technical alternatives to implement FHE. Subsequent to 2011, (iii) the greater political openness shifted towards an ideological debate in which discussion seemed to be a space that was still in dispute. Firstly, the HE debate about free education prior to 2011 entailed a reduction, or an absorption, of equity considerations. Chapter 7 defines the FHE-oriented debate as an extension of the wider equity-oriented debate described in Chapter 6. The relationship between equity and free education would be reversed, since any attempt to develop free education policies would involve an inequitable reform. The themes described in sections 7.1.1 and 7.2.1 are intended to describe both political and technical arguments delimiting the discussion in order to comprehend the aforementioned political intransigence. A policy-maker during the first government of President Bachelet (2006-2010) and a dean of a private university later explained that even the students did not see free education as a possibility, leaving the task to improve equity to scholarships for the most deprived students.

> The battle cry of the students at that time was always trying to shift the limits of the criteria regarding the provision of scholarships a little. We never talked about free education. They were clear that it wasn't possible. I had to grant more scholarships. We agreed at some point when the president at that time created the academic excellence scholarship. This involved giving a scholarship to the students who were in the highest 5% of their secondary class. The highest 5% of a class generally got a scholarship. That was one or two students in any class. The requirement at the time was to come from a municipal or private school with state subsidies. And there was a moment where people from the PUC student union at that time, if I'm not mistaken

… a boy with a surname like me, Castro, who is now the mayor of Recoleta, tried to fight to go beyond that. Why not give scholarships to private schools without state subsidies? Why not? It doesn't matter. 'If they're finally going to be at university because of their score, they should go'. Again, no. It's a matter of principle. No. The country's resources are scarce. Therefore you finance those who actually require support for that. Not us. Never the topic of free education.

Interviewee
Ignacio Durán, former head of Higher Education Division (DIVISUP) and dean of UNAB, NPU

The HE debate about free education during 2011 saw the emergence of free education as an independent theme in the year of the student social movement. The independence of this issue enabled the FHE discussion to free itself from the direct relationship with equity, although not entirely. In this regard, the conservative position was still that the FHE reform would be a politically regressive policy and a technical impossibility that should be discouraged. This argument became the main link with the previous period, since defenders of the HE model warned of a lack of equity. While these people created justifications to continue with the HE model, those demanding the FHE reform began gaining support in the HE debate. There was a more significant demonstration of demands for the HE model, which led to significant consequences since criticism of the particular relationship came from critiques of HE policy. Therefore, the targeting method adopted by the *Estado Subsidiario* to develop public policy became the main focus of criticism from the left-wing and the student movement. In this regard, the data from the HE discussion during 2011 suggested that the FHE debate created justifications that went beyond equity. Structural disputes became the source of arguments to devise alternatives for a new Chilean HE model. The student social movement seemed to come up what Boltanski (2011) called the *existential critique*, since students resorted to the *world* to criticise *the institutional reality* and successfully propose an FHE policy. There would be a new dispute to define the policy reality and to construct what Boltanski & Thévenot (2006) called a common good to legitimise the HE model. The student demands had the effect of designing a different society. A scholar from a prestigious private CRUCH institution with a reformist perspective described the policy shift and the starting point from the FHE issue became disconnected from the equity debate.

The system had advanced to very strong levels of inequity in the 1990s and early 2000s. And the CAE was the input. While the conditions of the *Crédito Solidario* improved and students' benefits for those attending CRUCH institutions were generally reasonable. They were so reasonable that in Chile we had situations that weren't allowed in other parts of the world: such as having eternal students who were 10, 12 years in HEIs and still maintained a loan. That's how silly it was in the CRUCH. We could now move to the private sector that had grown so much by the early, mid-2000s. They were a priority due to the size of the enrolment. For the first time, in 2007, the private sector—the new private ones—acquired more relevance than in the previous system. And well, that sector is the one that has the most deteriorated institutions and which have very poor conditions of quality. Universities that supposedly provided opportunities, but what they were generating was drama. That exploded in 2011 and with good reason: scandals, corruption, bad policy, and an inoperative government. It was a combination. It was a perfect storm in 2011. And I think that free education was rightly installed. I had never heard of the concept of free education before 2011, but it was something that was generally outside the debate on higher education. No one talked about free education, no one.

Interviewee
Ernesto Ayala, scholar, PUC, CRUCH

The sub-period after 2011 saw the consolidation of free education as an independent debate. After the student social movement in 2011, the FHE-oriented debate seemed to absorb the political and ideological content of debate on equity, converting the latter into a technical discussion. The implementation of the FHE reform—through a funding law in 2016 and a definitive law enacted in 2018—established the change of the policy goal in the HE debate. Although the centrality of FHE policy in the HE debate was an immediate effect of the 2011 student social movement, its primacy as the issue most discussed rested on the electoral promise of future president Michelle Bachelet in 2013. FHE reform was the political response to the demands of the students and civil society and the political-ideological shift in the HE debate seemed to confirm its position as the main orientation of HE policy in recent years. The FHE issue became a third-order goal (Hall 1993), but not answering the question of whether there was a change of paradigm in the model. Indeed, detractors of the model

warned that the FHE policy could be a source of continuity with market-ruled HE because it maintained neoliberal policy instruments for operation. The academic world has echoed this mobilisation of justifications and critiques and kept open a question that will require the examination of other elements of policy development to answer.

> The governments of the Concertación and Nueva Mayoría [the political coalition supporting the second Bachelet government], and naturally the right-wing government, do not understand these policies as structural reforms that must have permanent and stable platforms for equal opportunities, in which actors can raise their possibility of having parity—the poorest actors with the richest actors. But it has been understood as aid, remedial support, assistance, and that is a small free education policy, similar to the equity policy that we have. So we give a bonus here, we give a little to improve enrolment, we award some scholarships here, we create free education there, we give a lunch voucher.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Danilo Gutierrez, scholar, UTA, CRUCH*

Conclusion

Chapter 7 involves an attempt to explore potential responses to the questions raised in Chapter 6: if equity lost its status as a goal in the policy field, could free education as a policy instrument become a policy goal? Did this apparent change of policy goal mean a discontinuity at the level of the policy paradigm? Chapter 7 strives to address the first question in detail by using the definition of policy orders provided by Hall (1993). However, there are still doubts about whether a definitive answer to the second question can be found. In Chapter 3, the definition of policy orders provided by Hall allows us to understand how a policy instrument in a policy order may be joined with a policy goal. Data from the Chilean HE policy debate suggests that equity operated as a goal before the 2011 student social movement and achieved some success, especially with regard to improvement in HE access. The conception of equity as a policy goal in the HE debate has been associated with a broader context of policies oriented towards overcoming inequalities stemming from the neoliberal development of the country (Larrañaga, 2010). In this regard, the goal of equity was strongly linked to instruments in the form of a cost-sharing formula to finance HE access—especially for more vulnerable students—as an effect of an expansion of private education provision.

Equity as a goal of access then seemed to be a promise met by the application of cost-sharing mechanisms, ignoring any possibility of developing free education strategies as an alternative for the HE model.

Chapter 7 analyses the debate about free education in this period, in which equity as a goal based on accessibility prevailed, forming a compromise between the *market* (tuition fees) *and industrial cités* (access with merit). In this context, there were few political and technical possibilities for FHE as an alternative instrument before 2011. It was even associated with the opposite of equity. However, the irrelevant position of FHE in the HE debate changed when the student social movement demanded changes and a new policy arrangement in 2011. Chapter 6 discussed showed how defenders of the HE model—after an immediate response highlighting access as a sign of progress in 2011—started resorting to justifications from the civic *cité* to maintain an HE system based on access, merit, and privatisation. These civic justifications expressed solutions seeking to establish new institutions and more rules to audit and regulate privatised educational access. The individualised value of the HE model based on the freedom of enterprise in privatised education provision and merit and freedom of choice at the level of students' demands seemed to provide space for collective forms of ensuring the *common good* was crystallised in new rules and institutions. The way the civic space was opened up also acted as a gateway to allow the consideration of FHE as an alternative. The student social movement and its supporters managed to have *universal* FHE conceived as a universal right. Therefore, the impossibility of maintaining the compromise between the market and industrial *cités* converted the civic sphere into a space of dispute. Differing perspectives in the HE debate understood that the source of the new legitimacy of the HE model was at stake in the civic regime of justifications. While defenders of the HE model sought to establish a more comprehensive compromise encompassing the three *cités*, the critics saw the possibility of discontinuity with the model through civic critiques.

The transition of the discussion about social justice to the civic *cité* displaced equity as the political orientation of the HE debate. FHE seemed to take its place and equity became a technical issue subsequent to 2011. Indeed, the political opening of the debate made room for the technical application of free education to be feasibly devised within educational policy. FHE acquired both political and technical content and appeared to become the new goal of HE policy subsequent to 2011. The promise of discontinuity with the previous HE model

reflected a marked divergence of ideological positions between defenders and critics of the FHE policy. Both positions coincided in perceiving the FHE reform as a structural change, but with a different sense. Defenders of the HE model saw a threat to the freedom achieved by the model to date, leading them to use justifications from the market and industrial *cités*. On the other hand, critics of the model were hopeful that such a reform would bring a social change, breaking away from neoliberalism. However, Chapter 7 explores new critiques of the FHE policy, since the most critical participants of the HE policy debate questioned the idea of structural change. They suggested that there would be some degree of continuity with policies developed before the student social movement, casting doubts on the assumption that there would be a change in the policy field.

In addition, going back to McCowan's framework (2016), there was no certainty that free education embodied the ideal of horizontality and its substitution in place of equity might involve a new discussion about accessibility. In order to respond to this unanswered question, Chapter 8 again goes back to Hall's contribution (1993) on policy orders. One of the assumptions of the incremental theory of policy orders is that when a change occurs at the third-order level (level of goals), there would be also shifts in the second-order (instruments) and first-order levels (instrument settings). In this regard, Chapter 8 enables the examination of changes in other relevant policy instruments that show how different a policy oriented towards equity could be from another aimed towards free education. This logic of thought might extend to the idea of a paradigm, since a transformation at this level would involve a change of all orders of policy development. Chapter 8 thus seeks to describe these shifts in policy instruments, but also adding the evolution of transformations in the decision-making process by examining the justifications and critiques in the HE model regarding these themes in each sub-period under analysis.

8. THE DEBATE ABOUT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: THE COEXISTENCE OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN CHILEAN HE POLICY

While Chapter 4 describes how social policy became the primary tool to overcome the inequity issues created by the Chilean neoliberal modernisation, Chapter 6 aims to address how this policy goal took shape in the HE debate between 2003 and 2016. At the beginning of this period, the HE discussion about equity-oriented policies involved justifications and critiques that defined the Chilean HE model according to particular relationships between different topics and discursive elements in the field. Firstly, the image of HE equity drew on what McCowan (2016) called the *principle of availability*, since the promotion of private sector participation became the primary strategy to increase the number of student places in the HE model. This strategy also led to the deployment of *the principle of accessibility*, since opportunities for private HE access meant improvements in equity for deprived students. Secondly, the policy orientation towards equity established what Hall (1993) called the *first-level of policy* development. Equity became the HE *policy goal* that coordinated a set of cost-sharing policy instruments with a *neoliberal paradigm*. The policy paradigm, goal, and instruments thus worked harmoniously in pursuit of the aim of improving levels of access to HE.

Thirdly, the utilization of justifications belonging to what Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) termed the *market and industrial cités* provided legitimacy to the particular definition of the Chilean HE model. The *market justifications* allowed an understanding of HE as a scarce good that is subject to be exchangeable through prices expressed as tuition fees and the competition present in quasi-markets. The improved opportunities to access HE would represent a notion of social justice if HE—as an exclusive good with individual rewards in the future job market—fairly sets the price paid to access it. In addition, the market justifications established a *figure of compromise* with justifications from the *industrial cité*. This compromise meant that legitimacy of the Chilean HE model would not come solely from a fair exchange, but also by advocating the reward of access to HE access to applicants who deserved it. Merit became the criterion to measure the efficiency of students. Efficient individuals were able to participate in selective high-quality HEIs, while students not selected with unsatisfactory merit might access the new private HEIs if they could pay the tuition fees. The legitimacy of HE was based on a concept of HE access validated by selection based on merit and through fair tuition fees to provide greater possibilities of experiencing HE to

students not selected. Finally, *the accessibility principle*, the *policy goal of equity*, and *the market-industrial compromise* meant that the equity-oriented HE model contained both the *political and technical content* of the HE debate at the beginning of the 14-year period.

Nevertheless, Chapter 6 shows that this harmonic interaction between the elements forming the HE debate suffered some variations. The emergence of the student social movement in 2011, demanding public, free, and high-quality higher education, made it clear that the promise of equity was a failed objective. Indeed, the students' demands seemed to turn the focus after 2011 to what McCowan (2016) termed *the principle of horizontality*, since the *accessibility principle* exposed its limitations in a highly privatised model. This situation cast doubt on the coherence of *the neoliberal policy-orders* oriented towards *equity*, as well as the *compromise* between market and industrial justifications. Although Chapter 6 does not provide data to describe what type of changes took place in terms of coherence and legitimacy, it does enable observation of how the political-technical unity of the HE discussion was split. The debate about equity lost its *political content*, becoming a debate about which instruments would produce improvements in equity under measurements of access of HE. The separation between the *political and technical content* of policy raised the question about what element absorbed the political aspect in the HE debate. Chapter 4 shows that the political system opted for the students' demand for free higher education (FHE) to fill the political void left by the debate oriented towards equity. In that regard, Chapter 7 re-examined the debate focused on FHE between 2003 and 2016 to explore how it rehearsed a new unification between *the political and technical* contents regarding FHE justifications subsequent to 2011.

Given that FHE debate started taking the position previously occupied by the debate on equity, Chapter 7 also attempted to respond to the questions raised from the inconclusive findings described in Chapter 6. The inclusion of the FHE demand in the HE debate implied that the *compromise* between *market and industrial cités* had resorted to a different *regime of justifications* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) to devise solutions to the HE crisis denounced by students in 2011. On the one hand, supporters of the HE model, especially those from the right-wing and certain members of the *Concertación* who wanted to defend their accomplishments, proposed a new *figure of compromise* by appealing to the *civic cité*. They recognised that the HE model was facing issues from the accelerated enrolment seen during

Figure 8.1: Summary of the evolution of the Chilean HE debate about policy-making between 2003 and 2016

	2003-2010 **8.1. The *subsidiario* nature of the decision-making process**	2011 **8.2. The struggle to define policy change**	2012-2016 **8.3. The continuity of instruments and potential discontinuities in policy-making**
	The construction of a cost-sharing set of instruments: the *Estado Subsidiario* at the level of practices		
8. THE DEBATE ABOUT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:	8.1.1. The HE debate about the equity orientations guiding the development of funding instruments	8.2.1. The resistance of funding instruments to target state resources	8.3.1. The continuity of targeted funding instruments: partial free higher education
	The making-decision process: continuities and discontinuities regarding the prevalence of actors in spaces of steering policy		
	8.1.2. The value of technocracy: suspicion about politics and social groups	8.2.2. The prevalence, redemption, and emergence of actors in spaces for steering policy	8.3.2. The technocratic-conservative versus the socio-ideological actors
THE COEXISTENCE OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN CHILEAN HE POLICY	**The influence of policy criteria to understand the tension between reform and change within the policy-making process**		
	8.1.3. The criterion of *reality* to achieve gradual policy change	8.2.3. The tension between reality and ideology to make policy decisions	8.3.3. The dispute of a reality in crisis

2003 — 2016

Lagos government (2000-2006) ·········· Bachelet government (2006-2010) — · · — · · Piñera government (2010-2014) — — — — — Bachelet government (2014-2018)

the last decade. This sector proposed more regulation in the form of new laws and organisations as specific solutions to control HE. Therefore, civic objects such as laws and auditing organisations became the main source of justifications to devise policies responding to the students' perspective, which was considered to be exaggerated. On the other hand, politicians linked to the left-wing, social actors, and certain former *Concertación* members critical of their own governments saw the dispute about civic arguments as source of critiques to change the HE model. This standpoint was that the HE policy had failed to foster and protect the notion of education as a right. The student debt linked to tuition fees, the segregated access to high-quality HE, and the privatised profit-making provision of education became the threat to ensure the right to education for everyone. The failure to meet this goal involved calling for structural changes that opened up the HE debate to political and technical disputes that were previously constrained within the limits of the equity-oriented debate. Although there was still no certainty about a comprise that articulated new justifications or about a change generated by civic critiques, the findings in Chapter 7 do suggest that there was a shift in the policy goal. Free education replaced equity as the main element around which the HE debate was coordinated subsequent to 2011.

The implementation of this change in policy is a challenge to the theoretical framework devised by Hall (1993), since the political promise of an FHE reform would involve transforming a *second-order level* of policy—FHE as a set of funding instruments—into the *third-order level* of policy. The data in Chapter 7 allows us to observe the appropriation of the HE discussion by the FHE-oriented debate. It appeared to be a change at the policy goal level, since a new arrangement emerged to consider access to free education as a new form of social justice. Free access, particularly for the most deprived students, became the policy solution to overcome the uncomfortable social inequalities caused by the neoliberal model of development. However, despite the change at the policy goal level, the HE debate continued revolving around what McCowan (2016) called the *principle of accessibility*. Although at some stages of in 2011 the HE discussion was focused on the *principle of horizontality*, the promise of an HE reform entailed a definition of HE issues as a problem of access to HE. Essentially, while the debate focused on FHE seemed to lead to discontinuities due to the replacement of the political-technical unification and the policy goal dominating previous debate oriented towards equity, questions regarding the continuation of the

predominant *principle of accessibility* and the potential new *legitimacy* of the HE model were left unanswered. These questions become relevant since the persistence of continuities regarding these concerns could cast doubt on the real degree of discontinuity caused by the changes in the policy goal and content. The question about the relationship between continuity and discontinuity remains open.

Chapter 8 intends to respond to this question by exploring one of Hall's theoretical assumptions (1993), which is that when a first-order policy changes, the second-order policies should also change—adapting to the primary transformation. In other words, when a policy goal changes (*third-order policy*), policy instruments (*second-order policy*), and instrument settings (*first-policy order*) should adapt their orientations and practices to meet the goal. Taking into account the findings in previous chapters, Chapter 8 is another stage in the analysis started in Chapter 6. It examines the expected changes generated by a debate focused on an FHE policy at the level of the orientations followed by the policy instruments and the actors and criteria determining the decision-making process. Therefore, following Hall's assumption, this chapter analyses the evolution of the HE debate about policy-making development with the inclusion of the three sub-periods under analysis. Similar to the figures summarising the previous chapters, Figure 8.1 encompasses the aspect of the HE discussion about the decision-making process according to two axes that can be interpreted horizontally and vertically. The horizontal or vertical interpretation of Figure 8.1 depends on the articulation of the emerging topics regarding the decision-making process during the period. While the horizontal interpretation follows the evolution of a specific topic in each sub-period, the vertical one focuses on each sub-period separately to analyse how topics acquire an articulation within temporal limits. Chapter 8 addresses the vertical interpretation. This reading is intended to highlight how the predominance of equity and free education in the emerging themes entailed a particular articulation of them during each sub-period. In this regard, Chapter 8 emphasises the relationship between the three topics for each sub-period: i) the HE debate about the orientation pursued by the funding instruments in the transition from cost-sharing to free education, ii) the HE discussion about the policy actors participating in the decision-making process, and iii) the HE debate about the criteria to make policy decisions and its consequences to achieve change in policy. The specific connections of these themes enable the analysis of momentary policy articulations for which the chapter is divided

into three sections. Prior to 2011, Section 8.1 describes how the *Estado Subsidiario* established cost-sharing and a conservative decision-making process. In 2011, Section 8.2 analyses the struggle to define the policy change in terms of actors making HE decisions. This section shows how what has been known as the 'evidence-based policy' and 'what works' (McCowan, 2019) agenda started seeing a weakness in its dominant position within policy-making. Finally, Section 8.3 shows how financing policy appears as a refuge for continuity while there was an emergence of potential discontinuities of policy actors and criteria definitions subsequent to 2011. In addition, Section 8.4 attempts to summarise the changes in the HE discussion about each theme from a general horizontal perspective. The findings in Chapter 8 suggest that the change of policy goal established as an FHE policy was not necessarily accompanied by shifts at the level of the orientations guiding the policy instruments, although there could be potential discontinuities regarding new actors making policy decisions and novel policy criteria disputing the best way to lead the change in policy.

8.1. The *subsidiario* nature of the decision-making process (2003-2010)

Prior to 2011, the predominance of an HE model oriented towards equity defined the discussion about policy-making, since the cost-sharing system articulated with conservative practices to make decisions. The concept behind this policy arrangement was intended to improve the levels of HE equity respecting the nature of the *Estado Subsidiario* described in Chapter 4. This *subsidiario* nature became the main orientation for the HE debate to decide what type of funding instruments were needed to achieve equity in a cost-sharing set of policy instruments. In this regard, Section 8.1.1 establishes a baseline about the conception of funding instruments for the other sub-periods under analysis, highlighting the positive value of targeting funds at HE demand—particularly demand from the most deprived students. Since the set of cost-sharing instruments were based on economic knowledge that justified policy decisions, Section 8.1.2 gives an account of how a particular actor started dominating the decision-making process: the technocracy described in Chapter 3. Finally, Section 8.1.3 explores the source of justifications to develop HE policy in order to understand how the HE debate conceived of the policy change conservatively prior to 2011.

8.1.1. The HE debate about the equity orientations guiding the development of funding instruments

Prior to 2011, the importance of financing policy as the main tool to intervene in the HE model was agreed in the debate. The development of policy proposals seeking to achieve equity—as analysed in Chapter 6—made use of a particular allocation of public funds, which was implemented in different policy instruments and instrument settings. Firstly, the HE debate showed an almost total consensus about targeting state resources on the demand side to promote access to HE instead of providing special funding for HE provision. In addition, this concentration on demand was in line with the idea of the *Estado Subsidiario*, since the state participated in the social spaces where the market was not interested in being involved. These spaces involved a reduced number of the most deprived applicants demonstrating merit to participate in HE according to their results during secondary education.

> A well-conceived social policy considers as a fundamental basis that state subsidies go to demand, that is, to those who require support for their needs or are pressed by their merits. Subsidising offer does not mean better quality of life and is not a reward for the best and neediest.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 30-12-04*
> *Miguel Angel Podujó*

The agreement about targeted funding policies was the cornerstone of the cost-sharing set of instruments described in Chapter 3. State scholarships and private loans allocated to the most deprived students were supplementary to the private payment of tuition fees in order to build a mixed model of HE provision. An editorial in *El Mercurio* expressed this concept succinctly when the CAE policy was enacted in 2005.

> Parliament finally considered the bill that allows the financing of university education through a financial system guaranteed by the state. This bill [the CAE policy] was originally conceived with the idea of favouring students from private institutions—both universities and short-cycle tertiary education—but it is extended as an option that is open to students of traditional universities … it is an initiative that is aimed in the right direction and which creates more opportunities for low-income students, but with academic merit.
>
> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 03-05-05*

This funding mechanism based on loans even restricted what was imaginable for those who criticised the HE model. They reduced the alternatives of policy change to reforms framed within the possibilities provided by these loan mechanisms.

> To fulfil the promise of equity in access to higher education, it is necessary to substantially reform the current loan policy. This does not require state subsidies, but a coherent public policy, because there is no way to achieve equity if the universities use self-funding while the policy lacks appropriate loans.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 24-06-04*
> *Osvaldo Larrañaga, PUC, CRUCH*

One of the ministers of education in the *Concertación* governments mentioned the importance of funding instruments to facilitate access that went beyond the traditional sector and how the contextual economic needs led to policy decisions being taken.

> [T]he parents came and told us—and I experienced this as a senator and afterwards—'hey, I have no way to pay for my son to study at university. And *La Chile* [Universidad de Chile] didn't accept him or another one accepted him, I can't pay'. Or it happened in the state-run universities too. Because if you had a little more money, the state loan wasn't enough. You could have some scholarships, but if ´I'm going to ask the bank, they won't give me one because there's no guarantee, or they charge me huge amount like a credit card, a consumer loan'. The CORFO loan[6] was enacted at that time—in the 1990s maybe. A CORFO loan was a relief. Lots of people got it. Luckily, the state gave loans because there were none. The discussion there wasn't what the interest rate was: ´if what I want is to study, I'll see how to pay later'. So the pressure was very strong for expansion.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Rodrigo Cumsille, former Minister of Education during Lagos government*

The connections between targeted funding and better opportunities for access enabled actors with expert economic knowledge to gain space in the policy-making process. The next

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[6] A CORFO loan was an alternative loan—prior to the CAE granted by banks and financial entities—operating with funds from the *Corporación de Fomento de la Producción* (CORFO, Production Development Corporation). This loan differed little from a common consumer loan. The interest rate varied between 7% and 9% per year and monthly instalments were adjustable. CORFO is a government organisation responsible for promoting national production and regional economic growth.

section explores how that economic knowledge enabled the establishment of technocracy as the predominant policy actor to make policy decisions in the HE debate.

8.1.2. The value of technocracy: suspicion about politics and social groups

The relevance of funding policy instruments meant highlighting the role played by technocracy as a pivotal factor to make decisions in the HE model prior to 2011. As seen in Chapter 3, Brooks (2018) defined technocracy as actors holding authority to make policy decisions based on expert knowledge. The emergence of these actors in the policy process was a democratic challenge, since they are not appointed via public elections. Given this definition, technocracy usually counteracts legislators or social leaders whose source of authority stems from the representation of social groups. In Chile, technocratic actors were placed in important positions of state because they expressed what Adams (2018) termed a rationalist view to make policy decisions. Additionally, they gained importance over other social and educational stakeholders because there was contempt for politicians' influence over policy. As Chapter 4 describes it, the roots of this contempt for politicians lay in the process of depoliticisation started during the dictatorship. With regard to the HE policy field, the lack of trust in politicians to make efficient and disinterested decisions meant that the technical independence of technocracy appeared to be *the right way* of conducting policy. The debate about the new accreditation law during the sub-period sheds some light on this point.

> [T]he agreement reached on limiting the interference of the executive power in the formation of the commission on accreditation is a move in the right direction. Until last Tuesday, the President of the Republic was responsible for the appointment of 12 of the 13 members of that body, which provided high probabilities of politicisation in a system that should be ensured to be as independent as possible.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 17-10-03*

Political interference was not desirable since politicians represent ideological stances, which would not be in line with decisions made with empirical data and would instead be based on outdated prejudices.

> What is stopping us, then? Apparently, ideological aspects and, to a certain extent, lack of enlightenment among our parliamentarians. We see parliamentarians in the

discussions loaded with prejudice and with ignorance regarding how the world has changed in the higher education field, leading them to recall ancient conceptions.

Editorial, El Mercurio, 05-03-05

It should be noted that the mistrust of politicians was not aimed solely at the institutional political system. There was also exclusion of the political participation of the student social movement prior to 2011. Students would be incapable of understanding problems from a realistic approach and their policy proposals considered to have a negative impact on the educational sector. Students, along with politicians, would not be included in the technical toolbox to provide appropriate solutions to HE issues.

> The attitude of the student movement is that of a typical pressure group that tries to maximise its interests. The commission that will analyse the regulations of this new law should remember that a realistic analysis of the student approaches shows their weaknesses. If the commission accepts them, they will inevitably translate, sooner or later, into more subsidies and less equity.

Editorial, El Mercurio, 08-06-05

A former policy-maker from the *Concertación* governments remembered the process by which the HE policy tended to highlight the role played by technocracy. He described how the political tendency of the policy before 2003 gave way to civil servants with technical knowledge who began operating at the level of specialised committees until making international technocratic connections.

> At the beginning, the technical advice or the support of the technicians was provided by the commissions that were formed. The first Brunner commission and, later, the duties of the ministerial team were to try to execute those proposals, obviously going through the political filter of the minister who was responsible for taking the decisions. Later, there was a second phase—I experienced some of this—in which international organisations begin to appear. First, the World Bank or the IDB had something to do with this. And now, I also imagine, due to the participation in the OECD, its reports have greater relevance today. But, let's say, I would say that it's a phase that's clearly distinguishable when foreign technocrats or international experts started entering ministries, let's say, and then there was a time when they had a lot of influence. That

is, in the first stage, the decision was basically political. In this second stage, the technical issue became predominant.

Interviewee
Andrés Alonso Gallo, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former Concertación policy-maker

Section 8.1.2 reviews how technocracy imposed its policy perspective on political and social actors in the HE debate. The predominance of technocrats operated through economic knowledge enabling that technocracy to have the power to define the most appropriate criteria to drive policy change. Section 8.1.3 examines how the policy criteria were coordinated with funding instruments and the value of technocratic knowledge.

8.1.3. The criterion of *reality* to achieve gradual policy change

The rejection of the participation of institutional politicians and socio-political actors in the HE debate prior to 2011 shaped the discussion about the best criteria to make decisions in the HE policy field. The HE debate drew on the idea of *reality* as the basis for conducting HE policy. The reality was the starting point to conceive of *good policy* as that opposed to ideological proposals embodying social risks. In addition, the call for greater state intervention in the model had an ideological sense, while its coexistence with market operation would be a material reality.

> Controversy has emerged in recent weeks regarding the bill about quality assurance in Chilean higher education. The controversy reveals positions that come from ideological biases rather than critical and realistic reasoning on the subject. There is a false dichotomy of the pure market or regulatory state without noting that there are spaces for coexistence.

Editorial, El Mercurio, 02-11-03

Following the considerations of reality, the HE policy debate followed the macro-political bipartisan arrangement (Fernández Darraz, 2015) and suggested that any change should involve dialogue and consensus to avoid uncertainty, imposing a reformist perspective on the decision-making process. Dialogue and agreement were understood as a synonym for rationality, while conflicts would entail demands from socio-political groups conceived as dead ends.

The second fact that we should value is the change in the disposition of the government. It transitioned from a position close to intransigence to a frank and open dialogue with the students, showing the ability to reach agreements with the student movement. It was necessary for all of us to abandon the trenches and let reason prevail to allow this situation to occur.

Opinion Column, La Nación 15-09-05
Rodrigo de la Calle

A former right-wing MP defended the manner of developing policies during the *Concertación* governments. He highlighted the importance of political agreements and the value of long-term state decisions detached from political shifts expressed in changes of government.

I think Chile was successful during the period of the *Concertación*, among other things, because there were certain levels of agreement on certain things. Those agreements can happen with larger states or smaller states, but there have to be agreements. So, in education, in my opinion, there have to be agreements. Secondly, I believe in autonomy. It's good that we have a truly independent National Accreditation Council. In education, there can't be such a large connection between the government of the day and the short-term objectives.

Interviewee
Pedro Pablo Swett, former right-wing MP

The idea of policy change thus gradually acquired a sense that it should be based on technical justifications in the HE policy discussion. The HE debate agreed that the implementation of CAE and the new accreditation law regulating the entire model were the most important policy changes before 2011. These two HE reforms positioned the policy decisions at the level of instruments, but without transforming what Hall (1993) called the third-order level of policy—equity as a goal. It was a conservative conception of policy change, the best expression of which was embodied by the idea of reform.

These two reforms [CAE and accreditation] represent the greatest transformation at this level of education in the last 30 years, responding to the main demands that the massification of education has brought with it: to guarantee equitable access to post-secondary education for all young people with merit in a paid system and that they have a quality educational offering in an open and decentralised system.

The importance of reality counteracting ideology and the idea of gradual policy change based on broad agreements were linked to the targeted funding instruments and the role of technocracy to inform a policy-making process characterised by decisions made conservatively. The main vehicle of policy change found a reformist perspective in which the HE model only required adjustments to perfect what had been already developed. Section 8.2 shows the challenge to this model due to the disruption caused by the 2011 social movement that questioned it.

8.2. The struggle to define policy change (2011)

Following the theoretical framework used in the previous chapters, Section 8.2 draws on what Boltanski (2011) termed the *existential critique* to define the events that occurred in 2011. The student social movement represented the moment at which the participants in the HE debate who criticised the model had the chance to utilise critiques from outside the *reality* of the discussion. This was the moment in which the *world* appeared to question the *institutional* reality of the HE model. An area of dispute opened up the HE discussion and equity considerations gave way to potential alternatives in the policy-making process. Section 8.1 outlines an integration between targeted funding instruments, the role of technocracy, and the notion of reality to steer HE policy, while Section 8.2 shows the undermining of these pillars, particularly those regarding policy actors and policy criteria. Therefore, Sub-section 8.2.1 describes how the debate about targeted funding instruments tried to resist the demands and criticisms from the students, and Sub-section 8.2.2 addresses the emergence of new policy actors disputing the position occupied by the economic technocracy in policy-making. Finally, Sub-section 8.2.3 reviews the questioning of the notion of reality in the equity-oriented debate in order to carry out the policy change.

8.2.1. The resistance of funding instruments to target state resources

When the student social movement took place in 2011, the debate about HE funding underwent some interesting shifts that allowed the emergence of free education policy to be observed in an initial stage. The students affected the policy agenda because they showed that access based on loans led to high levels of individual debt. These debts were impossible to pay for students who dropped out of HE—and even for many of those who managed to

graduate—when they joined the job market. In this context, supporters of the HE model responded by trying to demonstrate a shift in the debate regarding funding instruments. They highlighted that solutions to the debt could come from improving the allocation of scholarships instead of loans. Scholarships would be the most equitable support for vulnerable students: "the issue of access is solved and substantially improved with scholarships that benefit the poorest students" *(Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 07-07-11: Orlando Poblete Iturrate, former dean of Universidad de Los Andes, NPU)*

A policy-maker who was responsible for a government HE programme during the *Concertación* governments summarised how President Piñera reacted to the emergence of the student social movement by reinforcing the available funding instruments.

> What did the student movement bring? The government of the day reacted to the movement. And essentially the changes that one can see at that time were that new resources were incorporated with the aim of targeting certain objectives, but still heavily in line with the programmes that were implemented during the last 15 years. One could say that that is what happened and, well, certain changes such as the decrease in the interest rate of the CAE.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Daniel Davis, former policy-maker and head of MECESUP programme*

However, the 2011 student social movement opened up an unseen dispute about funding instruments going beyond technocratic experts. In 2011, experts and scholars representing the demands of critical social groups gained greater visibility and support. They argued that scholarships and loan systems reinforced the subsidies for demand and deepened the current model. These critiques based on funding criteria were observed when the first Piñera government proposed the *Gran Acuerdo Nacional por la Educación* (GANE[7], Great National Agreement for Education) to respond to the students' demands. GANE was a failed policy aimed at increasing scholarships for deprived students, enhancing coverage of economic supports, and reducing the CAE interest rate for new students.

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[7] The name GANE had a symbolic meaning since *gane* also means ´you win` in Spanish.

The details of the GANE show that the government is not willing to make substantial transformations of the current system, but is opting to perfect it.... It aims to improve access and financing conditions for higher education through scholarships for the SC-TE sector and helping the most vulnerable students with academic merit to choose the higher education institution of their choice. In addition, it aims to reduce the interest rates for the CAE, reformulating this mechanism and strengthening the collection of debts inherited from the former old state loan. These measures are intended to reduce inequalities in financing for higher education through the role of the market.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 07-07-11
Ernesto Treviño, PUC, CRUCH

As analysed in Chapter 7, this technical questioning—linked to political demands from the student social movement—opened the door to devise the potential of free education policy as an alternative to cost-sharing instruments in the higher education model. It was the condition of possibility to articulate the technical area with the political sphere based on the core of the Chilean HE model: funding policy instruments.

A free education reform of the traditional university system would allow an end to socioeconomic segregation and would contribute to social integration.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 30-10-11
Juan Manuel Zolezzi, dean of USACH. CRUCH

While the funding instruments seemed to be the main tool utilised by the Piñera government to react to the students' demands, the social movement challenged the decisions of the funding area in HE, converting them into the source of malaise for educational actors. One policy-maker drew attention to debt as an economic factor producing criticism of the crumbling funding instruments causing the HE crisis.

The thing is that each policy makes sense at the time when it's created. Before the student movements, the main challenges were the socioeconomic gaps in HE access. These gaps were also accompanied by heavy debt accumulated by the students who were in the system, that is, through the CAE. So, in some way, what the movement did was to make the complicated economic situation of the students visible.

Interviewee

As a reaction to the 2011 social movement, the HE debate saw two main shifts. On the one hand, those defending the model tried to link policy change with funding instruments by replacing loans with scholarships. That is, the structure of HE funding would remain similar to that in the previous sub-period, but with some adjustments at the level of policy instrument settings. On the other hand, scholars and policy-makers linked to the social movement began criticising the targeted way of distributing the HE funding. They saw it as one of the causes of the growing student debt and began imagining the possibilities of FHE as an applicable set of instruments. The dispute over the definition of funding instruments in 2011 gave the opportunity to other actors positioned beyond the economic experts to participate in the HE debate. Section 8.2.2 describes this new area of dispute, formed by a broader variety of actors discussing the funding instruments to make policy decisions.

8.2.2. The prevalence, redemption, and emergence of actors in spaces for steering policy

In 2011, the conservative sector in the HE debate reiterated the criticism of the role of students as valid participants in the discussion. However, there was an interesting shift intended to contain the malaise denounced by the students. Conservative HE experts slowly started recognising that the diagnosis of the HE crisis made by the social movement was not erroneous, but the students lacked the expertise to propose solutions. Technical justifications became the bulwark to support the privatised model. One liberal scholar summarised the view of the students on the part of those defending the model.

> Its leaders have maintained, rightly, that the OECD agrees with the diagnosis of the Chilean student movement. What they do not want to say is that the OECD itself does not discriminate according to the public or private ownership of the institutions, or regarding their financing methods. Sharing the diagnosis is one thing. Agreeing on the solutions is another matter.

> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 28-10-11*
> *Cristóbal Bellolio, scholar, UAI, NPU*

Another novelty in the sector defending the HE model was backing for the value of institutional politicians to conduct policy. They argued that institutions such as parliament and government were the place to carry out the decision-making process.

[I]t's positive to have discussion about changes in the Legislative Power. That's the place where major reforms should be discussed, where society is represented in the broadest manner and which is institutionally responsible for approving or rejecting the legal initiatives presented by the government.

Editorial, La Tercera, 03-07-11

Nevertheless, the participants criticising the HE model and supporting the student social movement saw an opportunity to gain space in the policy discussion. They turned the same contempt of technocratic thought towards politicians to promote student participation. Since technocracy had conquered the political discourse, it would have scorned the content of any policy proposal from institutional spaces. Students were thus seen as valid actors confronting illegitimate technocratic and political policy-makers.

We are facing something much deeper than a demand that can be met with a package of measures. When Piñera spoke of the importance of public education in his speech in a televised address, the young people didn't believe him. Piñera seemed to float on a stage with lots of Chilean flags in the background, throwing out a series of figures and acronyms that sounded like empty words, like so many words that the youth of this generation have heard and have ended up rejecting instinctively.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 07-07-11
Cristián Warnken, literary writer

On the other hand, a left-wing politician emphasised how the student social movement had managed to break the predominance of technocracy in HE policy: he saw the contribution of the students to the political HE discussion as positive.

There was a hegemonic view in the country closely linked to the idea of targeting meritocracy. And furthermore, the discussion was reduced to a small group of experts who disguised technocracy as a kind of space detached from political discussions. I think what the student movement did was to break that barrier as well and politicise the discussion in the positive sense of the word.

Interviewee
Franco Ancic, MP Frente Amplio and former leader of the student movement

The main finding of this section was the displacement of the economic technocracy as the primary actor to conduct HE policy. Although supporters of the model recognised that students had an accurate diagnosis of the HE crisis, they insisted on solutions based on expert knowledge to steer policy. However, agents intending to change the HE model saw this relationship between technocracy and political actors as the conquest of the former over the latter. This relationship became a source of criticism to vindicate the role played by students and the scholars offering alternatives for an HE model in crisis. How these emergent actors gained weight in the HE debate is the topic of analysis in Section 8.2.3. It describes how critiques and justifications from this dispute were based on different policy criteria and how a tension emerged between different views on conducting the policy change.

8.2.3. The tension between reality and ideology to make policy decisions

In 2011, the lack of realism of the student demands became the main criticism of the social movement. Supporters of the HE model argued that to act based on reality would mean going beyond the diagnosis of the HE crisis and discarding radical solutions involving structural changes based on ideological stances. In general terms, ideology was seen as a negative element associated with a negative influence of the state.

> On the basis of what factual evidence do students insist on associating public [education] with the quality? It is based on an old prejudice refuted by history and data. The state—whether you think of the Cuban or European model—does not offer the benefits that the left-wing attributes to it. The state either always does it badly or seems to do it well, but in a way that is unsustainable.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 10-08-11
Teresa Marinovic, right-wing politician

However, this association between ideology and state began to be challenged in 2011. Critics of the HE model argued that the defence of the market in HE also had an ideological nature. There was a vindication of the concept of ideology in the HE discussion. Ideology as the element opposed to *reality* emerged as the articulator to connect policy demands with what Boltanski (2011) called the concept of *world* in Chapter 2. Ideology in the HE debate brought elements from the world to define the new limits of reality. The vindication of ideology has the potential to change *reality*. In an opinion column, a scholar from a NPU analysed the new role played by ideology in 2011.

Some people say ´the government gives priority to ideological reasons'. Other people say ´the students are ideologised'. Who's right? Both of them! A large part of the reasoning put forward—and which will be presented again at the next roundtable— are legitimately ideological since they promote a certain view of how society should operate.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 02-09-11
Cristóbal, Belollio, scholar, UAI, NPU

Although ideology in the previous quotation does not have the meaning that Marxism allocated to this concept, it operates as a set of elements that enable an alternative imaginary of society. A former right-wing MP summarised how the social movement exposed the differences between the policy decision-making process prior to 2011 and the relevance of the ideological shift in 2011 to devise new policies later.

Look, I think Chile had a consensus in the way in which progress was made in the country from 1990 to 2014. It wasn't an explicit consensus, it was an underlying consensus. That is to say, it was President Aylwin during the post-dictatorship who had to make the decision whether to continue with the previous model in democracy or not. And his decision was, yes, to follow the model, to expand and improve it ... I believe that this consensus was broken in 2014. I believe that those who were repentant members of *Concertación* governments, along with some who were not part of the consensus, never stopped their ideological work in the universities, student unions, unions. And they saw in 2011— wrongly in my opinion—they saw the demonstrations and said ´well, this is our moment. People don't want this model and, therefore, we have to create a different one'.

Interviewee
Hernán Rossi, right-wing former MP and minister in second Piñera government

The balance of the weight of policy between reality and ideology as a criterion to make policy decisions has led to a dispute about the correct way of changing the HE model. On the one hand, the most conservative observers recognised that although the problems identified by the student social movement were serious, it was not a crisis sufficient to consider radical changes.

There are many reform proposals for higher and school education in the debate. Some of them are valuable, but the idea of a radical change prevails. It is argued that both school and higher education are in crisis. It is true that there are a number of serious problems, but we are certainly not in a terminal crisis.

Editorial, El Mercurio, 02-07-11

On the other hand, a new stance linked to the social movement emerged to propose an alternative conception of policy change. This position claimed there was a need for structural changes to end the current HE model. The critiques even encompassed technical reasoning expressed in terms of the waste of funds by an inefficient model, in addition to inequalities and segregation resulting from policy failures.

The different social actors have agreed that we need structural transformations and should not continue wasting large sums of money on a model that is unique in the world. This model has been consolidating one of the most unequal societies and the second most segregated in educational terms.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 01-08-11
Giorgio Jackson, former student leader and current MP

Although the 2011 social movement represented a moment in which the *institutional reality* collapsed, it is necessary to review how the HE debate consolidated the tensions described in Section 8.2. Questions about whether the changes at the level of policy actors and criteria were welcome or reversed by the HE debate after 2011 requires analysis of the subsequent sub-period. Likewise, the apparent continuity of funding instruments maintains the doubt about the real degree of change in the decision-making process generated by the social movement. Section 8.3 attempts to explore the consolidation of these particularities after a period of social upheaval.

8.3. The continuity of financing instruments and potential discontinuities in policy-making (2012-2016)

After 2011, the discussion of the potential implementation of FHE raised questions about how the debate about the three topics analysed so far reacted to the HE institutional efforts aimed at diffusing the student malaise. In this regard, Section 8.3 explores the consolidation of the continuity of targeted funding instruments (8.3.1) and the potential discontinuities

represented by the disputes about who (8.3.2) and how (8.3.3) HE policy should be steered in a context of an FHE reform.

8.3.1. The continuity of targeted funding instruments: partial free higher education

The HE debate about funding instruments subsequent to 2011 shifted towards a smaller space that operated as a refuge for justifications defending the model. After the political defeat ended up with the promise of free education policy as described in Chapter 7, some supporters of the equity-oriented model sought to save the mechanisms in which the operation *of the Estado Subsidiario* had been crystallised. This sector sought to reject the allocation of economic resources from free education in a *´universal´* manner so that the targeting principle would remain untouched. A former minister of education during the first Piñera government summarised how this perspective encompassed a systematic view about how funding policy should be conducted.

> Thus, an agenda that improves the scholarship system, develops the system of loans appropriately adjusted to future incomes, deepens and perfects the quality assurance system of higher education, promotes more investment in research, and development in accordance with the complexity and performance of HEIs, creates a national fund for humanities, defines incentives to reduce dropouts and course lengths, and lastly, ensures rules that reduce asymmetries of information and discourages professional programmes [there are about 12,000) that are not socially profitable, and, on the other hand, promotes those that are profitable for students and Chilean society. It seems to be much more effective, socially more relevant, and less burdensome than universal free education.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 17-05-15*
> *Harald Beyer, former Minister of Education in first Piñera government*

Moreover, there was a warning about the risks of enacting policy without considering the historical targeting strategy of making policy decisions. Universal free education policy could become regressive if it ignored that the most vulnerable students attend private sector HEIs. The policy should thus focus on the needs of the applicants regardless of the type of HE provision, since the wealthiest students generally study in the traditional sector.

> [M]easures based on a discriminatory criterion have been announced, such as selecting the students benefited [with state resources] regardless of their needs, but because of the institution they have chosen.

> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 11-06-15*
> *Cristián Nazer, dean of UFT, NPU*

The targeted nature of the policy on funding instruments became essential, since the country's lack of resources would require decisions to be made based on efficiency.

> State universities aspire to have a Treasury that finances the difference and all their expenses in the form of basic contributions, but there we fall into an area already seen in Chile until the 1980s. Over time, tertiary education ended up accounting for much of the public education budget, being detrimental to the quality of secondary and preschool education.

> *Opinion Column, La Tercera, 09-02-14*
> *Ruben Covarrubias, dean of Universidad Mayor, NPU*

Even authorities from a regional state-run university warned that the FHE policy might fail in its attempt to change the model. They cast doubts on whether a political victory—observed in the establishment of FHE—could be compatible with a technical defeat—crystallised in continuing the mixed cost-sharing funding model.

> The situation becomes even more concerning if one considers that the HE reform project doesn't mention the possibility of changing the conditions under which the CAE has operated until now, but leaves the door open for it to be the formula to finance for the students who cannot access free [education].

> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 09-09-16*
> *Álvaro Rojas Marín and Hugo Salgado, scholars, UTalca, CRUCH*

The concern about the continuity in terms of funding instruments is also shared by the interviewees who saw partial free education policy—as that opposed to universal FHE—as the repetition of old mechanisms to allocate public resources. The partial FHE policy emerged as the possibility to continue with a mechanism of allocating state funds by targeting the resources. A former policy-maker from the first Piñera government explained how a *universal* FHE policy was the opposite to targeted policies. This recognition of a conflict

between the two funding models is useful to understand why FHE policy adopted a partial nature, assimilating these instruments as elements that share the same characteristics.

> So, my impression is that the universality of free education or the slogan of universal free education has to do with taking the logic out of targeting and allowing only certain subjects to be beneficiaries of a certain right, a right which before was a loan, afterwards a scholarship, and now free education. And it says more than anything 'because I study here, regardless of my socioeconomic level, because my family or I… I'm going to generate a return through taxes later'. I think that's the difference.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Blanca Zuñiga, ex MINEDUC advisor during the Piñera government*

With regard to the funding instruments, the HE discussion seemed to show agreement on targeting insofar as the idea of partial FHE was imposed on the demand for universal FHE. The partial nature of the policy gave the opportunity to retain the cost-sharing mechanisms of allocating resources, while the FHE reform fitted the most deprived students. The relevance of this situation is controversial, since it would involve the coexistence of a discontinuity of a policy goal with the continuity of policy instruments. The scope of the policy change thus becomes relevant to understand the relationship between *continuity* and *discontinuity*. The complexity of this relationship will even be expressed beyond the framework of *policy-orders*. In contrast, Sections 8.3.2 and 8.3.3 outline an unsolved dispute involving the policy actors and criteria.

8.3.2. The technocratic-conservative versus the socio-ideological actors

After 2011, the discussion about who should carry out the policy process followed similar patterns to those analysed in the previous periods. There was a split regarding who should define the orientation of the policy. On the one hand, supporters of the model again resorted to the relevance of technocracy to decide what sort of policies were suitable. The difference from the previous sub-periods involved a sector of those defending the model who explicitly wanted a combination of technocracy and the state to be responsible for conducting policy. Since the social demands were for greater state involvement, this technocratic stance escalated the justifications to dispute what kind of state participation was needed to intervene in the HE model. They were in favour of broadening the areas of state influence by guaranteeing its auditing role through the creation of new ´state' institutions that were

autonomous from government. These new institutions would have the power to regulate the HE model, but with ensured independence from the state.

> In addition, a higher education superintendency has been promoted. It was approved in parliament two weeks ago despite having been presented in November 2011. This superintendency gives the state much greater oversight capabilities, which are currently extremely limited.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 31-03-13*
> *Harald Beyer, former Minister of Education in first Piñera government*

The interviewees supporting the model complained about the displacement of the traditional technocracy from the decision-making process, arguing against new actors who did not have the experience to steer the FHE policy.

> Let's see, first, I think that the reform was done sloppily ... as I told you before, the contribution of people who knew a lot about the system, who knew a lot, was scorned. There was an attempt to include exclusively young people. I think they had no experience and, in many cases, they didn't have enough preparation. You can see that in the bill.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Javiera Donoso, policy-maker in first Piñera government*

On the other hand, in the sector that criticised the model, the historical precedents of policy failures on the part of *'the political class'* led to demands that the social actors should be those steering policy.

> [D]espite the observations and questions that we might have about the development of these surveys, it shows that the largest political blocs in the country don't have sufficient legitimacy to govern or legislate in the current scenario... we, the actors of the social movements, are those who should form a force in light of the instability, incapacity, failures, and the false historical illusions emanating from the political class.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 11-03-16*
> *Gabriel Iturra*

The call to revaluate the participation of society in the definition of the HE policy would be a democratic exercise, since the public would be responsible for the decision-making process.

For the same reason, the discussion cannot be detached from the interests of the public, since they are—undeniably—the ones who should lead an open and profound debate, which achieves the introduction of the changes that our education system really needs.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 17-08-16
Juan Manuel Zolezzi, dean of USACH, CRUCH

Following this call for greater social participation, a left-wing politician who was interviewed, interpreted how the HE policy has been developed over time. He highlighted the lack of democratic participation in guiding policy and criticised the role played by the technocracy in this area since the return to democracy.

I think that policies have been developed in a very undemocratic way in the last 30 years. There was no participation of different social interests, through popular representatives of the public, elected by the public, or the participation of elements of civil society in the development of policies. I think that the development of policies has been reduced to the opinion of so-called experts. A person who has credentials of advanced studies in a subject now has much more authority than a legislator or social leader who represents the demands of a social group …. This makes the discussion and evaluation of policies at present the domain of a very, very small sector of society, which also naturalises those policies. They naturalise basic ideas such as that the state has no initiative as a provider, but rather that it has to regulate or deliver resources to the private sector, which should take charge. And on the basis of that, they think about how to perfect the model, but not question it.

Interviewee
Enrique Gómez, left-wing politician and former leader of student social movement

The social characteristics of the definition of HE policy meant that critics of the HE model gave a preponderant role to the state as the primary actor to make policy decisions. According to this view, the state should orientate its action to ensure the ´right to education' regardless of the governments of the day.

The state should guarantee the ´right to education' as an aim to meet regardless of the decisions and will of specific governments. In this regard, the state should establish the deadlines in law to implement free education and the institutional

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requirements to access funding, as well as the expansion and improvement of public provision [of education].

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 16-07-16
Camila Vallejo Dowling and Rolando Rebolledo Berroeta

8.3.3. The dispute of a reality in crisis

The HE debate subsequent to 2011 saw a deepening of the split between reality and ideology seen in the previous sub-period. On the one hand, there was a complaint from the reformist sector—the most progressive actors defending the model—that free education policy clashed with the *reality* of the HEIs, particularly new private ones that that intended to adhere to the HE reform.

> That reality—the reality of the Chilean universities—now clashes with the expectations of free education and, in any case, of lower costs that the government has sown among the students. The result so far is the worst of all: the [private sector] students feel disappointed about the expectations of free education that have proliferated among them and therefore demand they are met, even partially, by the institutions to which they belong.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 19-12-15
Carlos Peña, dean of UDP, NPU

Likewise, the most conservative sectors in the HE debate again called for democratic agreements to guide policy change. They argued that the development of gradual HE changes requires balance at the level of policy decisions.

> [I]f there is something that validates democracy despite its imperfections, it is that characteristic. That is, the characteristic of offering means the peaceful resolution of the controversies that arise in free societies. The search for balances between divergent interests sometimes are not 100% achieved, but they allow a gradual evolution towards better conditions of social, political, economic, and cultural life.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 17-02-2012
Roberto Meza

On the other hand, the vindication of ideology by those seeking to change the HE model entailed moving towards new disputes in the HE debate. One of the most critical shifts—and

the expression of the political shift that FHE policy led to after 2011—was the intention of critics of the model to battle for the definition of a *reality* previously monopolised by those defending the model. This conception of reality was a synonym of an HE crisis in which the promises of the privatised HE model became utopias that were impossible to achieve. A scholar from a state-run university summarised this idea by describing the failures of the promise of equity through merit.

> The reality is much more brutal like the results of the PSU test are brutal ... merit doesn't sell any more because it is opposed to fact. And the only thing opposed to fact that sells are utopias. I wanted to say that it was sold because nobody has lived on utopias for a long time.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 04-01-13*
> *Jaime Retamal, scholar, USACH, CRUCH*

The attempt to appropriate reality in line with a rejection of the consensus became the basis to steer HE policy for the critics of the HE model. They claimed that this process entailed an intrinsic lack of neutrality, since the search for consensus and neutrality meant that policy acquired contradictory content.

> Unfortunately, there is not even the minimum intention of the executive power to correct and reorient the reform. It is an attempt to design a public policy in education that ´leaves everyone happy', but which has profound contradictions.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 26-09-16*
> *Juan Manuel Zolezzi, dean of USACH, CRUCH*

The scholars interviewed that were in favour of making changes to the HE model reiterated this policy shift and advocated against the intended neutrality in the decision-making process.

> This government has proved time and time again that it doesn't know what it wants to do, and it doesn't know how to do it. You can't seduce anyone with such a poorly articulated speech. You can't seduce anyone by saying ´I'm going to listen to all of you and we're going to back everyone'. You have to break eggs somewhere.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Luis Enrique Rozas, scholar, PUCV, CRUCH*

Like the previous period, the most radical actors among the critics of the model associated the idea of change in the HE debate with structural transformations, even avoiding using the notion of reform. The policy change would thus involve the introduction of a new paradigm that might invoke civil disobedience if there was no institutional openness to it.

> Most of people believe in reformism, but that assumes that a paradigm shift isn't necessary. And here the problem is huge. A paradigm shift is needed. In this framework of dead ends, one of the routes is to socially build the right that one has conceptually and legally: the right to free education. Given the scenario, that route is civil disobedience.

Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 01-02-2012
Alberto Mayol, scholar, USACH, CRUCH, and former presidential candidate

Section 8.3 shows interesting shifts in the HE discussion regarding how much the HE policy-making changes compared between an equity-oriented debate and an FHE-oriented debate. The data suggest that there would be potential discontinuities regarding policy actors and criteria to carry out HE policy, but it was notable that those defending the model focused their arguments on maintaining the funding instruments. Therefore, the complexity of these changes in policy-making would require a different perspective. Section 8.4 attempts to use a transversal analysis of these topics to understand how these continuities and discontinuities are linked to the findings described in chapters 6 and 7.

8.4. The non-correspondence between policy levels of change

Chapter 8 explores the correspondence between the political change described in Chapter 7 as the enactment of the goal of free education, its influence on the making-decision process, and the evolution of the policy instruments. Firstly, at the level of policy instruments, information from the opinion columns and interviews suggests that there was a continuity during the 14-year period regarding the way of allocating resources to the HE model. The debate on HE almost agreed that FHE policy settled on a funding structure which did not undergo significant modifications. The different discourses seemed to recognise a continuity at the level of policy instruments that tended to be compatible with a discontinuity at the level of the new policy goal of free education. It would be a continuation of a system in which subsidies for demand and privatisation could coexist with the implementation of the FHE policy.

[B]ecause free education has been understood in Chile through the voucher system again and has not been understood through higher taxes that are paid to finance the education system and the HE system. And there should be free education, in my view, only in the state [institutions] and nowhere else. Because it's not a private system. It's not a system of subsidies. When I pay my health insurance, for example, if I don't get ill, that money doesn't go to another sick person, it goes directly to the Mercedes Benz of the owner of my insurance company. And the same happens with private universities, although it's still illegal to be oriented towards profit-making.

Interviewee
Denisse Thompson, scholar, UV, CRUCH

Secondly, there was an exploration of how the decision-making process had evolved since 2003 and how different actors gained preponderance to influence policy decisions. In that regard, the student social movements and the FHE reform led to an openness to the acceptance of new actors making policy decisions. Although the technocracy retained its value in the decision-making process by the supporters of the model, doubts emerged about its role in 2011 that resulted in a demand for greater democratic participation from sectors who criticised the HE model after 2011. This policy change at the level of decisions informed a new space of an as yet unresolved dispute that could be interpreted as a potential discontinuity.

It seems to me that over time, during the first decade and what has been going on in this second decade, there is indeed a growing confrontation of opinions in the field of HE policy, but also in the ideological field itself regarding these policies and in the academic sector. Therefore, there is a loss of the framework of explicit and latent consensus that had existed during the previous period. It seems to me that we're currently in the stage of discussion regarding the foundations of an HE policy and the development of the educational system—or of Chilean higher education. That's where we are. In other words, this is a very dynamic time, very confrontational, with many questions.

Interviewee
Miguel Ángel Smith, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former minister of the Concertación

Thirdly, the question about continuity and discontinuity addresses the shifts regarding the criteria used to guide policy throughout the sub-periods. Changes were also seen regarding this aspect. The student social movement began debating the criterion of reality to conduct policy after 2011. Similarly, the value of ideology underwent a resignification, since its meaning changed from a negative value to a positive one for the participants who wanted to transform the model. Even neutrality was seen as an inefficient element to steer policy. However, the discursive defence of the HE model insisted on the need for consensus and gradualness to conduct policy. Once again, there was a new area of dispute in which different criteria were in conflict to conduct policy. A former student leader and current MP pointed out during his interview that the social movement embodied a transformation to decide the criteria for steering HE policy.

> I believe that we, as a student movement, managed to highlight the need for education in general and higher education in particular based on a conception of it as a right rather than as a concept of consumer goods as Piñera defined it. And I think that there was a change in the logic of policy discussion at the national level after 2011 ... because we managed to reduce the interest rate on loans and are now moving towards ending the CAE and towards free education with a lot of questions regarding its implementation. That's another debate: the way in which it's done. But I think they have led to a substantial political change in how the issue has been approached in Chile.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Franco Ancic, MP Frente Amplio and former student leader*

The political discontinuity created by the FHE reform, the continuity of policy instruments, and the potential discontinuities of actors making decisions and policy criteria reflected complex policy development activated by a notion of change that did not follow the linear sequence suggested by Hall (1993). Indeed, a relevant scholar underlined the convoluted understanding of policy change in the debate, even arguing for the possibility of a return to the most conservative way of conducting HE policy.

> Until the Bachelet government, higher education policies were incremental, that is, marginal changes. Marginal not in the sense that they were irrelevant, but in the sense that they started from a basic system structure that was established in the era of the

dictatorship. And policy-makers introduced changes to improve certain aspects that weren't working well in that model. So it was from 1990 to 2014. With the Bachelet government, the unrealised aspiration emerged—and which would not be realised either—to change the foundations of the system, quite radically, and what critics called a commoditised HE model. To transform it into a system that has more components of state control or coordination. That's a very important difference at the aspirational level with respect to what has been done before. But that won't work. What will happen is that in the next government—whatever its leanings—the model of incremental change will continue, correcting certain aspects of the current model.

Interviewee
Victor Capiccelli, scholar, PUC, CRUCH

The complexity of the *policy change* has generated diverse discourses attempting to evaluate the nature of the change created by the establishment of the FHE reform in the debate. Although the discussion has shown some nuances, discursive data suggests recognition of the coexistence between discontinuity in terms of goals and continuity of instruments, leaving the dispute open about the unresolved aspects that seemed to move ahead of potential discontinuities. A scholar who was a former student leader confirmed the agreement about the coexistence between policy continuities and discontinuities, but underlined a critical perspective of the same policy concept.

[HE policy] underwent a shift in 2011, but it was a shift within the paradigm. We need a shift outside the paradigm. Regarding this shift within the paradigm, there's also a distinction of the degree, still within the paradigm. I'm making two distinctions. Also, the problem of equality in terms of degrees. Why? The Bachelet project is indeed a break with the Brunner generation, but that's a break in terms of degree and not in orientation …. they use the notion of policy to block the implementation of policy because the Chilean state ultimately isn't able to decide. Chile can't have an educational policy. It can have funding policies, but not an educational one, because the curriculum doesn't matter. The only curriculum that Chile has is called SIMCE and it's called PSU. That's what the state does, but the state can't steer policy.

Interviewee
Tomás Uribe, scholar, UChile, CRUCH, and politician and former student leader

The interesting point in this last discourse is that the interviewee made a distinction in terms of understanding continuity and discontinuity inside and outside the paradigm. This distinction is significant because it represents the pivotal factor to understand how continuity and discontinuity can coexist in policy development. This discussion is the primary focus of Chapter 9.

Conclusion

Chapter 8 addresses one of the questions raised by the change of the policy goal in the Chilean HE debate mentioned in Chapter 7. Specifically, the analysis in this chapter seeks to examine what Hall (1993) called the occurrence of a potential *discontinuity* in terms of a policy paradigm if a distinct goal guides policy development. That is, if a change ensues at the third-order policy level (goal), both the second-order level (policy instruments) and the first-order level (policy instrument settings) should change in accordance with the shift at the level of that policy goal. *Discontinuity* would thus be an effect of significant shifts modifying the entire paradigm regarding unidirectional incremental changes in the different policy orders. Instead, *continuity* would allow the existence of change, but as adjustments at the levels of policy instruments and instrument settings.

In this regard, the evolution of the set of funding instruments was the focus of the study at first. The findings suggest that although FHE could become a policy goal in the HE debate, the discussion about its implementation tended to recognise that this policy settled for a funding structure which did not change. There would be a *continuity* regarding this aspect. In addition, although the dominant position of technocracy to decide HE policies began being challenged, there was no definition about the depth of this change. Although students came up against technocrats and politicians in 2011 and there was a call for greater participation from society in HE policy-making discussions after 2011, it was not possible to establish a total discontinuity with the decision-making process linked to conservative perspectives prior to 2011.

Similarly, the evolution of the HE debate on policy criteria to steer policy underwent significant shifts in comparison to the almost total agreement observed between the actors influencing the HE debate in the news media prior to 2011. It was noteworthy that the return of the positive view of ideology in the HE discussion worked as a bridge to bring critiques from

what Boltanski (2011) called the *world* to question the institutional reality. This enabled the emergence of a dispute regarding the definition of reality to carry out HE policy, consolidating a division on the issue of policy change into two opposing positions: gradual changes versus structural changes. The introduction of FHE into the HE debate did not lead to a harmonious change at the level of the policy-making process and the data recommended taking into account the potential continuities and discontinuities as elements of the complexity of developing policy change.

It should be noted that Chapter 8 analyses the coherence between the changes in a policy goal with the policy-making processes within the limits of the former. This was an *inward* exploration of policy development and there was still no discussion about the *outward* manner of conducting policy, namely the relationship between the new policy goal and the possibilities of transforming a *paradigm*. Therefore, although the findings have shown a new unification of the *technical and political content* of HE policy regarding FHE and the accomplishment of a policy change combining *continuities* and *discontinuities*, there are still questions about how *accessibility* retained its predominance in the HE debate and whether a different legitimacy emerged in the HE model. The last two questions are specifically positioned in the *outward* area of changes in policy development. They are questions that need to explore the relationship between HE policy and the paradigm, since the significance of equity before 2011 lay in demands from neoliberal society to improve access to HE for various groups. It was a requirement made of HE by neoliberal society to soften the effects of this type of modernisation.

In this regard, Chapter 9 proposes a possible explanation of how discontinuities at different levels of policy development can connect with continuities under the umbrella of the principle of *accessibility* mentioned above. In practical terms, it is suggested that the key elements to understand this apparently contradictory coexistence are the modifications in and evolution of the HE debate regarding the student demands not considered by the political system: the demands for public and high-quality HE. The assumption here is that the emergence and implementation of the FHE reform required a particular discursive arrangement with these two alternative demands that prevented the debate from shifting towards issues regarding the *principle of horizontality*. Finally, the definitions of these *continuities* and *discontinuities* are the primary resource to analyse what sort of *figure of compromise* (Boltanski, 2011) was

at stake in terms of how justifications and critiques articulated a new form of legitimacy of HE. The possibilities of a change of *paradigm* would depend on the degree of transformations at the level of the *regime of justifications* underpinning the *institutional reality* of the HE system.

9. THE POSSIBILITIES OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY AT THE LEVEL OF THE HE POLICY PARADIGM

Chapter 2 of this thesis offers a theoretical proposal to study the relationship between *continuity* and *discontinuity* in the policy field. This theoretical proposal is intended to cover the gap in knowledge regarding this relationship in the policy area. It uses the notion of change as a dynamic concept that enables the application of ebb-and-flow energy to produce continuities and/or discontinuities. Change acts like a see-saw that allows policy continuities to be maintained—with the aim of continuing the status quo—through small shifts that can be interpreted as substantial reforms, as well as enabling broader transformations—in the form of policy discontinuities—resulting in conditions different to the previous state of affairs before the change is effected. The recognition of a bidirectional influence of change on the relationship between continuity and discontinuity led to the rejection of the static approaches in the policy literature that conceived of change as an antonym for continuity and a synonym for discontinuity. Furthermore, Chapter 2 proposes that the study of the dis/continuity relationship seems quite similar to the discussion of the relationship between the production and reproduction of society in the sociological area. This conceptual similarity provided the opportunity to draw on sociological categories that already enable progress to be made in the study of dynamic social relationships defined by the action of social change. In this regard, there was a restoration of the theoretical contributions provided by Boltanski since his main focuses involve processes of agreement and disagreement in situations in which dispute and uncertainty prevail. This sociological problem bears a resemblance to the policy-making process, the debates of which are intrinsic to contentious situations that require agreements to enable the implementation of policies. In addition to this focus, this theoretical approach becomes relevant, since it allows the ambition to explain the social totality on the basis of the same agents that are involved in the disputes with a normative emphasis on the possibilities of transforming society.

The adoption of these theoretical considerations established an opportunity to study the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in the particular context of the Chilean HE model. Since the Chilean neoliberal modernisation after the Pinochet dictatorship and during the subsequent democratic governments experienced side effects in terms of the equitable development of the country, social policy tended to limit its scope to improvements in equity during the first decade of this century. The educational sector—including HE—took part in

this process. However, this initial concern led to segregated HE access defined by differentiated enrolment in HEIs with an enormous variety in quality. As the political diagnosis identified an association between differentiated access and families' spending power, the political system reacted with an FHE proposal to contain the malaise of the 2011 student social movement that highlighted the crisis in HE. FHE became a promise of a total transformation of an inequitable HE model. It provided the opportunity for the emergence of a critique of the Chilean neoliberal modernisation that saw a possibility of developing a discontinuity in HE by proposing radical changes.

With regard to the aims of this thesis, the promise of implementing an FHE policy becomes a possibility of investigating how the action of policy change influences the arrangement between continuities and discontinuities with regard to themes and discourses forming the HE debate to provide legitimacy to the HE model. In order to comprehend the relationship between continuities and discontinuities in the Chilean HE debate, the analytical work focuses on four concerns considering the context of the Chilean HE model described in Chapter 4. Firstly, by analysing the justifications and critiques informing the HE debate on equity between 2003 and 2016, Chapter 6 acts as a baseline to understand how the 2011 student social movement broke the *unity of legitimacy between political and technical* arguments supporting the equity-oriented policies hitherto developed.

At the end of the period, the initial unity based on the figure of the policy goal of equity seemed to lose its political strength, preserving only its technical content. In this scenario, and following what was outlined in Chapter 4, Chapter 7 explored the discursive possibilities that the students' demand for FHE could become a goal that reunified the connection between political and technical content in HE policy. Since the HE debate about FHE incorporated *civic justifications* to discuss the compromise established between the *market and industrial cités* before the 2011 social movement, the data suggest that FHE seemed to operate as a new policy goal with appropriate legitimacy in the HE debate. However, the historical status as a policy instrument allocated to FHE—as an alternative for financing HE— raised doubts about its conversion into a policy goal. With the aim of responding to those doubts, Chapter 8 used the theoretical contribution of policy orders proposed by Hall (1993).

Figure 9.1: Summary of the evolution of the Chilean HE debate about public orientation and quality between 2003 and 2016

	2003-2010	2011	2012-2016
9. POLICY AND CHANGE: THE POSSIBILITIES OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY AT THE LEVEL OF THE HE POLICY PARADIGM	**9.1. Why not a public-oriented HE reform? The debate about the public orientation in HE**		
	9.1.1. The disputed meaning of public orientation of HE	9.1.2. The demand for public orientation of HE as a source of criticism of the profit issue	9.1.3. The prohibition of profit and the confirmation of a mixed HE model with a public orientation
	9.2. Why not a high-quality HE reform? The debate on quality in HE		
	9.2.1. Three positions aimed at improving HE quality in a context of the equity goal	9.2.2 The quality issue as a dispute between market and state participation	9.2.3 Quality policies as the principle of accessibility in an FHE context

2003 — 2016

—— Lagos government (2000-2006) ·········· Bachelet government (2006-2010) — · · — · · Piñera government (2010-2014) — — — — — Bachelet government (2014-2018)

He claimed that a change at the level of the policy goal would cause inward discontinuities regarding the policy level of instruments and instrument settings. The findings in Chapter 8 suggest that there were still gaps in the dispute regarding the policy-making process, but there seemed to be a continuity with respect to the set of funding instruments used by the equity-oriented and FHE-oriented models. There would thus be a discontinuity at the level of the policy goal with continuity at the level of the policy instruments. This apparent contradiction describes the special relationship between continuity and discontinuity in the development of policies, but there has not yet been an examination of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity with regard to the level of the policy paradigm—the outward relationship.

Chapter 9 addresses explicitly this outward relationship by looking at how the activation of change created by the FHE reform established a relationship with the principle of accessibility dominating the neoliberal HE paradigm. At this point, it should be noted that this thesis understands neoliberalism as the particular modernisation experienced by Chile in the 1970-80s decades. Specifically, as mentioned in Chapter 4, it refers to the consolidation of the conservative-neoliberal project during the civic-military dictatorship. Chilean neoliberalism and conservatism join each other through a consensus on an economic transformation. From both perspectives, the suspicion of the state led to relegating it to secondary operations in the national industrial and economic development. This process is different to other realities of the region in which societies started adopting neoliberal strategies. For instance, Brazil and Argentine kept the active state role in the industrialisation of the countries (Sanhueza, 2012). Birch and Mykhnenko (2008) add that there is a variety of neoliberalism. This variety would be a consequence of the economic conditions of national realities incorporating neoliberal strategies. For example, Germany introduced changes underpinning its solid industrial structure, while other European countries have shown an accelerated process of de-industrialisation with the increasing importance of services. In this regard, there is the acknowledgement of the fact that there is no single definition nor a unique route to settle the neoliberal project. Therefore, there would be no single neoliberal paradigm, and the Chilean experience is one among others.

The large diversity of national realities and how they have adopted neoliberal principles and practices according to their particular historical trajectories also affects other key elements

common in every analysis of it. For example, this is the case of the competition factor. This chapter analyses competition in Chilean HE as a factor influencing accreditation policies in Section 9.2. However, there is the awareness that its role is more complex than what here is analysed. There would then be a pending task of integrating it into future analyses, especially concerning its influence on educational reform discourses.

In concrete terms, Chapter 9 explores the issue of *accessibility*, firstly as the idea of a *common good* sustaining the policy paradigm during the entire period. With the aim of finding an answer to the persistence of the *principle of accessibility*, the first two sections of Chapter 9 seek to reveal how the HE debate relegated the student demands for public (9.1) and high-quality (9.2) higher education, giving greater priority to free education. Sections 9.1 and 9.2 have a similar structure to that used in the previous chapters. The description of the themes and discourses involves division into the previously described sub-periods under analysis, which can be seen in Figure 9.1, which summarises the relationships between the topics both horizontally and vertically. With regard to this chapter, the interpretation of the topics considers the horizontal relationships between them. Section 9.1 addresses the question about why the public-oriented HE reform was rejected, while Section 9.2 does the same with the question about why HE reform aimed at quality was relegated in importance. Finally, Section 9.3 attempts to connect the implementation of an FHE reform with the possibilities of producing a *discontinuity* at the level of the neoliberal policy paradigm by using the theoretical framework of Boltanski (2011) containing the notions of reality and world.

9.1. Why not a public-oriented HE reform? The debate about the public orientation in HE

Sections 9.1 and 9.2 analyse the relationship between the *policy goal* and the *neoliberal paradigm* dominating HE. By analysing the evolution of the HE debate, these sections intend to provide a response to why the student demand of free education became the leading political response to the HE crisis instead of public and high-quality higher education. It should be remembered that students conceived of these three demands as an entire policy with the aim of transforming the HE model. In this regard, Section 9.1 describes the first of these debates to understand how the idea of the orientation towards public education has evolved in the discussion about HE. Although the public orientation of HEIs has been a long-term point of discussion in the HE model (Marginson, 2011), this research will consider three dimensions of the public emerging from the Chilean HE discussion. Firstly, there is a dimension that refers

to the ownership of HEIs. Generally speaking, state-run HEIs are characterised as public entities which differ from private ones. Secondly, public meaning can be linked to the source of funding to finance HEIs. Those institutions receiving public resources have been commonly seen as public entities in Chile, even if they show private ownership and charge fees to students. The traditional private universities forming part of CRUCH are a good example of this situation because they are considered public despite of their private nature. Finally, a third dimension of the public sense involves the capacity of HEIs to generate public benefits. Those institutions capable of producing public goods might be termed as public entities because their mission goes beyond the individual economic return for graduates. For instance, they underpin society's development through the creation of scientific knowledge or the deployment of arts. These three dimensions are a constitutive part of the Chilean debate and their articulation defines what is public in the HE level depending on the social context in which policy is enacted.

Public orientation re-took centrality in the HE debate when the 2011 social movement diagnosed that the increasing privatisation of the sector had affected post-secondary education's public significance. It seemed to be a type of demand that was intended to rekindle the initial foundations of modern Chilean HE by addressing the contradictions stemming from the development of neoliberalism. In specific terms, this discussion is divided into three sub-sections in line with the themes emerging in each sub-period under analysis. Therefore, Section 9.1.1 focuses on the dispute between traditional HEIs claiming a monopoly in public education provision and new private sector educational provision struggling for the recognition of its public work—with a special emphasis on the state resources allocated under the criterion of providing a public good. Section 9.1.2 resumes the previous discussion regarding 2011, but this time describing how the position of the traditional sector expanded its criticism to question profit-making HEIs, while those defending the model continued their efforts of highlighting the public contribution of the new private institutions created after 1981. This new tension regarding the profit-making nature of HEIs led to a new balance in the HE debate about its public orientation. Section 9.1.3 examines this new balance and tries to provide an account of how the reform oriented towards public education was rejected as a possible goal to be pursued by the HE model.

9.1.1. The disputed meaning of public orientation of HE (2003-2011)

Prior to 2011, there was a fruitful discussion about the public orientation of HE and the new scenario generated by the accelerated process of privatisation of the sector. Opinions related to the state HEIs in the CRUCH group began to complain about the increase in students attending NPUs and claimed that they lacked a public orientation in what they offered. These *state* opinions argued that the public orientation of education could not be disconnected from high-quality education in a model oriented towards equity and that the state should be the main actor responsible for undertaking this task.

> State universities play an essential role in the formation of human capital in all areas, social mobility, and the development of areas that are not necessarily profitable from a market perspective. We are committed to the quality and strengthening of public education.
>
> *Editorial, La Nación, 17-09-08*

In this regard, the state group claimed that state-run universities represented the responsibility to meet the purpose of public orientation in HE. This homologation between notions of the state and what is public even meant that the citizenry recognised state HEIs as *public HE entities*, since they would represent what is shared in society.

> What characterises state-owned public universities is their specific duty to stimulate shared public values. It is up to us to strengthen the dimension of what we share, the objectives and expectations that unite us as a nation.
>
> *Opinion Column, La Nación, 28-07-08*
> *José Manuel Zolezzi, dean of USACH, CRUCH*

Even the media that were inclined towards the privatisation of HE saw a link between the public orientation of post-secondary education and the state nature of HE provision. This recognition led these participants in the debate to call for allocation of state resources based on the production of public goods in areas like arts or research. This shift in the HE debate became the initial justification to distribute state resources according to the production of public goods by HEIs regardless of their ownership.

> Regarding the financial support of the state to HEIs, the base is established in that there are areas with a public good component that society wants to stimulate. This

could be the case of education or the cultivation of the arts, such as music, or the teaching of philosophy. It should not be confused with the discipline, which in itself can be a generator of public goods. For example, when it generates new knowledge such as in the natural sciences. In the latter case, support will be provided through research funding.

Editorial, El Mercurio, 21-02-03

The link between public goods and state funds allowed the privatised education sector to adopt a common point of view. Since traditional private HEIs also form part of CRUCH, they joined the new private sector to complain against the demand for privileged state funding to state-run HEIs based on the production of public goods. The entire private group claimed that it was not just state CRUCH HEIs that had a public orientation, but NPUs also deserved to participate in the allocation of state funds.

> The ability to generate these public goods and respond for them is seen both in institutions that belong to CRUCH and others that don't. The allocation of these resources cannot reasonably be subject to the membership of the institutions in that organisation.

Opinion Column, La Tercera, 19-08-09
Andres Bernasconi, scholar, PUC, CRUCH

Discourses from interviewees critical of the private HEIs claimed that the demand for recognition of their public work by the new private sector was an attempt to participate in the allocation of economic resources from the state.

> When Carlos Peña [the influential dean of a new private HEI] comes out to question the homologation of what is public by its state nature and what is *public* is everything that produces public goods, so we have to end this discussion, [saying] 'we have to end this conversation'. He believes that he is in a position to end a 2000-year-old philosophical-political debate. What lies beneath that rude and aggressive nonsense is the demand for state money for Universidad Diego Portales. Why don't we discuss it like that? Why do we affect a conceptual, theoretical dialogue that can be really interesting and really decisive for the development of Chilean public policy? Why don't we stop and say 'hey, look, here are a series of institutions that deserve public money, which deserve public money even though they're private, despite the fact that the

1980 legislation under which they were created doesn't establish public funds for them? Let's talk about it like that, it would be more honest, and we would say 'well, what public policies do we have to provide and why'?

Interviewee
Danilo Gutierrez, scholar, UTA, CRUCH

Prior to 2011, the discussion about the public function of the HE model involved a wide range of arguments regarding the state and the private limitations of HEIs. This discussion became a funding debate at the end of the period due to the increasing private privatisation of the HE system. The financing argument continued to be deployed in the debate during the subsequent sub-period, but the efforts of the state sector in calling for a monopoly of publicly-oriented institutions in the HE model found common ground with criticism of the profit-making aims of the private sector from the students in 2011.

9.1.2. The demand for public orientation of HE as a source of criticism of the profit issue (2011)

In 2011, with the emergence of the student social movement, the participants in the debate from the privatised sector insisted on defining the public orientation of HE as something that was independent of the nature of HE provision. This sector sought to access state funds by appealing to this criterion of funding allocation. However, there was a novel justification from those defending the mixed provision HE model. Supporters of this model argued that equating state HE provision with a public orientation was a demand for state paternalism, which could affect the autonomy of HEIs.

What lies behind the demand to exclude Catholic universities [traditional HEIs] from state funding—even if it is not stated—is the [aim] to restrict the exercise of freedom of education under the false pretext that public education would be more democratic and would better embody the values of citizens. This explanation is nothing more than an expression of reductionism, determinism, and, ultimately, state paternalism.

Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 06-08-11
Roberto Guerrero, head of PUC law school, CRUCH

Nevertheless, the social upheaval generated by the 2011 student social movement meant a renewal of the debate about the public orientation of HE. The group calling for the role of the state as a promoter of public HE to be reclaimed attempted to escalate this dispute to the

level of the legitimacy of the HE model. The vindication of the public nature of post-secondary education became a substantive criticism of the participation of the market *cité* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) in the definition of HE. If the HE model could meet the objective of providing public HE, it would be on the condition of separating itself from the market and its logic of competition. This critique rested on a cross-cutting theme denounced by the student social movement: the profit-making orientation of the new private sector. Although profit-making had been banned in Chilean HEIs after the 1981 HE reform, some NPUs corrupted and eluded the law to make profits from tuition fees. This situation led to critics of the HE model contrasting the public orientation of HE with the profit-making orientation in the debate.

> Rather than wanting a radicalisation of the lucrative and ultra-liberal Chilean model of universities, what seems to be felt on the streets is the opposite: the return to common sense and the establishment of a system of public universities in accordance with contemporary standards and maintaining our national traditions.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 05-07-11*
> *Juan Guillermo Tejeda, scholar, literature writer and visual artist*

The profit-making orientation of HEIs became a mainstream issue in the students' demands. The aim to generate profits was an incentive for the privatisation of HE, the increase of tuition fees, and a lack of investment to improve HE quality—owners of private HEIs would have fewer incentives to reinvest the profits in their HEIs. The profit issue led critics of the model to call for HE to have a public orientation. The concept of public HE should be associated with demands for free and high-quality HE as well as the reversal of the problems of privatisation, tuition fees, and poor quality—even for those who wanted to retain the mixed model of HE provision.

> The state must guarantee—with the necessary interventions and corrections to the private model—that Chilean students have the right to a free education, where there is no profit-making, which has a public purpose and where quality is a central element for the country's development. This necessarily depends on recognising that there are currently universities in the public sphere that meet these requirements, but also some private institutions.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 31-12-11*
> *Miguel Echeverría*

The sub-period of the HE debate in 2011 moved the discussion about its public orientation towards a structural criticism of the profit-making orientation operating latently in the HE model. After 2011, the power of the critique of profit-making and the vindication of the public orientation of HE progressed with a consensus that banned profit-making in those HEIs that participate in the FHE scheme, but also acted as a bargaining chip to recognise that publicly-oriented HE is a service provided by the entire mixed model of education provision.

9.1.3. The prohibition of profit and the confirmation of a mixed HE model with a public orientation (2011-2016)

Subsequent to 2011, the participants in the HE debate connected to the student social movement reiterated that the public orientation of HE should be linked to free and high-quality higher education. In the context of debate about the FHE policy, the critics of the HE model argued that the establishment of a public system would involve a real paradigm change that would resolve the crisis in HE. This position representing the student demands insisted on contrasting the meaning of publicly-oriented higher education to the profit-making, market-oriented HE model.

> When there is a demand to end the profit-making orientation, it is not just a slogan or a semantic problem between those who understand it as a simple economic benefit and those who consider that profit-making—as the dictionaries point out—is 'to take advantage of a business'. This is the essence of the discrepancy between two divergent views. While some people believe in the education market and consider it legitimate to obtain profits from a school, CFT, or university, others consider that education is a right and a public good and it cannot be part of a commercial transaction.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 26-04-13*
> *Patricia Politzer, journalist and literature writer*

However, although other institutional actors linked to the state HE sector agreed on the importance of reinforcing its public orientation, those backing the state focused the demand on the state funding debate. Their diagnosis was that the lack of state resources had not allowed the development of publicly-oriented HE, leading to more privatisation. This sector

advocated for what they called *a new deal between the state and its universities* on the basis of their public operation, once again guiding the debate to the area of funding instruments.

> Public universities have been forgotten for 40 years, in which the state has reduced its commitment to its universities and increased public funding for private higher education, undermining and denaturing public higher education .... Since mid-2011, a bill has been 'on hold' in the education commission of parliament for the *new deal between the state and its universities*. How can we believe, then, that public higher education will be strengthened?
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 27-08-13*
> *Víctor Pérez, former dean of UChile, CRUCH*

Like the sub-period prior to 2011, the discussion about the suitability allocating state resources to HEIs with a public orientation opened the door to a definition of what is public that went beyond the ownership of the HE provision. The political triumph for the social movement in the HE debate was an almost total consensus on the prohibition of profit-making institutions, but accepting that the meaning of what was public would involve criteria other than merely the participation of the state.

> Under what criteria is it possible to define that a university that does not belong to the state is truly public? Issues such as the non-existence of profit, its contribution to the generation of knowledge, academic freedom, and pluralism are essential. But the issue is not limited to only four statements and it should fall upon the whole of society and the actors involved to define the concept.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 01-04-14*
> *Ignacio Cienfuegos and Francesco Penaglia*

The relationship between state funding and the public orientation of HE in the debate thus involved the reduction of a political debate that, in 2011, was aimed at developing a reform to change the paradigm dominating the discussion of HE. Supporters of the private sector—sacrificing the conflict over profit-making—argued that funding allocation should not depend on the ownership of HEIs, but on their public orientation. This orientation would be subject to assessments of technical policy and a purpose that can be achieved by the state and privatised HE provision.

In this context, there are private universities that are not part of CRUCH that generate more and better public goods than some state ones. For example, there are four non-CRUCH private universities among the 15 most productive [HEIs] in the 2016 national fund for scientific and technological development, which finances the development of science and technology. On the other hand, of the 16 state-run universities, only six are among the best 15, even though all of them receive basic resources.

Editorial 2, La Tercera, 04-10-16

A self-acknowledged left-wing academic explained how the HE reform was adapted to the existence of a hybrid state-private system that does not make distinctions based on the public orientation of its institutions.

One could take the reform in education as an example. I see that there's a certain interest in making changes, but those changes, as I mentioned before, don't change the dynamics that lie beneath this whole paradigm, which doesn't give a real place to the state public aspect. It maintains the hybrid boundaries between the public and the private, even though it's called a reform, even though there's free education. On the one hand, the famous free education has been a good step, and on the other, it's not a way out. It's still a cosmetic reform. It maintains the same mechanism. It treats equally what is not equal. One cannot treat the private sector and the public equally. This shows that in Chile, everything is colonised by the market, nothing more. That's not free education.

Interviewee
Denisse Thompson, scholar, UV, CRUCH

The HE discussion about the public orientation of the model underwent a series of disputes in which profit-making, privatisation, and the demand for access funding challenged the position of traditional HEIs that made a historical claim to represent the public orientation of the model. Although this claim showed some tendencies to become a demand to change the paradigm in 2011, the implementation of the FHE reform after 2011 closed off any possibility of making the public orientation of HE into a policy goal pursued by the model. The main accomplishment of the sector criticising the HE model involved more robust auditing of profit-making HEIs, but with the compensation of broadening the meaning of public orientation that can be carried out by other entities than just the state or traditional HE providers.

9.2. Why not a high-quality HE reform? The debate on quality in HE

The second section of this chapter addresses the discussion about one of the demands of the students that was relegated in importance: the debate about policies for high quality. Like Section 9.1, Section 9.2 examines the evolution of the critiques and justifications in the debate on quality-oriented HE considering the three sub-periods under analysis. Therefore, Sub-section 9.2.1 describes how the debate on quality-oriented HE prior to 2011 established strong links with the debate on equity-oriented HE, outlining three positions regarding the way to improve quality without affecting the equity goal: quality through competition, quality ensured by accreditation, and quality by strengthening the public provision. In 2011, these three positions tended to become two stances, since Section 9.2.2 identifies the amalgamation of positions calling for more competition to improve quality and those with a reformist view advocating for new accreditation law in the sector to support the model. This unification of justifications opposed the perspective calling for greater presence of the state to control the quality of HE. This divergence is examined in Section 9.2.3 with a novel arrangement in which accreditation, funding, and FHE policy articulate a new continuity within the paradigm in terms of keeping the HE discussion to the *principle of accessibility* (McCowan, 2016).

9.2.1. Three positions aimed at improving HE quality in a context of the equity goal (2011-2016)

If one issue could challenge the central position of the equity orientation of HE in the policy debate prior to 2011, it was the demand to improve the quality of the HE model. However, when analysing the justifications and critiques forming the debate on HE quality, the discussion appeared to be dependent on equity considerations in terms of both its emergence and consequences. Firstly, the nature of the policy debate oriented towards quality emerged from arguments about equity, since the expansion of HE access had affected the chances of attending high-quality HE institutions. High-quality HEIs tended to enhance their selection procedures in order to maintain excellence and social prestige. Secondly, the debate on quality-oriented HE seemed to be a consequence of the improvement in access to HE, which became inequitable because of the quality differences in HE provision. The policy-makers interviewed reiterated the idea of quality-oriented policies as an effect of a policy oriented towards equity developed during the 2000s. A policy-maker during the first Piñera

government associated the quality assurance system implemented at the end of the sub-period with the implementation of CAE as a funding policy to improve HE access.

> Let's see, since the return to democracy, there was practically no significant change in higher education until 2006, I mean, the CAE and the new quality assurance system. That second stage was more concentrated [compared with a previous stage without important HE policies]. That is, the greatest emphasis was on the CAE and a little on policies that were derived from the CAE. When you increase enrolment in that way thanks to the CAE, it becomes more important to set a regulation of minimum quality. The national quality assurance system attempted that.

> *Interviewee*
> *Javiera Donoso, policy-maker in first Piñera government*

This condition of quality depending on equity considerations created a tension that led to a fruitful discussion about the most accurate means of developing a quality-oriented policy in HE. On the one hand, supporters of the model linked to the right wing reacted to the diagnosis connecting equity and quality by arguing that the achievement of HE quality in the long-term would require the promotion of competition in HE provision. This refers to a conception of quality defined based on the *market cité*, which aimed to improve the transparency of the information that HEIs provide. Competition would improve the quality of HEIs since they would make the effort to provide better services to increase enrolment, while more transparent information would be useful to help students choose institutions according to their quality. The claim from this perspective was that poor-quality HEIs should disappear in the long-term due to the action of competition.

> The only way to ensure the long-term quality of higher education is through the provision of relevant information for decision-makers that reduces asymmetry. Encouraging competition is the best way to promote continuous quality improvement in tertiary education.

> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio, 16-12-03*
> *Claudio Bonilla, Economist, UDD, NPU*

Another position in the HE debate proposed policies for the improvement of HE quality based on a reformist perspective. This represented a position closer to that of the *Concertación* governments that recognised the side effects of the accelerated increase in HE enrolment on

quality due to the lack of rules controlling HE provision. This perspective drew on *civic justifications* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) that called for the creation of an accreditation organisation to certify HEIs and provide better information on them.

> The system therefore risks that informed choice on the part of future students can be replaced by the seduction of marketing and that universities will entrust their success more to access to elite positions instead of patient and slow intellectual work. It is becoming more and more urgent to have an accreditation system for university degrees, which, along with transmitting reliable information to the public, encourages institutions towards improvements in quality.

> *Opinion Column, El Mercurio 17-06-2003*
> *Carlos Peña, dean of UDP, NPU*

Finally, there was a third position in the debate about quality-oriented policies which also made an alternative use of *civic critiques*. This was the claim that quality improvements would require the reinforcement of the traditional public nature of the HE model—mainly focused on state-run universities and their social relevance, since market competition and freedom of choice had failed to fulfil the promise of providing HE access with quality. This was a lukewarm stance since it had no significant support during the sub-period, but it did give rise to a meaningful critique that linked the demand for high quality to the demand for free and public HE in the following sub-period.

> State universities are committed to quality—but with equity—to reach the highest level of the country's development and build a model of the university system of the best international level. They should support the state in matters of citizenship, knowledge, culture, and innovation in order to achieve high-quality standards in education, innovation, public policies, and the environment. They should provide alternatives for access to higher education for all. They should become a public-oriented model consistent with a process of modernisation of the state, as well as creating and maintaining pluralist, secular, equitable public spaces, in which freedom of expression prevails.

> *Editorial, La Nación, 22-05-09*

The data suggest that quality was the first theme to bring *civic critiques* into an HE debate that established its legitimacy through justifications from the *market and industrial cités*. The

three positions described in the HE debate established a baseline that demarcated the shifts in justifications in the subsequent debate about quality in HE. While the first two stances tended to merge together, the combination of justifications with the position advocating for greater presence of the state to improve quality defined a new divergence in the debate on the quality of HE.

9.2.2 The quality issue as a dispute between market and state participation (2011)

In 2011, the debate on quality moved to more radical positions in order to address the demands made by the student social movement. On the one hand, those defending the model extended their proposals to enhance HE quality by promoting freedom of choice and competition. However, there was an innovation in this position, since some participants supporting the model recognised that the accreditation policy implemented prior to 2011 had positive consequences for improving HE quality. They pointed out that accreditation should be advanced to improve transparency and the information available in the HE model. This acknowledgement of accreditation became a key point in the HE debate because it associated the intermediate stance demanding accreditation with the conservative position seeking to maintain the prevalence of market logic in the model.

> Furthermore, it is difficult to argue that, unlike what happens in other educational settings, the state should have a preponderant role here. It seems more reasonable, especially if there is agreement on this matter, to move towards an accreditation system that is more demanding than the current one and which includes information on the internal efficiency of higher education institutions—dropout rates, timely graduation, etc.—and the prospects for graduate work.

> *Editorial, El Mercurio, 04-08-11*

In addition, the HE debate on the allocation of resources enabled a connection between the defence of the market and the implementation of accreditation, because those defending the model wanted state resources to be provided according to the quality of HEIs.

> For this reason, the provision of state funds to universities should be allocated by quality criteria and not for historical reasons or arguments regarding the ownership of HEIs.

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Following this openness to reformist stances, the new coalescence of the market and accreditation positions even saw positive value in the more widespread presence of the state to promote quality as long as this state role could be compatible with market participation and the maintenance of diversity in HE provision. This openness to state regulation also became significant, as it enabled those defending the HE model to limit the conception of state intervention to a corrective role in HE.

> By resorting to the market—supplemented by appropriate regulation and the necessary subsidies—is it possible to prevent people from satisfying their value preferences, their preferred teaching methods, and their required content and so on? On the contrary, it generates unimaginable spaces of freedom in a state system, allowing the demand for the different types of goods that inform education to be satisfied in the best possible way. Furthermore, for a given amount of resources, it is undeniable that competition between providers will tend to generate a better quality of education.

Finally, on the opposite side of the HE debate, the lukewarm calls for greater state participation prior to 2011 gained strength with the emergence of the social movement. Those advocating for more state participation and the students shared the same diagnosis about how to improve quality through HE policy: the state should have an active role in the promotion of quality by reinforcing the state sector and connecting high quality with publicly-oriented HEIs and free higher education.

> We have also stated—stubbornly and vehemently—that education is a right and not a consumer good because there are millions who have been excluded from any possibility of accessing a quality education system due to not having sufficient resources. For this reason, we are calling for a change in the role that the state should have with this right.

A policy-maker during the *Concertación* governments and currently holder of a position in the CRUCH group highlighted the student demands by associating the quality issue with a structural requirement created by the student social movement.

> Let's see. I think that the student movement effectively generated the need or generated profound awareness regarding the need to not follow or maintain the status quo in higher education. Somehow it positioned the commodification of education radically, the intervention of private interests, etc., mainly reflected in the issue of profit-making and mainly expressed in the issue of the lack of quality. I believe that this has effectively marked a before and after in terms of the political system having to respond to these demands, let's say.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Ana Sofía Navarro, policy-maker, general secretary of CRUCH*

Section 9.2 describes the establishment of a new divergence in the HE debate. On the one hand, the confluence between promoters of competition and accreditation meant they saw a possibility of linking both elements to the allocation of state funding. On the other hand, the critics of the HE model demanded the participation of the state in the dual role of ensuring public and high-quality HE. This divergence tended to deepen after 2011 and the accreditation factor began gaining ground as an articulator of funding policy to boost HE access.

9.2.3 Quality policies as the *principle of accessibility* in an FHE context (after 2011)

During the sub-period after 2011, those focused on quality in the discussion tried to define its position in the HE debate in a context of implementation of FHE. From a more political standpoint, the trend regarding the topics of discussion resembled the previous sub-period. On the one hand, actors linked to the social movement insisted that quality cannot be detached from public and free education. On the other hand, those defending the HE model did not agree with this diagnosis of quality problems and reacted by reiterating that low quality is not exclusive to the private sector. They called for the recognition of the role played by private institutions that provided high-quality HE services. The main novelty regarding this divergence was that the accreditation law became an opportunity to make the allocation of state resources uniform. Although this proposal had been present in the HE debate since 2011, its application became significant after 2011 since it would affect and define the implementation of the FHE reform. The centrality of accreditation as a funding instrument

allowed conservative voices to find a mechanism to protect mixed provision in a context of FHE discussion. They emphasised that accreditation was the right way to improve HE quality through fairer allocation of funding to the entire spectrum of HEIs. HE accreditation became the pivotal element to enable new private HEIs to legitimately access FHE funding according to quality criteria.

> After the Constitutional Court (TC) declared that the budget law that granted free education to the most vulnerable half of higher education students was unconstitutional because of its discriminatory nature based on the institution in which they studied, the government presented a "short law" bill—which was approved in parliament after hasty negotiation—that granted public funds to students of the same social stratum attending state and private universities. The HEIs had to be accredited for at least four years and not have a profit-making orientation ... well, if the government has said that the public funds allocated by free education should not go to institutions that don't have sufficient quality—at least four years of accreditation— it's difficult to understand why state universities don't need to meet this criterion. That is to say, quality is required for the private sector, but not the state sector.
>
> *Editorial, La Tercera, 25-12-15*

The role played by accreditation as a funding criterion led the HE debate to articulate issues regarding access and funding, but in the form of FHE concerns subsequent to 2011. A critic of the HE model summarised the transformation of accreditation into a pivotal factor for the HE funding system in an FHE-oriented model.

> However, it should be warned that what has already been implemented consolidates the current market model. The free education formula is nothing more than a subsidy for demand. It is exchangeable at any institution that meets the requirements, which are quite basic [accreditation] and has nothing to do with the obligations of the state to provide education for the common good.
>
> *Opinion Column, El Mostrador, 06-03-16*
> *Luis Huerta*

Even some scholars critical of the HE model suggested there was a curious situation resulting from the implementation of the FHE policy associated with the accreditation law: the organisational structure of new private HEIs acquired the form of traditional HEIs, but not to

assimilate the concept of a university devoted to research, teaching, and outreach. Instead, they used this organisation to meet the bureaucratic requirements in the accreditation law to receive FHE funds.

> But I believe that the presence of the state is obviously greater with the new [free] higher education policy than it was before in the state universities, but also in the private universities that want to access financing. In fact, I was talking with a guy from *Universidad Autónoma* [a new private university] the other day. *Universidad Autónoma* has an organisational structure that is equivalent to any state university. And that would be called an isomorphism because it adopted the same form as state universities to receive state resources in terms of its relationship with the state. Now, that form is the same in bureaucratic terms, but in academic terms it's probably completely different. In academic work, there are no established academic departments; scholars are simply subordinate employees. They don't have academic freedom, let's say, so this is where I think the emphasis of the reform has been.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Marcel Gordon, scholar, Universidad de Tarapacá, CRUCH*

The debate on quality became then the key element that enabled FHE to continue changing the relationship between funding and access. Although the 2011 social movement raised the high-quality HE access as a demonstration of the principle of horizontality (McCowan, 2016), the debate on HE policy managed to keep access as the core of the Chilean HE model. Quality became in this scenario an indicator to define how much funds will be received by those students accessing accredited HEIS. The *principle of accessibility* refreshed its prevalence as principle since it not only ensured the continuity of funding instruments operating at the second level of the policy orders (Hall 1993), but emerged as the condition of possibilities for the new legitimacy of the HE model under construction (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Specifically, both the *market-industrial regime of justification* and the new regime trying to incorporate the *civic cité* saw the *principle of accessibility* as the opportunity to establish an idea of the *common good*, which is necessary to establish a *figure of compromise* with justifications from different *cités*. In this regard, the coexistence between *discontinuities* and *continuities* generated by the FHE reform created a balance in the function performed by quality policies, since they ensured a change (new *civic justifications*) within the *neoliberal*

paradigm. The careful selection of free education as a political promise and its relationship with a potential *discontinuity* at the level of the *policy paradigm* are the focus of the last section of this thesis by means of analysing the discourse of the participants forming part of the debate on Chilean HE.

9.3. The arrangement between the discontinuities of a policy goal with the continuity of a policy paradigm

The data presented in the previous chapters suggest a *policy discontinuity* in which the policy oriented towards equity lost its central position in the HE debate regarding its *political and technical* articulation (Chapter 6). The proposal of an FHE reform reactivated the search for a new technical-political policy juncture (Chapter 7), leading to a shift at the level of the *goal* (Hall 1993) guiding Chilean HE policy. Chapter 8 examines the scope of this supposed policy displacement by analysing the justifications supporting and critiques against the transformations within the policy development. The findings indicate a continuity with respect to the funding instruments underpinning the implementation of policy, although potential discontinuities were observed regarding the decision-making process and criteria to decide policy solutions. These elements in the HE discussion became interesting since they enabled a continuity regarding *the principle of accessibility* (McCowan, 2016) as a category of *common good* provided by the HE model to the entire society. The persistence of access as a reference category for the *common good* has defined outward policy development despite a new arrangement of justifications and critiques emerging in the HE model. Although there has been an intensification in the dispute between the *cités* forming HE in terms of the legitimacy of the model to inform a *new figure of compromise* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006), the value of HE access remains unaffected by the critiques. The *principle of accessibility* would function for both *market-industrial compromise* and for the compromise under construction integrating the *civic cité*. This value of access as a *common good* seems to be untouchable in an HE model ruled by those advocating for greater regulation without significant transformations, as well as in an HE model ruled by radical positions calling for a structural change that recognises the right to education.

In this context, Chapter 9 explores how the continuation of the p*rinciple of accessibility* (McCowan, 2016) encountered a possibility to prevail by relegating the importance of the demands for public and high-quality education and prioritising the demand for free

education. The debate about quality has particular relevance, since it enabled the FHE-oriented debate to reverse the old relationship between funding and HE access dominating the debate on equity. In addition, it became a source of justifications to maintain the counterweight of *industrial justifications* based on the efficacy of quality policies to address the entry of *civic critiques*, which question the market justifications, in the *new figure of compromise* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). This section draws on those findings and this discursive path to explore the possibilities of linking the issue about *dis/continuity* with transformations at the level of the *policy paradigm*. Special attention is given to discourses informing the possibilities of a change of *policy paradigm* after a change of *policy goal*—FHE replacing equity—in the HE debate. This section is divided into four sub-sections that attempt to comprehend the scope of the FHE reform regarding its relationship with the *neoliberal paradigm* dominating the model. Firstly, there is an account of the last Chilean paradigm change in the form of a neoliberal shift and its connections with the Chilean HE model. This account is intended to act as a reference point that enables a better understanding of the context in which the FHE reform has been carried out (Section 9.3.1).

9.3.1. The establishment of a new paradigm

The baseline to understand the possibilities of studying *continuities* and *discontinuities* regarding the *paradigm* guiding the development of Chilean HE policy refers to—as Chapter 4 describes it—the neoliberal orientation that the country adopted during the dictatorship in the late 1970s. In line with the findings of sections 9.1 and 9.2, the articulation between policies oriented towards equity and quality defined a particular way of understanding the idea of mixed provision and access in a neoliberal HE model. A radical left-wing scholar and politician summarised this aspect with particular emphasis on the connections between policy orientations and the conceptual tenets of the paradigm.

> Equity and quality are basically the answers to what Friedman is saying. In Friedman's debate of monopolies, monopolies cannot set prices well. It is a debate that's heavily against socialism. That's why Friedman and the others are opposed to the monopoly. Because if you cannot set a price—if the prices are arbitrary—there is no competition. So quality, quality policies, ultimately have the point of adjusting the value, of adjusting the monies that society provides for a rational measurement of production. The other, equity, is the response to the neighbourhood effect that there can be no

discrimination. This involves an interpretation of the old precept of performance that had been postulated in modern education throughout the 20th century. The performance is no longer enough, but rather the legitimate performance. To provide an image of legitimate performance: being an heir to the elite is like doping in sport. With doping you can perform better in sport, but it's not legitimate.

Interviewee
Tomás Uribe, scholar, UChile,CRUCH, and politician and former student leader

According to this position, Chilean HE policy would be part of a process that Boltanski (2011) called the definition of the *reality*, since policy would reduce uncertainty to confirm the *whatness of what is*. HE policy would perform as a space of *confirmation of a reality* already defined by the neoliberal paradigm, although producing certain paradoxes from the same process of selection to model what is real. This concept is similar to what was expressed by Hall (1993), since the emergence of contradictions in the policy paradigm come from the constant need to confirm it.

I think that policies obviously make models: an educational model, a national model. Therefore, if these policies, that is, if the model is changed, I believe that the essence here is the model that a country has regarding education and the prosperity of the country, for example. It's a national project. I believe that policies would have to adapt to this model. And my perception is that in Chile, since the model hasn't been changed, educational policies seem somewhat patchwork solutions because the underlying model isn't changed, but rather they reinforce certain basic postulates that are actually very contradictory.

Interviewee
Barbara Huerta, scholar at CIAE, UChile, CRUCH

In the case of the Chilean HE debate, there was almost total agreement between the participants on these contradictions in policy development. The academic sector has broadly shared a discourse arguing that the deployment of HE policy has become steadily more incoherent. This lack of articulation in the policy could be one of the reasons why the HE model became the social space to address the protests led by the students in 2011. According to Boltanski (2011), the weaker social institutions tend to fail in their work to confirm the reality, opening up room to draw on critiques from the sociological category of the *world*

which allow the emergence of disputes to define the reality. The Chilean HE model thus became an area of conflict due to its historical lack of institutionalisation. Boltanski's questioning of the assimilation of bodiless institutions with corporal authorities representing them would explain why the HE model was the focus of the possibilities of producing a *paradigm discontinuity* through the emergence of the 2011 student social movement.

> There is no line that allows you to read this progressively. It's the other way around: it's ruptures and unforeseen things that happen that are reshaping the system. There is no master wizard that has the complete design and can administrate it. Therefore, it's not, there is no way to consider the coherence of the policies as a single thing. They have never been produced in this way.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Luis Enrique Rozas, scholar, PUCV, CRUCH*

However, despite this institutional fragility distinguished by participants in the HE debate, it should be noted that the Chilean HE discussion recognised a degree of institutionalisation guaranteed by a political agreement that tended to limit any potential change through a limited policy consensus derived from constitutional arrangements defined since the period of the dictatorship.

> The democratic transition has a logic of negotiation to take the maximum advantage of what can be done without breaking the system. The system had a cultural tendency to resolve itself on its own and if people want something, to pay for it. This was the same as going to buy a machine and generating more profits: whoever wants to buy it and get an education pays for it. However, there was quite a lot of resistance to changes throughout the initial period. Basically, change was stopped by the issue of organic constitutional laws. And education was part of an organic constitutional law. And then we didn't have the 4/7[8] in parliament. We presented many bills where we couldn't not alter the structure.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Rodrigo Cumsille, former Minister of Education during Lagos government*

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[8] To change organic constitutional laws in Chile a four-sevenths majority was needed in Congress.

9.3.2. Why free higher education? The incomplete project of the FHE reform seeking to transform the policy paradigm

In a context in which the policy *institutionality* showed a robust political connection with the neoliberal paradigm, but demonstrated a weak internal coherence that failed *to confirm the reality* in 2011, the student demands of *public, free and high-quality higher education* enabled a rupture in the HE paradigm by criticising profit-making in a model that had to prohibit it legally. The student demands questioned the *reality* by revealing all of the social possibilities that the *world* offered (Boltanski, 2011). In this regard, the choice of free education as the main slogan of the second Bachelet government not only promised a transformation in the state of affairs before the protests, but it contained the ambition of devising a new HE *institutionality* and *reality*. It returned society to a political sphere that had excluded it due to the political intransigence effected by the neoliberal project of depoliticisation. The deputy minister responsible for conducting the FHE reform mentioned the ambition previously pursued by the policy.

> Here there was, in a way, an important grassroots base despite the fact that during the government it was difficult to capitalise on that. It seemed instead that we had lost that grassroots base. There was a strong grassroots base that preceded us, which gave support at certain times. I'm referring mainly to the student leaders. And therefore, in general, the parliamentarians were very sensitive to that situation to continue with the idea of moving forward with the reform …. The idea of reform is specifically to advance in this process of institutionalisation of certain conversations that allow the educational system to respond in a much better way to the needs of the country. If we manage to institutionalise all of this—to implement the reform properly and move immediately on to the next step, which is to achieve these processes of conversation, which as I told you institutionalised public-private [education]—I think we would be consolidating this route.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Ursula Ramírez, deputy minister of education in second Bachelet government*

Some scholars endorsed the ambition of the FHE reform by backing the potential institutional change that the policy would create. The main elements used to modify the *institutional*

reality were laws, which reflected the influence of *civic justifications* in the definition of the model.

> I believe that this reform has many things that are going to change. First, and I think it's not a minor thing, it institutionalises the issue of free education. It makes it institutional under the law and it makes it much more difficult to remove it. I think that's not a minor point.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Bruno Zambra, scholar at CEPPE, PUC, CRUCH*

However, the potential *paradigm discontinuity* seemed to become an unachievable desire since there was an agreement across the entire political spectrum about the failure to design a new *institutional arrangement* that could lead to another difficult state of affairs in HE. A former right-wing MP and current minister in the second Piñera government stated how the FHE policy led to *confirmation* of the previous *HE reality* by increasing the power of confirmation through the creation of greater regulation and institutions controlling the HE model.

> Again, the purpose of free education is to replace private money with public money in higher education. It brings greater regulation with more institutions, but I also see resignation from wanting to propose a different model in higher education. Instead, it's like tightening up the HE model that we have, rather than trying to make a long-term proposal about what we would like to do.
>
> *Interviewee*
> *Hernán Rossi, right-wing former MP and minister in second Piñera government*

A left-wing politician and former student leader confirmed the failure in changing the policy paradigm by describing how the old institutional political arrangement worked to *confirm the reality* prior to the student social movement through the implementation of the FHE reform.

> I believe that an example of this is that one of the main opponents of the reform didn't become an opponent, but a backer of the higher education reform. This was the group of new private higher education institutions led by a member of the PPD [a former member of the *Concertación* coalition]. It's the same party of the current Minister of Education and the former Minister of Education in this government [the second

Bachelet government]. So it seems to me that the interests of the businesspeople in education are very faithfully represented in the *Nueva Mayoría*.

Interviewee
Enrique Gómez, left-wing politician and former leader of student social movement

In this respect, the FHE reform transitioned from being an ambition to change the *policy paradigm* to a *policy of confirmation* of what already existed.

9.3.3. The failure of the FHE policy to institutionalise change at the paradigm level

Data suggests that FHE reform failed to become a change at the level of the policy paradigm. As Boltanski (2011) claimed, this failure would be a lack of connection with what he called the world's sociological category. *World* represents the totality of elements of the social sphere, while *reality* would be a model of that totality carried out by institutions that make a particular selection of those elements. In this framework, social change would depend on the capacity of actors to generate a new selection of elements to re-define that institutional reality. But, given the institutional nature of a policy, does this mean that policies can only *confirm the reality*? Can their scope go beyond a reformist critique and become a source of developing a *radical critique*? The discourses from participants in the Chilean HE debate provide an opportunity to explore these issues. The FHE debate gave some hints about how it experienced its institutional intransigence and, on this understanding, how to devise a *paradigmatic* critique pointing to the neoliberal implementation of Chilean HE policy. Section 9.3.3 addresses the justifications of why the FHE policy turned into what it initially attempted to criticise. First, the academic sector advocating for the continuation of the HE model saw a structural restriction in the alternatives to transform its relationship with the *paradigm*.

I believe that it's impossible in a democratic capitalist society to try to carry out paradigmatic reforms without the articulation of consensus. And consensus often effectively limits the capacity for a policy paradigm change. So there's the trade-off. I want more consensus with less paradigm shift or the other way around. And this needs to be balanced. It wasn't achieved, and the result can be seen.

Interviewee
Miguel Ángel Smith, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former minister of the Concertación

However, the best-supported argument in the HE debate conceived of the *confirmation work* of the FHE reform as a failure to institutionalise what the policy wanted to change. Academic

discourses recognised that there was the emergence of an *existential critique* (Boltanski, 2011) because of the connection with the *world* in 2011. However, there was no institutional arrangement to support the process of *paradigm discontinuity*.

> And it [the HE reform] has something very good and something very bad. The very bad thing is that we weren't really prepared for that, so nobody knew. I think this isn't very difficult to recognise in light of what has happened in recent years. Nobody knew, for example, how to do it, how to build an FHE system. Then it was implemented: a policy was built based on an idea that had a different conceptual perspective to what we'd been doing for 20 years. There wasn't a sufficiently mature policy.

Interviewee
Bruno Zambra, scholar at CEPPE, PUC, CRUCH

According to scholars critical of the HE model, the failure of the FHE policy even lay in a lack of knowledge about the former *institutional arrangement* on the part of the people steering the reform. Any opportunity to challenge the definition of *reality* was truncated before undertaking the task of reforming the HE model.

> A radical change in the structure of the system without the instruments to do so, without understanding the operation of the systems that you currently have in operation, makes any reform unfeasible. They didn't understand the state apparatus where they were established and the tools that that the state apparatus provides them to make the reforms or to change the system. These are people who were amateurs, backing a big change and the only thing that produced at the end of the day was disappointment. I'm saying that they were unable to do what they said they were going to do and they had no idea how to operate in this scenario.

Interviewee
Luis Enrique Rozas, scholar, PUCV, CRUCH

A scholar and former policy-maker stated that the lack of a specific ambition—understood as a social-political project—became a continuity between the institutional arrangement prior to 2011 and the new one developed after the student social movement. He even suggested that when the FHE project did not encounter the institutional foundations to outline a new reality, its supporters resorted to the old institutional matrix to develop the policy, which would explain the incorporation of contradictions originating in the HE model before FHE.

Garretón [a renowned Chilean sociologist] says that the *Concertación* lacked a social-political project. What did he mean by this? Some understood this dichotomy between understanding growth with equity with an emphasis on growth and others with an emphasis on equality. Well, for the *Nueva Mayoría* it's the same. So when education was talked about as a social right, some understood it in a strong egalitarian sense and a non-segregated system. And others understood it in the context of compatibility with the characteristics of the mixed system that Chile had and with the autonomy that universities and HEIs have traditionally had by extension.

Interviewee
Andrés Alonso Gallo, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former Concertación policy-maker

9.3.4. The possibilities of connecting policy and paradigm through a new project to define the social reality

Boltanski (2011) proposed that social domination and the maintenance of the status quo would stem from the ability of dominant social actors to manage the *hermeneutic contradiction* entailed by the definitions of *reality*: *bodiless institutions* need *corporal social actors* guided by interests and desires that lead them to constant *situations of dispute* and *uncertainty*. According to Boltanski, dominant groups are capable of understanding that *institutional reality* has an artificial nature defined by rules, which they themselves probably create. Any subversion of this state of affairs would imply that dominated actors had the possibility of equal access to the *domestication* of the *hermeneutic contradiction* by interpreting *reality* with the same autonomy as dominant groups. Paradigmatic discontinuity would thus depend on this equal *domestication* of *policy reality*. With regard to the FHE reform, one of the most relevant scholars defining the HE model described how the FHE policy and the student social movement failed to challenge the space of defining *reality*. The connection with the *world* in 2011 became an *existential point of critique* on a longer *institutional* path that offered solutions to the HE issues.

Actors have that privilege: to think that what they're doing is changing history. But as we know from Marx, history is made a bit behind the consciousness of the actors and the action of the actors and it deals with much deeper processes. It's linked to the explosive expansion that higher education experienced, particularly from the 1990s and, very clearly, after 2000 and 2005, particularly when the CAE was already

introduced massively. It's linked to the expectations of the emerging groups of the middle classes in Chile, which were partly represented by students. The political voice of the new middle-class sectors was the students. Actually, the base of these new middle sectors, unlike the previous ones, are not in the state or in public employment, or in commerce, or in medium-sized industry. They are based strictly on educational capital.

Interviewee
Miguel Ángel Smith, scholar, UDP, NPU, and former minister of the Concertación

The most radical positions in the HE debate shared this view by recognising that the definition of the *paradigm reality* went beyond the policy-making process. A left-wing politician and former student leader revealed the difference between the social positions making policy decisions and the structural ones that interpret the model of *reality*. The student social movement also suffered from a lack of ambition in this area, since it was incapable of pushing the dispute beyond the struggle to make HE policy decisions.

I think that exclusively through public policies, no. I think that in my generation—maybe as a result of the prevailing depoliticisation and the type of ideologies that dominate the scenario—many people think that substantive changes can be made at the point of more precise, technically more accurate public policies. I think that's wrong. I believe that a very profound transformation of the country's socioeconomic structure is now needed. It's not possible to conduct the most important transformations by targeting public policies. It's not possible. What I do think, however, is that it's important to advance with certain reforms as a process. The content of these reforms should guide this different model that we want to establish. I don't think that we should completely abandon the battle for better policies, but without exaggerating, without falling into the self-deception of thinking that as policy experts we will be able to guarantee the right to education or other social rights.

Interviewee
Enrique Gómez, left-wing politician and former leader of student social movement

Therefore, although the most critical position in the debate demonstrated the correct analysis of the contradiction of the HE model, there was no evidence of a proposal of a new *institutional arrangement* that could underpin an FHE reform that promised to change

everything. The debate about change seemed to lead towards a *political discontinuity* in the form of a *policy goal.* In contrast*, continuity* seemed to be observable in the relationship that this reform established with the *paradigm*. This double nature of the policy achievement created by the FHE was even described as a shapeless monster that is still struggling to achieve its definitive organisation.

> It's a truncated project. That is, essentially, as Lucas said; I don't know if you remember the cartoonist, Lucas from Valparaíso, when he created this bestiary of the kingdom of Chile. So, it's a monstrosity built from different moments of the Chilean HE system. Obviously, it preserves the market and preserves the subsidy for demand in particular …. So that was the failure. It's an achievement, I believe, with observable social consequences because, regardless of the content of this issue, if the popular and middle classes stop spending on education, they have more money and they have more power. And that situation is already a political achievement. But nevertheless, we lost a tremendous opportunity to rethink the foundations of this system because nothing has been discussed about that.

> *Interviewee*
> *Marcel Gordon, scholar, UTA, CRUCH*

Conclusion

Chapter 9 takes on the task of analysing the relationship between the *discontinuity* at the level of the *policy goal* and the possibilities of producing a *paradigm change*. Considering the student protests in in 2011 about an HE crisis that proposed FHE as a political solution, sections 9.1 and 9.2 examine the evolution of the debate about the public orientation and focus on quality in HE, as well as their obsolescence as policy alternatives. Specifically, Section 9.1 addresses the demand for the public orientation of the HE model. This demand was extensively debated by HE stakeholders and demonstrated shifts regarding the topics that acted as the core of the debate over time. Therefore, prior to 2011 there was a debate about whether the public orientation of higher education was an exclusive characteristic of traditional HE provision—particularly by the state sector—and how the private sector might produce public goods. At the end of the sub-period, there was an increasing transformation of the debate regarding the public orientation of HE. It shifted towards how funding policies are linked to the production of public goods. With the emergence of the student social

movement in 2011, the position supporting the monopoly of the public orientation of education in the CRUCH group began pitting this public focus with the profit-making orientation of some of the private HEIs. This opposition became relevant to close down the debate after 2011. There was an agreement about prohibiting the profit-making orientation of HE, but with the cost of recognising that the production of public goods is a feature of the entire range of HEIs participating in HE provision. The mixed model of HE provision was thus reinforced and the new private HEIs that accessed state funds justified this according to legitimate criteria.

On the other hand, Section 9.2 examines the debate about quality during the period under analysis. The main findings involve a considerable variety of opinions prior to 2011 that tended to form two positions in the HE debate in 2011. Those advocating for competition between HEIs to improve quality saw an ally in those holding a position of proposing regulation of the quality of HE with a new law of accreditation. While those supporting accreditation tried to provide more regulation to a highly-privatised system, the sectors defending competition saw an opportunity to improve the levels of information to increase competition between HEIs. A third sector opposed them by calling for greater state participation. A divergence thus emerged in the debate, as others opposed the combination of accreditation and competition with state intervention. There was a split in the perspectives on quality, but it came to a definitive arrangement with the implementation of the FHE reform. With accreditation as a criterion to access FHE, it was possible to develop a policy loop that pushed discussion towards the topic of access. Free education would thus not be an issue of being free from charges, but an element promising free access to HE for all of society.

Finally, Section 9.3 analyses the discourses relating FHE policy to the idea of paradigm change—discontinuity. Great attention is paid to the theoretical contributions of Boltanski, since the emergence of the 2011 student social movement can be interpreted as the emergence of an existential critique that enabled the connection with what he called the *world* (2011) to challenge the *institutional reality*. One of the main findings from the interviews was the almost total consensus on the lack of ambition to institutionalise the change created by the FHE policy. This situation meant that the FHE reform had to draw on an institutional arrangement outlined to define the very reality that the social movement wanted to criticise. Interviewees agreed that the leaders and intellectuals in the social

movement could not reach the relevant power spaces to establish the rules that give form to *reality*. This lack of participation may explain why there was a shift at the level of the policy goal, but not at the level of the policy paradigm. People linked to the student social movement had the opportunity to access spaces of policy decision, even challenging the technical knowledge of policy-makers, but outside the necessary position to define the paradigm. This situation has led to the common thought that FHE policy was a reform carried out within the limits of the institutional arrangement, implying it was a defeat in terms of the original expectations. However, there are certain aspects to consider, above all because there are still potential discontinuities at the level of the policy actors and policy criteria. A significant part of a *discontinuity* in the *policy paradigm* depends on the *confirmation* of these *discontinuities* and their scope to reach spaces to define *reality*. However, thus far, the FHE reform, as one interviewee said, resembles a shapeless monster with work that remains to be done.

10. CONCLUSION

This research is aimed at exploring the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity*, in a context of *policy change*, going beyond seeing them as a mere contrast. *Policy change* in this context emerges as the driver of policy transformations—in the form of *continuities* or *discontinuities*—to understand them in a dynamic sense. That is to say, the maintenance of *policy continuities* or the emergence of *policy discontinuities* would depend on the energy of change applied in policy development. Change is not a static element that defines the success of policy implementation by determining whether it occurs, but a constitutive part of the process of policy development that demonstrates its presence through *continuities* and *discontinuities*, which are not reducible to the concept of change. It is a proposal to reformulate the concept of *policy change* by establishing a non-polarised and dynamic *relationship of policy continuity and discontinuity* that enables an examination of policy transformations, even including contradictory policy developments.

The recent policies enacted in the Chilean HE model provide an exceptional opportunity to study how *the dis/continuity relationship* has been deployed in a context of policy change. Chile began implementing a free higher education reform in 2016, which was intended to end a predominantly neoliberal way of producing social policy on the part of the state over the last 40 years (Bachelet 2013). This is a context of policy change that promises to produce *discontinuities* regarding the form of conducting HE policy and structural transformations that should challenge the country's entire neoliberal model of development. However, doubts emerged immediately, since the change proposed involved conducting a policy based on changing funding instruments (from cost-sharing to FHE), the scope of which does not seem to extend to the orientation dominating Chilean social policy and even less so regarding structural social transformations. In this respect, *policy continuity* with previous HE policies emerges as a possibility within the Chilean HE debate. The question principally addresses the novelty—in terms of transformations—generated by the FHE reform in an HE model that had struggled to meet the national requirement of improving equity in a neoliberal context during the first decade of the 21st century.

The case of Chilean HE is an extraordinary opportunity to address how the development of an FHE policy can produce *continuities*, with respect to perfecting what a model oriented towards equity tried to adapt to neoliberal policies, or *discontinuities*, in terms of breaking

away from and moving past the neoliberal orientation towards equity to improve social justice in the country. It is a period which allows the study of the prevalence of *continuity* or *discontinuity* in a context of *policy change*, but also their coexistence, given the dynamic character of the relationship between the two. Since the research topic addresses the nature and degree of change in the policy field, its approach cannot be defined in evaluative terms. The development of FHE policy would be not an issue of success in terms of policy implementation, but a question about the legitimacy of the HE model to understand the *policy change*. It is a research topic that focuses on the evolution of *justifications* and *critiques* intended to maintain or transform the HE model.

The nature of the research topic required a qualitative approach that focused on *justifications* and *critiques* that underpin the debates oriented towards both equity and FHE. These debates are understood as discursive discussions in the public sphere that compete to gain legitimacy in order to define HE. The two debates delimit a specific period of HE discussion about policy, beginning in 2003 with the bottom-up reform of the national HE admissions test and ending with the start of FHE implementation in 2016. During this period, the discursive shifts and continuations in HE policy operated as manifestations of *continuities* and *discontinuities*. The aim of approaching these discursive shifts and continuations and the public nature of the HE debate led to a decision to collect data in the form of opinion columns and editorials from the most influential Chilean newspapers. The basis for this decision lies in the power of these newspapers to drive the HE policy agenda. In addition, interviews were conducted with policy-makers, politicians, and scholars who have shown particular concern about, and actively participated in, the HE discussion during the period under analysis. Both sources of information were intended to answer the main research question and the three sub-questions that inform it. A review of how the data coming from these sources helped to answer these research questions is shown in section 10.1. Following this, Section 10.2 includes a description of the potential contributions of the thesis. Finally, Section 10.3 addresses the limitations and future directions of lines of research focused on the *relationship between continuity and discontinuity* in a context of *policy change*.

10.1 Revisiting the research questions

The main research question (MRQ) addressed by this research is:

How are continuity and discontinuity related in a context of policy change in the public debate on Chilean HE policy?

Answering the MRQ first requires revisiting the three research sub-questions (RSQs) that inform it. The first RSQ (RSQ1) attempts to fill a gap not addressed in the Chilean literature on HE equity: ***How has the Chilean HE debate mobilised discursive resources to meet the national promise of equity in the HE model by democratic governments?*** This is a question that addresses the equity-oriented HE model in the form of the *justifications* and *critiques* that provide legitimacy to the model in the HE debate, leaving aside evaluative interpretations that gauge equity through measures of success. Chapter 6 offers a potential answer to RSQ1. It explores how the Chilean neoliberal paradigm can coexist with the orientation of the HE policy to achieve equity as a *policy goal.* Thus, Chapter 6 aims to describe how HE policy critiques and justifications helped build a legitimate model based on the concept of equity (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006).

The analysis of the equity-oriented HE model operates as a baseline to contrast how policy changes activate processes of *continuity* and/or *discontinuity* in the evolution of the HE model. Before the 2011 student social movement, equity-oriented HE reflected the unity of the model's political and technical content. Equity was the pivotal element that organised the policy internally—regarding the technical competences used to meet this goal—and externally in terms of its relationship with society. The legitimacy of the equity-oriented model lay in a *figure of compromise* (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006) between *market and industrial justifications* that underpinned access (HE studies as an exclusive good that can be sold in the marketplace) to HE as a reward for individual merit (industrial efficiency). The findings in Chapter 6 suggest that this unity was broken after 2011 and the equity-oriented debate maintained its technical aspect. The split in the political-technical content of the policy goal of equity led to questions about the legitimacy of the HE model. *Critiques* based on the lack of equity were raised by students in 2011. The mobilisation of critiques thus referred to *justifications* from the *market and industrial cités*, which gave the idea of equity based on access the content of a *common good*. However, this model fell into crisis with the student

social movement and equity failed to regain its previous political-technical articulation as a policy goal.

The crisis of legitimacy and the loss of the political content of the policy goal of equity meant that the HE debate devised a new HE policy to overcome these issues: the FHE reform. The promise of FHE to resolve the issues identified in equity meant repeating the analysis, but this time considering how an FHE policy fits into an equity-oriented model, namely: **_How has the Chilean HE debate adjusted FHE discourses to provide legitimacy to the HE model?_** The study of the FHE debate explores how it interlinked relationships and differences with the equity-oriented debate during the period under analysis. Chapter 7 suggests that the FHE-oriented debate reconnects the policy's political and technical content, but by proclaiming FHE as the primary goal of the HE model. It represents a project that recognised the critiques based on the failure to achieve equity in the development of the HE model prior to 2011. FHE policy emerges as a promise going beyond equity in a neoliberal context, since it aims to reduce the presence of the market in HE and provide social justice to the entire society by eliminating economic obstacles to HE access.

The findings in Chapter 7 suggest that the debate oriented towards FHE was encapsulated within the debate oriented towards equity prior to 2011. While the image of a desirable society was a synonym for equity, the FHE alternative seemed incompatible with this policy goal since it entailed a regressive economic risk and had an elitist character. Conservative sectors saw incompatibility between FHE and equity during the entire period under analysis. However, their increasing concern about the FHE policy over time reflected the consolidation of their political relevance in the HE debate subsequent to 2011. Likewise, the technical debate about its implementation displayed a greater variety of opinions regarding the technical aspect, implying that the FHE discussion became an ideological debate in the wake of the students' demands. However, this instance of apparent *discontinuity* with past policies still did not respond to the doubt about a change of legitimacy in the HE model. Although supporters and critics of the HE model called for the incorporation of *civic justifications* to establish a new figure of *compromise*, the nature of this adjustment of arguments was not explicit. Defenders of the model called for more regulation to perfect the articulation between *market and industrial justifications*, while critics demanded *civic justifications* based on *education as a right* to end this neoliberal *figure of compromise*.

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Chapters 8 and 9 are intended to answer this question, departing from the assumption that a change in the policy goal occurred between equity and FHE. They address the following question: ***What are the differences and similarities between justifications and critiques mobilised by an HE model oriented towards equity and free education in Chile?*** By doing this, Chapter 8 focused on how the degree of change in the policy goal affected the policy-making process internally, the relevant actors, and their criteria to make decisions. This is the first approach to answer the MRQ by comparing these analytical elements in the Chilean HE debate before and after 2011. Following the *discontinuity* in the policy goal, there seems to be a manifestation of struggles to define legitimate actors and criteria to make HE policy decisions. This research treated these findings as *potential discontinuities* within the policy, since they are processes still in progress. Actors from civil society started challenging the primacy of economic technocrats and policy criteria in the policy-making process, revaluing ideology as a significant element—instead of technical knowledge and consensuses—to conduct policy. The situation was somewhat different regarding policy instruments for HE funding. The findings suggest that although FHE could become a policy goal in the HE debate, the discussion about its implementation tended to recognise that this policy settled for a funding structure which did not change. There was thus a *continuity* regarding this aspect.

On the other hand, Chapter 9 focuses on how the degree of change of the policy goal affected the HE policy in it terms of its external relationship with society. The chapter suggests that the interaction of *continuity* in funding instruments and *potential discontinuities* in policy-making processes fits with the *continuity* in the predominance of the *principle of accessibility* as the primary element connecting HE with Chilean society. HE access would work as a benchmark of the *common good* to link the transition from an HE model oriented towards equity to another oriented towards FHE, providing legitimacy to a new understanding of the neoliberal paradigm. The persistence of a high level of privatisation in HE (rather than a more public orientation) and the importance of accreditation procedures (to maintain the allocation of state resources) work together to maintain a balance that enables the neoliberal HE paradigm to remain operating. This balance was grounded on the idea that higher education may reduce social inequality by facilitating HE access, which arose as the highest worth in the public debate.

Revisiting the three RSQs allows an interpretation of the *relationship between policy continuity and discontinuity* as a convoluted interconnection. The context of *policy change* generated by the FHE reform has meant the emergence of various discontinuities (policy goal, actors, and criteria) that open the door to a new conception of policy development in the Chilean HE debate. However, policy continuities are still present in relevant areas of the decision-making process. The prevalence of funding instruments within policy and HE access as the prevalent idea of *common good* as an external policy cast doubt on the depth of the policy change. Therefore, the second part of Chapter 9 seeks to analyse the external influence of the policy change in the level of neoliberalism. The findings suggest a *continuity* of the neoliberal paradigm, but its final definition still seems to be in dispute. Although people linked to the student social movement had no opportunity to access spaces and positions to define the level of paradigmatic development, they did have influential participation in the HE policy agenda. The lack of participation at the paradigmatic level may explain why there was a shift at the level of the policy goal, but not at the level of the policy paradigm.

Within a static framework of interpretation, these doubts would involve opting for a response of continuity or discontinuity by gauging the weight and incidence of these elements. However, due to the complexity, non-linearity, and serendipity of policy developments (Ball, 1997), the data suggest a coexistence of policy *continuities* and *discontinuities* since FHE was devised as an institutional policy response to the social upheaval led by the students in 2011. In Hall's words (1993), the complexity of this dynamic relationship lies in a process that has seen continuities and discontinuities at the level of policy instruments; *discontinuity* at the policy goal level and continuity at the paradigm level. In this context, change has worked as a focused force that has enabled policy shifts to adjust an apparently contradictory HE model to a society still based on neoliberal modernisation.

10.2. Contributions

Revisiting the research questions enables an analysis of the main contributions made by the research. It is possible to identify three potential types of contributions emerging from the data: empirical, analytical and theoretical. These three contributions involve filling two gaps in the analysis of change conducted via policy sociology: the lack of collective action and the ambition of full explication. On the one hand, policy sociology has tended to focus on the perspective of social change as a matter of individual resistance. Despite multiple efforts, the

collective response to institutional arrangements and power relations in society has tended to restrict the possibilities of steering a process of endless *subjectivation* (Foucault, 1983; Ball, 1997). This kind of analysis has forgotten the conditions for aggregating individual resistances into collective action. On the other hand, the policy literature (Rizvi & Lingard, 2019; Grimaldi, 2012) has generally resorted to eclectic perspectives that seemed to abandon the ambition of analysing policy within a social totality by seeking to reconcile rationalist and constructionist policy traditions.

Firstly, the empirical contribution of this study encompassed the production of new data about HE policy through the conducting of interviews with relevant policy-making actors coming from the academic, public service and political fields. In addition, there was a work of selecting and curating relevant newspapers articles, which, along with the interviews, became a new source of information that contributed to understanding the relationship between continuity and discontinuity within the policy sociology of education. Finally, the data and analysis collected are being presented in the public domain as an invitation to -pursue this research stream, even from critical and challenging perspectives by scholars who think differently. Behind this idea is that data should be presented publicly to open spaces of collaboration that enable new knowledge about the research topic addressed here.

This research is also intended to contribute *analytically* in two ways. Seeking to overcome the non-collective restriction, it applies the pragmatic sociology of critique devised by Luc Boltanski to integrate an analysis of policy change at the micro-level with the institutional level. Concepts such as the regime of justifications, critique, and figures of compromises (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006), and the distinction between reality and world (Boltanski, 2011) become crucial to understand policy change. On the other hand, the framework of policy orders from Hall (1993) emerges as an appropriate strategy to address the lack of totality in policy sociology. This research draws on the classic framework of policy orders—although with a certain amount of flexibility—because its aim is to explain the internal and external policy change at the policy level. The use of pragmatic sociology (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) and policy orders (Hall, 1993) together provide original analytical contributions because their articulation allows a theoretical framework in which to study the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in a context of policy change. Policy orders work as an explicative totalising model to understand the policy in terms of its internal processes (goal, instruments,

and instrument settings) and its relationship with society in the form of a paradigm. Moreover, *pragmatic sociology* seems to be a useful analytical tool to examine how change affects internal policy through regimes of justifications and external policy through the distinction between reality and world.

The analytical contribution of this research is directly linked with its *theoretical* contribution since a new theory about how policy continuity and discontinuity are related emerged from the data. Findings suggest that the relationship between continuity and discontinuity should be understood as being dynamic, while change is detached from this relationship, acting as the driver in a non-polarised manner. This new conception of change involves considering a gradualist approach to study policy orders since they experience transformations with different velocities in a non-mechanical sense. Any assumption of policy change should be then taken flexibly, which allowed the separation of policy order (for instance, the policy goal from the policy paradigm) to enhance analysis of the policy change entailing multiple policy contradictions. In this regard, a continuity in one policy tier might coexist with discontinuities in the other levels because a concept of multi-layered change acts with see-saw movement.

Finally, it should be noted that there was an effort for conducting research with special focus on the social conditions that drive change in society. In this regard, the inclusion of the 2011 student social movement as a turning point in the study demonstrates the interest in researching the scopes of social events that can lead to significant social transformations. What happened in the Chilean HE model and how it reacted to critiques were the main practical orientations in order to undertake this research project. The findings suggest that the institutional level becomes relevant for any proposal of change with the aim of altering the current state of affairs. As Boltanski (2001) said: whoever dominates the hermeneutic contradiction will be in charge of defining reality. The data indicate that the student social movement achieved some degree of control at the policy level, but failed at the paradigm level.

10.3 Limitations and future directions

The analysis of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity has certain research design limitations. It requires an in-depth exploration of alternative methodological decisions, analytical, and practical elements to continue contributing to the development of new lines

of investigation in the policy sociology of education. In methodological terms, various decisions influenced the production of the data analysed. On the one hand, the focus on the public debate about HE policy refers to a limited number of voices participating in the discussion. There is room to incorporate the missing opinions that have no recurrent access to the public debate—such as students—or those who do not wish to participate in this type of discussion because their power of influence lies in their anonymity—such as political lobbyists. Future studies on this research topic could devise methodological strategies in order to include these participants and thus produce broader insights.

There is also a need for greater inventiveness to address a second limitation: the constraints of the methods. Since the public sphere seemed to be the most relevant space to track the evolution of the debate on the HE policy, the methodological decision was to collect documents from the most influential newspapers and conduct interviews to provide supplementary information. New insights could come from different methods addressing the same research topics. Given the importance of the concept of practice in this theoretical framework, other methods such as participant observation or focus groups could produce data which incorporates aspects that documents and interviews cannot provide. Creativity to develop more informative strategies to address the research topic would provide more opportunities to understand the phenomenon of *policy change* in more varied dimensions.

There is a third methodological limitation related to the definitions of the analysis period and strategy. The restricted period of time (2003-2016) allows an interpretation of the data from the public HE debate until the start of implementation of FHE. Studies that address how the discursive justifications and critiques after the consolidation of the FHE reform would contribute enormously to a more complete analysis of the policy dis/continuity relationship in a context of policy change. Likewise, the methodological decision to work with justifications and critiques supporting the legitimacy of the HE model is not exclusive to the perspectives that have approached the policy change generated by the FHE policy in an evaluative manner. The two methodological strategies are complementary and future research projects should integrate them as two parts of the same process.

On the other hand, there is an analytical constraint involving the particular sociological perspective to approach policy change. Although there was an incrementalist proposal (Hall, 1993) from policy analysis in the research, it is acknowledged that different perspectives from

the same field of policy sociology or contributions from other social sciences could improve the proposed analytical model. For instance, the so-called political sociology of policy instruments (Lascoumes & Le Gales, 2007) has many elements (no neutrality of instruments, relationship between government and the governed, social control and so on) in common with the analytical framework deployed here. Both share the concern for connecting the technical and socio-political dimensions within policy. Therefore, their articulation would be a valuable analytical effort "to move beyond functionalist approaches, to see public policy from the angle of the instruments that structure policies" (pp. 4). Besides, the invitation to extend the perspective is even made to those with views that are more critical of an analysis based on pragmatic sociology and policy orders. As Boltanski (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2005) claimed, critiques are useful for shifting the view towards another framework with better explanatory capabilities for the academic community or strengthening it due to the resistance to critiques and the formulation of new justifications underpinning its theoretical outputs.

Finally, there is a practical limitation that involves the political consequences of the findings in the research. The data suggests that the Chilean model of HE policy has responded with institutional arrangements that could reflect the country's stability in recent years. Since this topic was not a primary element of analysis, it was considered only fleetingly. However, such political implications require greater attention. For instance, the findings of this thesis in Chapter 8 could establish an interesting dialogue with what has become known as the 'evidence-based policy' and 'what works' agenda, calling for non-ideological policy based on *objective empirical evidence* (McCowan 2019, p. 260). Chapter 8 describes how the FHE slogans have been based on an ideological shift that counteracted technocratic economic knowledge to steer policy, which might bring political consequences if some voices in the political debate understand this ideological shift as an advance towards 'populist' positions based on post-truth discourses. An extension of these findings beyond the research scopes would suggest that it would appear that there is a rejection of technical knowledge to model reality, but this rejection is not more generalised because what is challenged is a specific kind of knowledge based on economic evidence. Instead, the popular demand seems to be for non-elitist knowledge that combines policy decisions with the reality experienced by ordinary people.

The materialisation of this popular demand might be applied to what happened during the Chilean *estallido social* (social outbreak) in 2019. This social outbreak was characterised by showing a multiplicity of different citizen complaints that only seemed to converge around a rejection of political, economic, and social elites' role in making crucial decisions. Although riots have not been controlled in the last year and despite the social instability brought by the social outbreak, the elite in charge of making relevant national decisions dared to offer an institutional response from within the Chilean neoliberal development model: to change the Constitution enacted during the dictatorship. The inside institutional answer seemed to work since the plebiscite deciding if the Constitution should be changed registered the highest record of participation after returning to democracy. The results indicated that 78.3% of voters favoured changing the 1980 Constitution (Servel, 2020). Even though the question is still open about if this solution will be enough to calm down the social malaise of Chileans, it seems to be another example of how Chilean policy can be affected by significant social events and how it performs as an institutional exit to complex social problems. In this sense, this thesis offers an interpretative standpoint to address this type of problem.

By articulating a review of the literature concerning sociological theory and policy sociology of education with several chapters analysing original data coming from newspaper documents and interviews about Chilean education policy, this thesis has addressed how policy continuities and discontinuities are related in the HE debate. This effort sought to offer an interpretative framework that incorporates a concept of change linked to a collective action oriented to a totality understood as society as a whole. In this regard, the 2011 Chilean social movement of students represented an excellent opportunity to explore how social events can affect education policy and how the latter may respond to changes demanded by social actors. This connection between social events and education policy has shown that the notion of change is determinant to understand the relationship between continuity and discontinuity in Chile as a complex and dynamic one in which dis/continuity processes tend to overlap themselves. Although the findings seem to be relevant for a specific context of policy development, the discussion remains open for other national (e.g. other countries facing similar social malaise and protests during the last year) and policy (e.g., health or housing policies) contexts so that the invitation is made to follow this and other lines of research.

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APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview question outline

Personal background and job role

1. How long have you worked in the education field?
2. Has all your experience been related with HE policy in the field?
3. Do you considerer yourself as a specialist in HE policy? Why?

Education policy-making

4. How do you think education policy-making process has change over time?
5. Which are the possibilities of doing social changes through education policy?
6. In your terms, how do you conceive the proper way of developing education policy? Which should it be the focus of this?

Education and equity

7. How do you remember the role played by education policy within the "Chilean model of growth with equity" developed before the social movement of students in 2011?
8. How do you understand equity? Can equity be a goal pursued by a national educational model?
9. Do you think an equity-oriented education policy and democracy are related in a particular way?
10. Do you think an equity-oriented education policy and market are related in a particular way?

Education and free-on-charge education

11. How do you understand free-on-charge education? Can free education be a goal pursued by a national educational model?
12. Do you think a free education-oriented education policy and democracy are related in a particular way?
13. Do you think a free education-oriented education policy and market are related in a particular way?
14.

The current Chilean reform

15. Has your conception of equity changed over time after the development of free education reform? Why?
16. Has your conception of free education changed over time after the development of free education reform? Why?
17. What difficulties has the government faced to carry out the reform?
18. Do you agree with the solutions developed to face these difficulties?
19. Do you think this reform will bring real changes to the current situation of Chilean HE?

Information sheet

Title: The continuity and discontinuity of education policy: a study of change in the Chilean debate about higher education	
Researcher: Francisco Zamorano Figueroa	**Institution:** Institute of Education, University College London
Email: fcozamoranof@gmail.com	**Contact phone number:** +56 9 3519876 / +44 7 729042093

Information for participants

This document is aimed to help you decide if you want to be part of a study on Chilean higher education. The document informs why I am conducting the study, what your participation consists of, what benefits and implications there may be, and what will happen after the study ends.

Whether or not you want to be part of the investigation is your decision. In the case of not wanting to be part, it is not necessary to use reasons. Now, if you want to be part of the study, but change your mind later, you can withdraw from the project up to a year after the interview by means of an e-mail addressed to the researcher.

The investigator will review this information with you and answer any questions you may have. Before deciding, you may want to discuss the research with others in order to make the best decision. If you agree to be part of the study, you will be asked to sign the "Informed Consent" attached to this document. You will be given a copy of both the "Information for participants" and the "Informed Consent" for your safekeeping.

Please make sure you have read and understood all the pages.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to analyze the educational debate on public policies carried out during the last 14 years in Chile. It is an investigation that focuses on determining the presence of a continuity or discontinuity within the development of the debate on higher education policies in the country. The study is part of my academic training in order to obtain a doctorate degree in sociology of education from the Institute of Education (IOE) at University College London (UCL). The study is expected to provide useful information for educational research on the scope of current public policy in the field.

What would you have to do if you agree to be part of the study?

To arrange a meeting with me and have a conversation about different topics related to the research. The time and place of the meeting will be decided according to your convenience and availability. It will be a one-time interview in which I will ask you questions about the topics mentioned above. Once the study is finished, I will prepare an executive summary with the main findings that I will happily share with you if you are interested.

How long is the estimated time of your participation?

An interview that lasts no more than 30-40 minutes and is conducted on once.

Will your participation in the project be confidential?

If you agree to be part of the study, the personal information you provide will be processed for the purposes of this academic research, but your name will not be registered on the study products and that information will not be disclosed to others. Your answers to the questions will be used solely for the purposes of this project.

Informed Consent Form PhD Thesis

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Project Title: Demands for an equitable and free educational model: the articulation of continuity/discontinuity between democratic and neoliberal orientations in Chilean higher education

Researcher: Francisco Zamorano Figueroa

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Before you agree to take part, the person organising the research must explain the project to you in the email, which attaches this consent form.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher by email before you to decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Participant's Statement

I agree that:

- I have read the notes written above and the Information Sheet, and understand what the study involves.
- I understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw immediately.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study.
- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in this study.
- I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I will be sent a copy.
- I agree that my name, job title and place of work may be identified in the final report, and waive the right to anonymity for the purposes of this research.

Name of participant:

Signature: Date:

APPENDIX 3. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Examples of thematic network analysis

1. Equity

1.1. HE debate about equity is based on accessibility
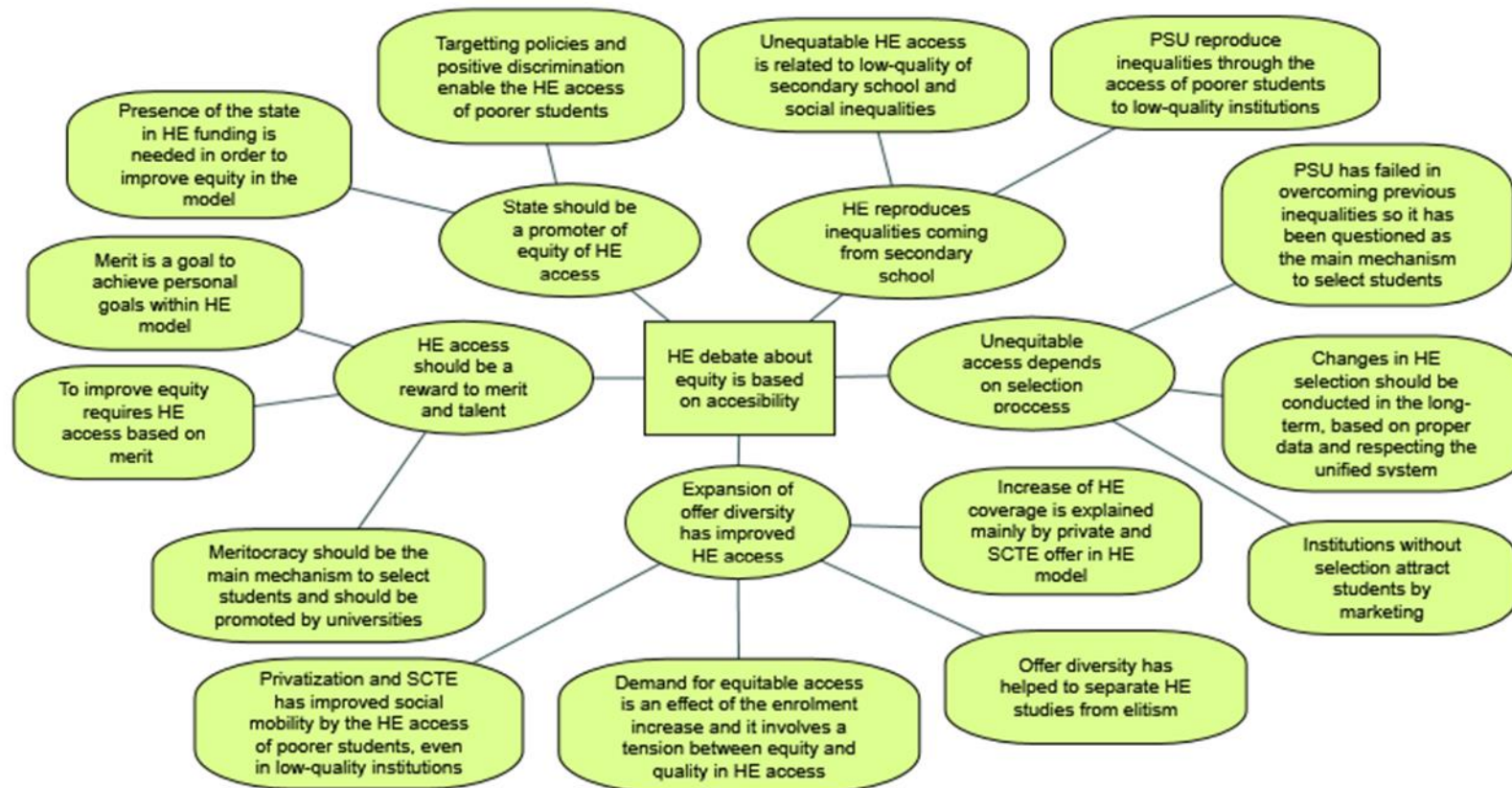
1.2. Equity in the access to access with quality or the availability justification of equity

Selection is directly related with quality of institutions as decrease the value of degrees if selection is low and improve their prestige if it is high

HE access is defined by economic power and social networks previous to HE studies

PSU has deepened difference among secondary institutions reflecting social inequalities of opportunities

HE model become more equitable when poorer students with merit can access to good-quality institutions

HE equity should be understood in relation to quality

HE is not responsible of inequalities coming from society

HE equity involves to solve problems related to access and quality by new ways of funding

HE access as an fulfilled promise of equity

The amount of first generation of students accesing HE is the best demonstration of social mobility

HE can cause more social inequalities due to economic weight of degree, so state funding should be allocated regarding this

Risks of unequity are linked to foster traditional HE sector

HE access promoted by increasing enrolement and social mobility

Proposals of students are elitist as they are claiming free education for a priviliged group attenting traditionals institutions

Demands for equality of opportunities in HE model is new phenomen which responds to economic development achieved by the country

Affirmative policy giving more money to state institution is unequitable as poor students from private and SCTE cannot receive funds

Privatization has been the engine of improving HE access

Increasing enrolment has been mostly experienced by poorer students accesing HE, so resources should be follow them

Privatization and profit are promoting social mobility as they enable HE access in private sector

Increasing enrolment in an undeniable fact promoted by privatization and SCTE

1.3 The technical conversion of the HE debate about equity

The technical conversion of the HE debate about equity

To improve HE equity requires technical solutions

- Technical report about HE funding are useful to improve equity and remove wrong conclusions about the reality of the model
- It is not clear what is the real effect of mark ranking to equity in terms of selection system, equality of opportunities and technical support
- Admission procces has become a source of social inequality and changes oriented to affirmative policies could improve equity

The private nature of HE equity prevails still

- Expansion of university offer, profit, private offer and funding have provided more opportunities for HE students
- Access and universality has been achieved by private participation, so that funding policy should deepen the fairer allocation by scholarships and more loans
- To equalise opportunities in HE implies a diversified model of provision with a articulator role of the state and strong regulation of privates

PSU continues demonstrating lack of equitable access

- Differences in terms of PSU score can be solved with more affirmative policies, targetting funding and the allocation of funding to first educationla levels
- PSU has failed in terms of equitable access so it needs changes oriented to alternative tests and international evaluation
- PSU discriminates poorer students promoting debate about equity, quality and how funding is allocated according to this criterion

The position, paradox and paradigm of HE in relation to social inequality

- HE is part of chain of social inequalities which starts with families and follows with secondary school and high wages returned by HE studies
- HE selection is directly associated with high quality, but it could affect social equality if deprived students cannot access to high quality institutions due to selective procedures
- To correct the social inequality experienced by the HE model could be a source of justification to keep or change the model
- There is a consensus that HE model should reward merit through support in the access, so that free education and mark ranking policies could help to solve previous failures of the model

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2. Free education

2.1. Free education beyond equity

Free education is a policy which is against targeting as the main criterion to develop public policy

Free education is a regressive policy due to high funding required which would be invested in other educational levels

Free education is a demand coming from social movement of students which has changed educational policy

Free education is a regressive policy due to HE economic retribution in relation to who cannot access it

Free education linked to high quality and public orientation is a structural reform centered on the state

Free education as a social demand

Free education is a regressive policy

Free education is a regressive policy due to the enrolment composition

Free education demand is a consequence of the rejection to profit in HE institutions

Free education beyond equity

Free education is directly associated to dropping-out

Free education policy lacks reality and effectiveness

Free education is techniically impossible

Free education is an old policy which funded an elite of students within the entire educational system

Free education policy is technically tricky (utopia) and has been deleted in other countries

2.2. The political conversion of free education debate

The political conversion of free education debate

- FHE is allocated to students with more risk of dropping out, leaving the funding of the rest subjected to CAE
- FHE is a continuity of the allocation of state funding to private institutions
- FHE is linked to a demand of public-oriented and hiigh-quality HE as elements forming part of the common good
- FHE was the political response to complaints against profit, privatization and indebtedness within HE level
- FHE is a continuity of funding to demand through a voucher system
- Critiques to free education as a continuity of market oriented model
- Free education is a socio-political response to the failure of the HE model
- Promises of FHE have provoked expectations in students which are linked to deeper and structural changes in society
- HE is already free as students pay fees with taxes when they graduate, so there is no novelty in this policy
- The real and utopian character of free education
- Free education brings a political-ideological promise of structural change
- FHE has an ideological purpose in order to enhance the power of the state on HE institutions and guarantee education as a right
- Universal free education is a demand in the long-term which requires intermediate stages of the reform
- Free education is opposed to equity
- The technical and political ideological reactive critique to free education
- International evidence suggests that FHE can provoke funding issues to HE institutions which would affect quality
- Universal free education with funding to educational offer is a utopia
- Private sector started demanding FHE complaining unfairness from the satete in respect to funding
- FHE is a risk of enhancing segregation of the model as poorer students will attend free institutions, while richer ones will do ir to private sector
- FHE policy can be a source of loss autonomy of institutions and freedom of choosing as they would depend on the state funding and accreditation control

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3. Policy-making

3.1. Technocratic-conservative conception of the process of making HE policy

Changes in HE should involve dialogue, consensus, prudence and graduality in order to avoid uncertainity

Comitees should have a technical role in policy recommendations to HE policy

There is a tension between quality and equity which is provoked by the increasing demand for more HE access

To foster competition and improve the transparency of the information provided are the best way of fostering HE quality in the long-term

Reality should be the basis for developing HE policy and it is needed to disgard the presence of (older) ideologies in this process

Criteria suggested to conduct HE policies are based on feasibility

Quality-oriented policy as an effect of equity-oriented policies

There is an intense debate about the benefits and potential damage of new law of accreditation

Technocratic-conservative conception of the process of making HE policy

HE policy should reinforce the traditional public character of HE model and state universities to improve quality of the model

The participation of social movement of students in the policy debate is negative as it could cause more inequity, ideoligization, and lack of consensus and dialogue

Suspicion about the role of politics in relation to HE policies

Funding is the main policy tool to achieve equity within HE model

Funding linked to quality of institutions and accreditation enables a fairer HE model as quality shows different level both in the traditional and in the private sector

Political cycles of government affects long-term policies, so short-term policies are needed to avoid conformity with problems

Old concept of reform and technical idea of change in HE model

It is believed that a new HE funding (as CAE) which replace the unfair state loan would improve equity, merit and equality of opportunities

Planification ans vision of state in the long-term should be criteria to develop HE policy in order to avoid improvisation and populism

PAA-PSU change, CAE and accredition laws are the most important reforms related to expansion in HE in the last years

Idea of reform is linked to 1981 HE reform which enabled to create new privates institutions and improve coverage and HE access

Positive discrimination is a good policy to help poor people who need special funding and HE acccess

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3.2. Development of HE policy in dispute

Ideology is seen as a negative elements to develop HE policy since market and state roles are interpreted as opposed perspectives of society

Ideology is seen as a positive element in that it has been priorised political solutions instead of technical ones

Quality-oriented policy should deepen as HE offer shows similar levels, state participation is compatible with market and diversity, freedom of choice and competition improve quality

There is a positive evaluation of accreditation policy developed so far and it is demanded to improve it in terms of enhancing transparency and available information of HE model

Demands from students lack of realism, show high ideological content and are far from national interest and funding context

Ideology and/or reality

Quality oriented policy between market and state

Quality-oriented policy demands an active role of the state in order to reinforce the state sector and guarantee quality linked to public orientation and free-education

There is disgrament about how to change the model: gradual-institutional change v/s radical-equitable change

Development of HE policy in dispute

There is no agreement about funding policy based on scholarships as it is argued that is an equitable policy and an unequitable policy which deepens market-based HE model

There is a debate about who should conduct the HE reform: politics or social movement

HE reform is needed

Doubts about equitable sense of funding policy

HE reform is a need as field has been abandoned by decades since the dictatorship

Policy disorientation

There is a discussion about treatment of state institutions as it is argued that to strenghten them could mean deepening the HE model as well as transform it

HE debate has usually forgotten the essential orientations due to political interests

Different views about the right orientation of HE polciy: agreement with diagnosis of social movement, but there is no clearity about th means to solve these issues

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3.3. The technocratic policy-making

Making decision process should regard the importance of technical and international evidence instead the political struggle

Making decision process in a HE reform cannot be neutral and needs to face multiple and different ideological interests

HE quality debate has a secondary place within a context of free HE reform

Quality-oriented policies are referred to changes within HE institutions

Making decision process should consider the dialogue with citizinship and stakeholders in a peaceable and realistic context to achieve gradual policies

The technocratic-conservative policy versus the conflictive-ideological policy

The technical-oriented debate about HE quality policy in a reform context

There is a debate about the real role played by accreditation policy in the goal of achieving high-quality within HE model

The technocratic policy-making

The HE model requires a radical change of paradigm and not cosmethic changes grouped around a reform of the model

The idea of change within policy is related to the implementation of new HE paradigm

HE funding policy and the allocation of public resources to private sector

Funding HE policy based on quality criteria is in dispute as accreditation has been the main mechanism to provid state resources to for-profits institutions

Education as a right is a demand for a structural change in wich HE is guarateed by the state and commodification is forbiden

There is no clarity about who should define the orientations of HE policy

Funding HE policy is equitable when public resources is allocated to poorer students attending priivate sector

The main orientation of HE reform should be a change of paradigm which should be based on good quality, inclusion, public orientation and deleting profit

Politics should not be in charge of defining policy orientations as participants in the debate distrust in its effective role

There is an important debate about the role played by state and market in the definition of orientation of HE policy

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