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THE GENESIS OF CONTEMPORARY YOUTH POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN CHILE
AND MEXICO: AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCE AND IDEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to compare the reasons for and impacts of two youth political movements in Latin America: *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* in Chile and *YoSoy132* in Mexico. Throughout history both countries have struggled to find equilibrium between governments that are both revolutionary and effective. As a result, versions of socialism, neo-liberalism, democracy as well as a military dictatorship in Chile have each contributed to the ideological and cultural landscapes of these two nations. The underlying issues of poverty, unequal distributions of wealth and resources, classism and overall lack in equality of power and opportunity have prevailed throughout the changes in regimes. However, in recent years a rather unlikely contingent of society, the youth, have organized and protested to seek real, positive changes in their societies in ways that were unimaginable even twenty years ago.

Everyday experiences have created a society hungry for change, which in turn has created a renewed ideology based on the hope that change *is* possible, which made now the right time for these movements to take place. Additionally, unlike in the past where people had no other outlets besides the physical public space to exchange ideas and to organize, the advent of social media has created a new virtual space where young people can connect and empower each other in order to organize complex and widespread movements to effect change in their societies.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Before delving into the histories of Chile and Mexico in order to begin to understand how experience, ideology and social media created a climate that made possible youth movements, such as *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* in Chile and *YoSoy132* in Mexico, it is imperative to first have a firm understanding of some of the key concepts discussed in this thesis. One such concept is that of youth. Youth, young people, adolescents, young adults are all terms we use to describe a group of people from around age thirteen to their early twenties. There are all kinds of norms and assumptions associated with this group including that they are “coming to age, hormone controlled and peer oriented” (Lesko 139). Considering this conception, it is no great surprise then that this group is today often viewed as “estranged from politics and increasingly politically apathetic” (Wallace 243). It is almost as if mentally, this group has been placed into a box that marks them as not ready yet to be accounted for anything. While these generalizations may be readily accepted at first blush as fact, it is important to keep in mind that this designation of “youth” is culturally constructed. In fact, the designation of youth was not even created until the late 1800s when sociology, psychology, and anthropology sought to explain human tendencies and conditions especially in regards to “deviance” (Lesko 141). Since that time generalizations about this group have been continuously evolving. For example, in the 1960s it could be argued that youth were seen paradoxically, as very politically active and the elected visionaries for society.

In her book *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from Latin American Sixties*, Diana Sorensen explores the idea of youth in Latin America during this decade. In her description of this tumultuous decade in history, Sorensen adroitly addresses that for the first time in history, people began to recognize “Latin America” as a defined entity, which she describes as “a transnational identity rooted in hemispheric imagination” (1). Using the conception of Latin America as a defined space and culture as a platform to jump off from, Sorensen then begins her analysis of the climate surrounding youth in this region and the sentiments of their generation. The two main concepts she identifies are utopia and revolution. These two ideologies served as the catalysts for other cultural concepts and ideas. Utopia according to Sorensen, helped to foster a sense of imminence in which a new age of men that was liberated from traditional ideas of “sexual morals, dress, interracial relationships, religious beliefs and educational reforms” was on the horizon (2). This sense of urgency and avarice for change are evidenced by the variety of popular movements that spread across Latin America. For example, there were movements that sought to transform accepted gender norms and traditions like the women’s liberation movement, which was very contradictory to the machista and religious dogmas of the past. There were also revolutions centered on political reformation like the Cuban Revolution, which occurred in 1959 and served as inspiration for many other similar revolutions across Latin America in the ensuing decade. Of course, not all of these movements resulted in the idealistic and life-altering changes that were anticipated.

As Sorensen explains, “Latin America in the sixties encapsulates its predicament: a moment of hope and celebration produced a sense of multiple possibilities, only to reach closure and despair in its culmination” (3). That is because destruction of the old system which had in many ways, created an environment to support these movements, was as a prominent a goal as

revolution and rebirth. As a result, as the young gained power they increasingly began to view the older generation and any ideas associated with them, as antiquated symbols of what was wrong in society. It was, as Sorensen explains, the first time in the history of this region that youth “appeared as the carrier of power and innovation, overshadowing the contesting power of the class” (6). The entire power dynamic of the region seemed to be re-appropriated however, for many countries, the jubilation was short-lived. Many of the regimes that followed this era of hope proved to be even more oppressive than the traditional societies of the past as was the case in Chile during Pinochet’s regime (1973-1990). Of course, even under the watchful eye of leaders like General Augusto Pinochet in Chile, a sense of nostalgia endured for more hopeful times. Over time and with the deposition of these authoritarian regimes, this nostalgia would evolve into a renewed fervor for action among youth, which is evidenced in the acts of the students in Chile in 2006 and in 2012 in Mexico. While some, as discussed earlier in the explanation of the term “youth,” had forgotten the power of this demographic and deemed them apathetic, others remembered the dreams of their youth and could see the new generation as the one to restore optimism for political and cultural change. The ideologies and experiences of the sixties were still alive in the minds and hearts that had lived through them and their progeny.

In order to understand the ideologies that drove the actions of the youths in these contexts and their shared experiences that informed their understanding of the world, it is first important to accurately define the concepts of ideology and experience. In his work Raymond Williams seeks to explicate the meaning of these two ambiguous terms. According to Williams, ideology has held both negative and positive connotations in its history. It was first used as a word in 1796 as derivation of a French word, which meant “the science of ideas or the philosophy of the mind” (154). Not long after though, Napoleon Bonaparte used the word to belittle the ideas surrounding

The Enlightenment. This negative connotation surrounding the word developed and spread to the point that even today, ideology is often used to refer to something that is not concrete or is an “illusion, false consciousness, unreality” as stated in some of the early writings by Marx and Engels. However, in their late writings Marx and Engels amended their views on the contentious term and asserted that ideology is “a sphere where one acquires consciousness of political and economic circumstances” (154). Even if the more popular use of the term “ideology” in today’s vernacular is more akin to Napoleon’s version, in this thesis, the term will be applied in sense that is congruent with the definition that Marx and Engels derived in their later writings. This is because ideologies are not random ideas that people share with one another but are instead, often the result of experience. This begs the question, how does one define experience?

Similar to ideology, experience as a word has born numerous different connotations in its existence. At the beginning of his passage on experience, Williams provides the reader with two definitions of experience. The first is “knowledge gathered from past events whether by conscious observation or by consideration and reflection,” and the other is “a particular kind of consciousness, which can in some contexts be distinguished from knowledge or reason” (126). What is interesting about both of these definitions is the focus each puts on awareness; it seems from Williams perspective that to experience something, it is not enough to be present but one must also be sentient of what is happening. Cognizance is important in the context of this thesis because both *YoSoy132* and *La Revolución de los Pingüinos*, at their core, seek to raise awareness of consciousness of a certain issue. Another principal consideration in Williams’ definition of experience, is whether it is a word used to describe the past or the present.

In this thesis, experience belongs equally to the past and the present because what people endure in the past, influences how they might act in the future. In this sense, it is important to be

mindful of the fact that every event that happens in the world was at one point, the “present” and since it continues to impact that person and their decisions, it is difficult to say whether an experience has a definitive beginning or end point. Experiences also have the ability to be transmitted to future generations via word of mouth, writing, or other forms of record keeping. Consequently, experience is a living-breathing entity that is forever fluctuating, as people create new experiences that help to mold and reinvent their views of the past. Therefore, a comprehensive definition of experience, for this thesis, precludes that it is something that one is aware of, and something that continues to impact and influence ones behavior whether consciously or subconsciously.

However, I would not require that an experience be obtained firsthand because, a person can experience something through the teachings, both formal and informal, of others. For example, a love of freedom can result from the stories a child may hear from their parents and grandparents about the horrors of oppression, as was the case for many Chilean youths involved in *La Revolución de los Pingüinos*. Understanding experience in this way also helps explain changes in ideology because, as experiences are transmitted from one person to another and one generation to the next, new ideas are created.

In contemporary Chilean history, the story of a ruthless dictatorship began with a democratically elected, socialist leader, named Salvador Allende who rose to power in 1970 at the tail end of the idealistic sixties. The two campaign promises that helped Allende win the election in this impatient and hopeful time were: his promises to increase equality, and decrease poverty. Unfortunately, like many other promising and revolutionary leaders at this time in Latin America, he was unable to fulfill his electoral promises, which created great discontent among the general public and even within his own political party. As a result, three years after his

election with many promises left unfulfilled, his trusted friend and general of the Chilean Army, Augusto Pinochet, staged a coup d'état and ousted Allende from the presidency. Pinochet then reigned as a ruthless dictator in Chile for the next twenty-seven years. Pinochet's seamless takeover and lengthy tenure as dictator greatly impacted the ideas that Chileans had about the function of government. An oppressive authoritarian regime seemed to be the inevitable consequence of a myriad of unpromising options for political leadership, which was illustrated by the relatively small majority of fifty-six percent, which voted to depose of Pinochet in a public referendum in 1989 (Del Barco). However, the referendum of 1989 was a pivotal turning point for society and again, drastically changed the way people in Chile viewed the world.

The expectations Chileans had of their government during Pinochet's dictatorship in the seventies, compared with those in the beginning of the nineties, and with expectations that they hold now, are dramatically different. The culture evolved from one of desperation-instilled apathy, to increased optimism, to empowered activism. That is because with President Bachelet's promises of participatory democracy, change seemed to be within reach. The young protesters of only twelve to seventeen years old, in *La Revolución de los Pingüinos*, were able to change laws that had been in place since the time of the dictatorship, and to establish new rights and provisions for students. Partially due to their success, five years later university students in Chile were able to accomplish even more advances in educational legislation and funding through organized protest.

With regards to ideological changes in Mexico, a cultural shift from compliance to resistance has been more subtle, but nonetheless essential in Mexico. Apathy and hopelessness have stemmed from a lack of political change with an over seventy-year, one party rule, by *El Partido Revolucionario (PRI)*. The PRI was deposed from power for a brief period beginning in

2000 but regained power in 2012. Nevertheless, Mexico had, for the first time in years, been able to elect another party to power and this re-instilled hope in the country, as evidenced by the actions of students in the same year of the PRI's return to power. The movement in 2012, *YoSoy132*, started a dialogue where people could begin to question accepted norms like state controlled media and press. This is especially important considering the current climate of government complicity with violence against youths, as exemplified in the disappearances of forty-three students from Ayotzinapa in 2014. It has also helped to draw the attention of the global community to the repression and violence being committed by drug lords and corrupted officials. While students in Mexico may not have seen the same level of success as the Chilean youths, their movement still helped to create a renewed sense of activism and hope.

It is clear in both of these examples that paradoxical ideologies are existing in these countries and creating serious clashes between the citizenry, the government, and the economic system of neoliberalism. Since the 1980s, both Mexico and Chile have implemented a series of neoliberal political and economic transformations that have had a profound impact on society. In Judith Teichman's article "Competing Visions of Democracy and Development in the Era of Neoliberalism in Mexico and Chile" she seeks to shed light on conflicts that exist between neoliberal governments and civil society organizations in these countries. She accomplishes this by focusing on opinions and efforts of the opposing sides in conditional cash transfer systems. By comparing the attempts, successes and failures of both parties in Chile and Mexico, she then draws some insightful conclusions as to what effect this situation could have on poverty and the state of democracy as a whole.

In Teichman's summary of Chilean politics and neoliberalism she highlights the fact that, in Chile after the end of Pinochet's regime and a return to democracy, the government began a

program called the Social Solidarity and Investment Fund as a solution to the inequitable division of resources in the country that the financial crisis of the 80s had significantly exacerbated. In the beginning, the program was community based in its distribution of aid but to the great disappointment of civil society organizations, in the 90s they stopped targeting communities and switched their focus to individuals and families (71). To further aggravate the civil society organizations, they were forced to distribute the aid and implement the programs exactly as prescribed by the bureaucracy. Similarly, in regards to the conditional cash transfer systems initiated by President Ricardo Lagos in 2002, Chilean civil society organizations were given no ability to impact the policies that guided neither the program nor the further development of the program. It was not until the World Bank intervened that the civil society organizations were even able to monitor and evaluate the program however, part of the board that conducted the evaluations had to include members of the Planning Ministry. Overall, the Chilean civil society organizations saw little success in changing the programs to be more inclusive and community oriented. Teichman argues the reason for their failure is that the Chilean government, unlike the Mexican one, is highly centralized with a weak congress. Also, Chile's economy has flourished more under neoliberal policies than Mexico's. Of course while they might have been slightly more successful, civil society organizations still struggled a great deal in Mexico.

The interesting facet to Mexico's conditional cash transfer system is that unlike Chile, it was instated under the authoritarian regime of the PRI and continued after the free election of a new party candidate, Vicente Fox. This was a highly controversial move for Fox since many were highly critical of the program. Another contrasting feature of Mexico from Chile is that not all of their civil society organizations agreed on their views about neoliberalism like the Chilean

ones did. Their views ranged from the PRI founded “Prista” which was not highly critical of neoliberalism in general and saw consultation in developing the program as the end goal, to the left leaning organizations like the FAM and Convergencia that believed civil society participation was central in the implementation of successful anti-poverty initiatives (81). Ironically, despite these differences these groups were able to gain more power in Mexico which resulted in the creation of two new programs: one, which was a community based poverty initiative for the elderly and another, which was health coverage aimed not only at the extremely impoverished but at all of those in poverty (83).

The overall information Teichman provides is useful and informative and the use of conditional cash transfer programs, as a platform to discuss neoliberalism and democracy in both countries was an effective approach. However, further explanation and analysis of the participatory government in Chile under Bachelet would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the issue since popular participation is the main goal of the civil society organizations. Overall, I agree with her conclusion that the goal of neoliberalist technocrats and community leaders are not working together and that is the root cause of distrust and dysfunction in these democracies. As they continue to grow from their once authoritarian beginnings into more well developed democracies, hopefully policy makers, especially in Chile, will learn how to include the voices of all constituents without creating utter chaos like was seen under the Bachelet regime. If they do not accomplish this in the words of Teichman, “The failure to open up to the community development perspective, however, may risk increasingly harsh criticism of the responsiveness of democratic institutions and the less than efficacious policy outcomes in poverty reduction” (84).

This thesis analyzes youth movements that took a stance and actively participated against some neoliberal politics in Mexico and Chile. Of course neither Mexico nor Chile would have been as successful in their respective movements if it were not for social media, which helped people to share their experiences and espouse their ideologies openly, and with great efficiency. In the not so distant past, the only means people had of communicating was by telephone, word of mouth, newspapers and other sources which were not as instantaneous and easily transmitted as avenues for communication that society possesses today. For this reason social media has had an important impact on social movements like the ones discussed in Chile and Mexico. According to a paper on “Collective Action on the Web” which focused primarily on its influence in Latin America by PhD candidate at the University of Texas at Austin and veteran journalist, Summer Harlow and her colleague, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communications at the University of Texas at Arlington, Dustin Harp, online social media has been increasingly used to “organize protests, create campaigns, and raise money for causes” (196). The authors go on to cite two examples in the recent past one of which was in 2008 where Facebook was used to organize a peace march in Colombia and the other was in 2009 where Facebook was used again in Guatemala to organize a protest. With examples like these many, as the authors point out, have implicated the use of online social media as a means to overcome barriers previously created by money, space and distance. This is integral in the cases of Chile and Mexico since both countries suffer from great wealth disparities between the rich and poor.

While Harlow and Harp argue that even though social media has helped to organize large populations in Latin America, not everyone has equal access to technology, which may cause barriers created by money to persist, I would counter that online social media has helped to bridge these gaps much more than it has widened them. That is because social media campaigns

do not just unite the people within the country in question, they also help to bring international attention to the issue at hand. Later in my analysis of the Chilean and Mexican cases, the importance of international pressure caused by social media campaigns is demonstrated to be essential in the success of the movements. For this reason, I would conclude that Facebook, twitter, Instagram and other similar technologies are powerful tools for everyone, especially those like poor and rural populations who historically, have not had the means to express their ideas and opinions to do so because it creates a linkage between these populations and the rest of the world. Social media also puts more power in the hands of youths who since the birth of these resources occurred in their lifetimes are more likely to use them.

The prevalence of social media use among younger populations is illustrated by the fact that 89% of users of online social networking are between the ages of 18 to 29 (“Social Media Use by Age Group Over Time”). This puts young people at an advantage to create social movements given the widespread use of social media to organize such things. If it had not been for social media the movements in Chile and Mexico may not have been as successful or popular as they were at local and global levels. Of course everything may have changed or been different if not for many factors, and for this reason both movements must be assessed in a logical manner.

By examining both of these movements through a comparative analysis, the chapters of this thesis assess the social and political changes in these countries and how their different experiences have impacted the movements’ successes and failures. To accomplish a firm understanding of the countries’ respective experiences I began by detailing relevant historical information in chapters one and two. Chapter one details Mexican history from the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, with the end of Porifio Diaz’s autocratic rule from 1876 to

1911, to present day Mexico. I chose this as the spectrum of dates because many issues and ideas that were being hotly debated and fought over in 1910 are still pertinent today. For example, the current dominant political party in Mexico, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, began as a result of the Revolution. The party was the legacy of the victor after a long struggle among a group of Mexico's most powerful men at the time each that represented different aspects of the culturally diverse landscape of the country. In fact, a political activist group predominantly from Chiapas called the Zapatista Army of National Liberation that continues to petition for increased indigenous rights is named after one of the Mexican Revolution power heads, Emiliano Zapata.

In the case of Chile, I began my overview of its national history with the end of Salvador Allende's tenure as president. I chose this as my starting point because it is important to understand that Chile was a democratically led country prior to Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the dictatorship and life in Chile during this period including the unique relationship between a controlling authoritarian regime and liberalization of the economy. After Pinochet's loss in a public referendum in 1989 the country was led by a coalition of democratic left leaning leaders called La Concertación. I then analyze the progress and shortfalls of the four presidents who followed Pinochet collectively known as *La Concertación*. These presidents each worked to help Chile re-transition to democracy and to address the human rights violations committed by Pinochet and his underlings. The last of the four leaders of La Concertación whose rhetoric about participatory democracy greatly influenced the birth *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* was Michelle Bachelet. I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of her first months in the presidency because they help to explain the climate in which the movement took place.

The next two chapters represent the heart of the thesis because here I begin to compare *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* and *YoSoy132*. In comparing both movements the most important aspect to me was to be sure that I reached a meaningful conclusion about each movement. To do this I focused on both the tangible outcomes, like changes in laws, and the less quantifiable changes, like the evolution in the attitudes and expectations of people in Chile and Mexico. Overall both movements were revolutionary and helped to mold new expectations and ideologies in their respective countries. While I did find more concrete changes in Chile, both movements helped to fundamentally alter the way people interact with the government. Anyone who reads this thesis should be able to glean a well-rounded understanding of the cultural landscape leading to and surrounding these movements, why students chose to organize when they did, what these movements accomplished, and what *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* and *YoSoy132* means for the future of Chile and Mexico.

Chapter 2

Mexican Historical Background

The history of Mexico has been fraught with struggles between dictatorships and democracies, and between enhanced social rights and censorship. Interestingly, many of the modern political issues and social divisions Mexico is experiencing today can be traced as far back as the Mexican Revolution.

The seeds of the Mexican Revolution grew in the final years of Porifio Diazs' lengthy reign as the dictator of Mexico dating from 1876 to 1911. As leader of Mexico, Diaz spearheaded the modernization of Mexico and the economy grew substantially. Unfortunately, the benefits of the country's success under Diaz were only enjoyed by a select few. The political and economical climate of Mexico during this era is accurately described as "oligarchic, dominated by caciques (political bosses), and authoritarian, slow, increasingly disjointed, introverted, jolted by innovation and productive changes though still tied down by its colonial traditions" (Camín and Meyer 2). The complaints and desires of the working-class Mexican people were to a great extent ignored. Therefore, in 1910 when Porifio Diaz naively boasted that he could win in a free election, Francisco Madero ran against him deriving confidence from the widespread dissatisfaction with Diaz by the farmers and other workers of Mexico. To Diaz's chagrin, Madero's charisma and rhetoric about the importance of rights for the working-class made him wildly more popular than the incumbent dictator. To prevent a loss of power and embarrassing defeat, Diaz had Madero arrested and proclaimed himself the winner of the election. Yet this did not last, while Madero sought refuge in the United States others began to rally under his cause and work to make Madero the new president of Mexico, which gave birth to

the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Consequently in May of 1911 under enormous pressure and fear for his life, Diaz acknowledged he had been defeated and Madero ascended into power.

Madero came into the presidency with lofty promises to initiate social reform and redistribute some of the land that had been taken from indigenous and impoverished populations in Mexico. Nonetheless, as is often the case, once in power Madero enacted much less than the radical changes he had promised during his campaign. To placate the masses who had helped him get elected, Madero created a law that instructed owners of large portions of land to return some of what had been taken from the indigenous and poorer working classes during Diaz's presidency, but he failed to adequately enforce the legislation. Madero's lack of conviction with his new law caused discontent with other Revolutionary leaders like Emiliano Zapata and Francisco (Pancho) Villa who had been waiting with bated breath for land reform and supported Madero solely for this reason. At the same time, other former supporters of Madero also began to turn against him most notably, his esteemed friend and general of the Mexican army, Victoriano Huerta. Huerta was largely unimpressed with Madero and began working with the United States in order to depose the Mexican president. Further deteriorating already waning support for Madero, Pascual Orozco, another former supporter of the president, who had control of the north, reneged support of Madero when he did not fulfill the promises he had made. With enemies surrounding him, it was just a matter of time before someone toppled Madero.

Victoriano Huerta with the help of the United States and the loyalty he had gleaned from his troops as a seasoned general was just the man to overthrow the president and even claim the seat for him. This is an integral point in Mexican history to consider because it demonstrates the many cultural and political divides between the different regions and classes within Mexico. It also exemplifies the exasperating lack of change Mexicans continue to receive from their leaders

despite grandiose campaign promises and supposedly “well intentioned” intervention from the United States.

Once Huerta was in power, one of the first things he did was to have the previous president, and his old friend, Madero killed. Huerta’s callous action was in stark contrast to the clemency that Madero had shown his predecessor Diaz. This is because the new president unlike Madero envisioned himself as a steel-fisted omnipotent dictator similar to other recently deposed leader, Diaz. What Huerta did not envision as part of his role as leader was to bring democracy and change to Mexico. However, no matter how desperately Huerta wanted to maintain absolute power in Mexico he was not successful for long. The divisions that had existed during Madero’s reign persisted and were now divided under four leaders: Zapata, Carranza, Villa and Obregon. And, for the first time, the four men found an issue they could agree and work on collectively: oust Huerta. As a result on July 15, 1914 Huerta resigned and left for exile.

As one might imagine, the alliance of the four powerful men was short lived. Once Huerta was gone they all had their own designs on power. The only exception was Obregon who chose to align himself with Carranza. Due to a large extent to the support of Obregon, Carranza was able to become president of Mexico in 1917 after Obregon won a few decisive battles over Zapata and Villa. In 1918 Carrancista forces killed Zapata and thus another contender was officially out of the running to become president. In 1920 Carranza met the same fate when he failed to support Obregon and instead chose to endorse another candidate. At this point the only two of the original leaders left were Villa and Obregon and while at first it appeared that Obregon would allow Villa to live a life of quiet banditry, in 1923 Obregon had Villa assassinated. Obregon led the country for four years and when he died, some historical sources would say it was the official mark of the end of the Mexican Revolution (others cite the year

1917 when the Mexican Constitution was drafted). Yet, Mexico continued to experience much violence and turmoil after the official end of the war and to further exasperate conditions in Mexico; every economic sector of the country but for oil was negatively impacted by the bloodshed. Mexico desperately needed strong, stable leadership to help restore its economy. What kind of leader and politics would most adroitly bring stability and economic growth to Mexico was difficult to ascertain especially with the wealth of differing opinions.

In Mexico there are three main political parties each of which has different ideologies. The one to arise from the revolution, the PRI (“Partido Revolucionario Institucional”), was founded by Plutarco Calles in 1929 and remained the dominant power in Mexico until the end of the 90s. In 1989 the PRD (“Partido de la Revolución Democrática”) was formed as a leftist party that arose in reaction to discontent with the PRI especially after Cuauhtémoc Cardenas won the election in 1988 but was kept out of office by what many claim to have been electoral fraud at the hands of the PRI (“The Parties”). The party was a unification of other parties in opposition of the PRI including: la Corriente Democrática, el Partido Mexicano Socialista and el Frente Cardenista de Reconstrucción Nacional and the Frente Democrático Nacional (FDN). The third political party in Mexico is the PAN (“Partido de Acción Nacional”), which represents the conservative faction, many of whom actively practice the Catholic faith. After seventy years of what Mario Vargas called the “perfect dictatorship,” the PAN won the elections in 2000 and the PRI conceded for the first time (Gillingham and Smith 11). The PAN held power from 2000 until 2012, when the PRI regained power and Enrique Peña Nieto became president. Over the years Mexico has suffered from a lack of change in political parties and while the PAN was revolutionary in gaining power from the PRI, the vast majority of Mexican history has occurred under the leadership of one very powerful political party.

The PRI dictatorship has been classified by some as a “dictablanda,” instead of a “dictadura,” because it was a “soft” dictatorship in comparison with some of Latin America’s more bloody regimes (Gillingham and Smith 11). Yet the history of the PRI has not always been peaceful especially in the face of opposition. On October 2, 1968 days before Mexico was to host the summer Olympics, a group of students gathered in Mexico City for a demonstration. At the time, Mexico was experiencing a great boom in the economy, and for the first time, parents who never could have afforded to go to college themselves were able to send their children. This new more highly educated class of youth while benefitting from the boom in the economy, were less than pleased with the continued government censorship and suppression of free speech.

Students began to grumble and protest about the lack of freedom of expression but were largely ignored. The gravity of the situation drastically changed in the summer of 1968 when the government squashed a political demonstration at a high school and injured some of the students involved. These demonstrations of violence against citizens incited the youth of Mexico begin to hold more protests to show their dissatisfaction with the Mexican government. The youths expected the government to respond by ending the repression and violence. Contrary to their expectations, on October 2nd of that year the police opened fire on a crowd of young people killing what the government originally stated, was four people. Years later though, with the election of the PAN candidate Vicente Fox in 2000, investigations revealed that the death toll from this incident was much higher with 44 dead officially documented by the Mexican government and estimates of a total of 400 dead (“LITEMPO: The CIA's Eyes on Tlatelolco”). Of course just as the oligarchy under Porifio changed with the Mexican Revolution, this kind of authoritarian rule in Mexico would also give way to more democratic presidencies.

During the 1980s democracy became a focus in the international community and the United States began to make the democratization of states a priority when distributing aid (Morton 183). The way in which states transitioned to democracy was also altered. According to Adam Morton, Professor in Political Economy at the University of Sydney, “the ‘transition’ to democracy paradigm emerged by advocating the construction of vibrant civil societies as supposedly autonomous realms of individual freedom and association through which democratic politics could proceed” (183). Mexico would be one of the many Latin American countries to follow suit and democratize.

The process of ending the tyrannical hold the PRI had on Mexican politics and consequently all aspects of life in the country began as the country experienced great economic gains and losses. In the beginning of the 1980s Mexico’s economy was doing well. However, after an economic crisis and petroleum prices collapsed, Mexico was forced to open up their national market and completely rearrange their economic system. To accomplish this grand restructuring of the economy the people elected a man who came from a lineage of politically involved individuals and had benefited from a prestigious education in economics. This man was Carlos Salinas.

Under President Salinas, the economy of Mexico was dramatically transformed. He and his advisors focused on three main issues: inflation, privatization and lessening the national debt which in 1988 corresponded to 66% of the nation’s GDP in a year (Krauze 43). He and his team of U.S. ivy-league educated financial advisors were very successful and in 1994, the national debt was reduced to less than half at 24.8%, and inflation was also down from upwards of 170% in 1987 to less than 20% in 1991 (42). To achieve their goal of privatization, Salinas and his cohorts took an especially aggressive approach forcing companies to either fail or sell, which

was a difficult undertaking considering in 1982, 1,155 companies were publicly owned. Yet with their ruthless tactics, the government was successful and by the early nineties the only publicly owned companies that remained were a smattering of railroad companies, petroleum refineries and electrical energy facilities. This new post-Salinas Mexico was now more open than ever to Western influence and as a result, the United States and other countries became increasingly involved in the Mexican economy.

As a result of the new interdependence between Mexico and its northern neighbors, in 1993 Mexico, the United States, and Canada signed a trade agreement called NAFTA. The trade agreement was supposed to be designed to facilitate the creation of new industries in all of the countries by making it cheaper to import and export amongst them. Initially the agreement did increase Mexico's GDP and improve the overall health of the economy. Salinas was in 1994 very proud of the trade agreement stating, "The level of trade and type of products that cross the borders, silenced even the most ardent critics" (Faux 35). However, in contradiction with Salina's statement, not everyone in Mexico has sung the praises of NAFTA. Critics initially doubted NAFTA's ability to create jobs in Mexico and foresaw that the majority of the wealth created from the agreement would go to the wealthy while the middle and lower classes would suffer any consequences (35). To a great extent the critics' predictions were correct. Wealth was not equally distributed across Mexico, since the vast majority of factories called maquiladoras, created as a result of the trade agreement, were located on the northern border of Mexico. In addition these factories failed to pay the promised wages that would help people transcend the barrier between poverty and middle-class. NAFTA along with the other neoliberalist policies of Salinas and his Chicago boys also created a horrendous economic crash in 1994, which left

many, even poorer than before (35). As a response to the economic downturn, many anti-globalism and anti-neoliberalism groups surfaced in Mexico.

One group that has especially anti-globalization and anti neoliberalism sentiments is the indigenous guerrilla EZLN (“Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional”) that was formed not long after NAFTA was enacted. Interestingly this group derived its name from Emiliano Zapata, the Mexican revolutionary leader from the south who was an activist for the rights of agrarian workers. The aim of the group is to fight the central and local governments—integrated mostly by white Mexicans—from taking control of Chiapas from the native people in the area. The group is opposed to the takeover of corporations of natural resources instead, they advocate for indigenous control of the land. They also strive to create social justice and a free and democratic governing body. In 1994, the same day as the “Tratado Libre de Comercio” or NAFTA was put into effect, the EZLN occupied San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Ocosingo, Altamirano, Las Margaritas, Abasolo and Chalán.

It was an army composed of 2,000 indigenous people armed with AK-47s, machetes and rifles shouting “¡Ya Basta!” or Enough! (Krauze 82). The cause for the uprising on this particular day as told by a commandant who helped lead the uprising,

It was the 1st of January, 1994, when we appeared, because of the conditions and the situation in which we live in these mountains. We rose up in arms Not so we could have somewhere — an office, or some other important place to go —We took up arms so we would not be killed by forgetfulness... so the demands would be heard and they would see that in this corner, in this country, Mexico, there are indigenous peoples who have been abandoned for many years. (“A commandant” qtd. in Goodman and González)

This was by no means a minor incident in the history of Mexico, not only did hundreds of people die and many more were wounded but more importantly, this was the first time the Internet was used as the catalyst to unify many small and previously isolated groups under one cause. Without this tool for networking it is difficult to imagine how these different indigenous groups some living in the jungle, would have come together. In addition to uniting people within Mexico, by using the Internet EZLN was able to gain the support of a vast international community in condemning the actions of the Mexican government. In fact, the EZLN 1994 uprising has become an important moment in history for anti-capitalist movements around the globe, as *DemocracyNow* poignantly elucidated in their 10-year anniversary piece on the 1994 uprising, “EZLN has been a key reference for anti-globalization struggles around the globe” (Goodman and González). Even if today EZLN has mostly suspended the armed struggle their ideals still march forward.

The movements of the students in the late 1960s and the efforts of EZLN highlight the struggles that people are still facing in Mexico today to find a balance between a strong and stable government, and one that listens to the voices of its people. While the Mexican Revolution may be long since past, the struggle for freedom of expression and social justice in Mexico are both very pertinent today, especially since 2012 when the PRI returned to power under the leadership of president Peña Nieto. The student led movement *YoSoy132* occurred in 2012 as a reaction to the foreseeable return of the PRI and the unchanging nature of politics and education in Mexico. As will be seen later in this thesis, tensions have only continued to rise between the ruling political party and youths.

Chapter 3

Chilean Historical Context

Chile is a country with a complex history clouded by generalizations and myths. In the past, Chile has been lauded for its early transition to democracy while at the same time, condemned for inequality and corporatist policies. It is a country that has suffered a great deal of repression while at the same time Chileans have continued to strive for progress and freedom. Today Chileans, especially youths, continue to struggle for equality and for a government that represents their interests. To understand these current issues in Chile it is imperative to first unravel the truth about the past. The first step towards comprehending Chile's complicated political history is to examine the democratic legacy of Salvador Allende and the Unidad Popular (UP).

Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile in 1970 as a representative of "El Partido de la Unidad Popular" (UP). Allende and his party were not overwhelmingly popular in Chile and he narrowly won the election with the help of a coalition with the Christian Democratic Party. Salvador Allende was the first ever democratically elected Marxist leader in Latin America and held the lofty goal of transforming Chile into a socialist society "without violence ... because there are millions of people in the world who want socialism, but without having to pay the terrible price of civil war" (Winn 129). For the president, the key to making Chile socialist was to bridge the historically wide inequality gap between the rich and poor. According to an analysis of Chilean democracy by Patricio Navia, "Chile was a profoundly unequal society, in which the poorest 20 percent received 3.7 percent of national income in 1967, whereas the

richest 20 percent received 56.5 percent” (300). The only way to overcome the virulent inequality for Allende was the inclusion of all people in the political process and the termination of policies that only benefitted the wealthy. Unfortunately, to Allende’s chagrin suddenly including masses of people that had previously been excluded from resources and government decisions was much more difficult than he had envisioned. The Chilean governmental system and infrastructure were not adequately equipped to evenly distribute resources to the entire populace. As a result, when the president who had gained a virtually negligible majority in the election struggled to deliver the resources and positive economic growth he had promised, his opponents from the 1970 election seized the opportunity to remove him from power.

Allende’s list of enemies by 1973 had grown to include many members of his own party because they perceived his policies as not radical enough despite his efforts to transform Chile into a socialist nation. On the other side of the spectrum, his conservative critics thought the president was being too radical especially in regards to his economic strategies. Public opinion of Allende was further weakened as the Chilean economy suffered a stinging recession, which was in part artificially created by the wealthy in Chile who stopped producing goods to incite chaos (Moulián 93). With citizens including wives of his army generals, flooding to the streets to protest. To further exacerbate the situation, the president had in his attempts to create a socialist society, alienated himself from members of the international community. The United States took an especially firm stance against Salvador Allende because they saw his socialist ideals as a security threat. These negative sentiments intensified when the Chilean leader expropriated American copper companies in Chile in order to nationalize them and refused to offer any compensation. On September 11, 1973 the situation would come to a head the state of affairs in Chile would be dramatically shifted.

The bloodshed under General Augusto Pinochet began the day that he, with the support of President Nixon and help of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), staged a military coup. Pinochet and his accomplices took control of the army and navy and bombed radio stations and other forms of communication so that the president was completely isolated. Naively, Allende continued to refuse to believe the level of mutiny among his armed forces and that his trusted general, Pinochet, would turn against him. Even after Pinochet and his cronies gained control of the capital city, Santiago, Allende still refused to resign from the presidency. In the end, Allende took his own life remaining in La Moneda, the presidential house, as it was being bombed and attacked by a ground assault. Pinochet and his military junta, with the blessing and official recognition of the United States, were now in power.

During Pinochet's authoritarian regime thousands of people were imprisoned and tortured for being leftists and many of these prisoners disappeared and were never found. Reports state that during his reign his government killed at least 3,197 people and tortured about 29,000 (Reel, Monte and Smith). It is difficult to imagine how even an extremely troubled democratic nation could allow Pinochet to commit such horrible atrocities, and even worse, how the United States could have supported such a ruthless dictator when they were espousing the benefits of democracy to the rest of the world, but he was an intelligent man that knew how to use circumstances to his advantage. He also knew how to make use of his very powerful friend, the United States, because this friendship made him virtually untouchable both from the threat of usurpation in his country by guerrillas and from intervention by the international community.

As previously mentioned, one important asset that Pinochet possessed, at least at the offset of his leadership, was the support of the American government due to their intense fear of communism and socialism. He also benefitted from a political climate across Latin America that

avored authoritarian regimes. In fact, Pinochet was very successful in helping other authoritarian regimes to flourish vis-à-vis the program “Operation Condor” which was a coalition between Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay aimed at controlling leftist dissidents who criticized the dictatorships. Pinochet was also able to utilize one of the most engrained aspects of Chilean culture to his advantage: religion.

Catholicism has existed in Chile since the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century. The vast majority of the country still identifies with the Roman Catholic Church and while the Chilean Catholic Church did not technically endorse Pinochet’s evocation of faith as the justification for kidnapping and murdering citizens, he was still successful at marketing his deplorable actions in a religious light. Pinochet demonized the socialists and declared that they threatened the well being of a godly society. With this logic, torturing and killing innocent people was not abuse of the citizenry by a tyrannical government but instead, it was a holy crusade. Tomás Moulián makes a point to explicate this phenomenon in the section of his book *Chile actual: anatomía de un mito* about torture under Pinochet. The ironic relationship between religion and the mass torture of people is not the only odd paradigm that existed during the dictator’s leadership; there was also an interesting relationship between an oppressive government and surprisingly free market.

In order to understand neoliberalism in Chile both during the Pinochet regime and after, it is important to have a firm grasp on what the term means. Neoliberalism is defined as:

An approach to economics and social studies in which control of economic factors is shifted from the public sector to the private sector. Drawing upon principles of neoclassical economics, neoliberalism suggests that governments reduce deficit spending, limit subsidies, reform tax law to broaden the tax base, remove fixed exchange rates,

open up markets to trade by limiting protectionism, privatize state-run businesses, allow private property and back deregulation. (Investopedia)

Of course, neoliberalism was also a policy supported heavily by countries in the West like the United States, and is based upon capitalism; the opposite of the socialist dreams of Allende's Chile. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the policy would appeal to Pinochet. In his efforts to create neoliberalist policies, one of the dictator's primary concerns was to privatize what had previously been nationalized like the sizeable copper industry in Chile. The new strategy was appealing to Pinochet and his team because they believed free competition among businesses in Chile would help to combat the chronic inflation the country had been suffering from while at the same time, further proving the ineptitudes of socialist policies. The logic behind implementing increased competition and free markets in Chile from an academic standpoint is that by permitting foreign investment, the flow of foreign currencies like the dollar or pound that have a more reputable value in the international market, increases and surplus foreign currency can be stored in the national reserve. As the reserve grows, the strength of the domestic currency increases thus increasing stability and purchasing power for the country. What Pinochet could not evade even with his economic policies, was the changing of conditions in the international community including the eradication of the communist threat.

Pinochet and his economic experts known as the "Chicago Boys" were very successful at buoying the Chilean economy and by the 1980s some were referring to the change in Chile as the Chilean Miracle. The Chilean people began to expect a higher quality of life as conditions improved and Pinochet was forced to slowly include some provisions for the poor. Still, the gap between the rich and poor persisted and despite small efforts, neither the main concern of Pinochet nor the United States and other countries aiding Chile in its transition to neo-liberalism

seemed to be improving the quality of life for the working-class. For example, “Subsidies given to Chilean banks in 1983, for example, amounted to ten times the annual cost of the Pinochet regime’s emergency employment program” (Eckstein and Vickham-Crowley 135). This system was not sustainable and neither was his absolute control over the country.

Although he also was forced to create a quasi democracy, it was still a military government that boasted a biased constitution. Unfortunately for Pinochet, when the economy took a dramatic turn for the worse in 1982 he was forced by the opposition and by growing international pressure to concede more power by agreeing to an eight-year term that would end in a plebiscite. In 1989 votes were cast and despite Pinochet’s significant advantage as the sole creator of the constitution, he lost. As a result an election was held and in 1990 Patricio Aylwin a member of the “Partido Demócrata Cristiano” became president. Just as poor economic conditions had created the ideal situation for a military dictatorship in 1973, they also helped to destroy it some years later. This was a great success for Chile but the transition from a bloody authoritarian regime to a democracy was a difficult process that became increasingly complicated especially where retribution for human rights violations committed by Pinochet were concerned.

Pinochet resigned from the office of presidency under the rules of the constitution he created and he remained chief of the army under those same rules. He also had a lifelong seat at the senate. In the midst of a recession and total regime change, Aylwin had to maintain a delicate balance between bolstering the economy while at the same time promoting democracy. The most pressing issue took precedence thus at first Aylwin focused his energies on improving the economy since when he took office an overwhelming 38.7 percent of Chileans were living in poverty (Navia 302). Where Allende had failed Aylwin and predecessors in a four party coalition

known as “La Concertación” aimed to succeed. Many critics lauded the efforts of Aylwin and the others from his coalition who followed for improving the distribution of economic growth and resources across socio-economic barriers. In fact “Chilean people in poverty decreased from 38.6 percent in 1990 to 27.7 percent in 1994” (304). However, the actual extent to which their changes improved the quality of life in Chile is up for debate.

Some would argue, like Moulián that on average, rates of poverty actually increased during the nineties. This could be attributed to the fact that while the economy was growing the cost of living was rising at a very rapid rate. Thus, even if the poorer factions were making more they were not necessarily living any better. For example, the average cost for health care rose by 83.9% during Aylwin’s time in office from 1990 to 1993 (Moulián 93). In contrast, from 1974 to 1989 the fifteen years of Pinochet’s presidency, health care rose by only 66.5% (93). Similarly costs for education and the overall cost of living increased by upwards of 90 percent during Aylwin’s short term in office while they only rose by around 60 percent during Pinochet’s long-standing dictatorship (96). These conflicting stories of economic success versus a gross increase in inequality beg the question of how Aylwin and his successors could maintain popularity in testy economic conditions?

The answer offered in *Chile actual: anatomía de un mito* is that the members of “La Concertación” created an image of success by marketing their country as a thriving and worthwhile investment to the outside world. They accomplished this by showcasing their industries, taking frequent diplomatic trips to wealthy nations like the United States and Japan, and being active participants in the global community via world fairs and other avenues (98). This image was also transmitted to the Chilean people both indirectly and directly, which illustrated Chile as a model country for growth. As a result of both the real and invented

economic successes of Alywin, he was able to transition his focus from monetary issues to investigating and punishing those responsible for the deaths and torturing that had occurred during the military regime.

In order to facilitate the process of bringing these human rights violations to justice Alywin commissioned an extensive report of all the deaths and major human rights violations committed under Pinochet. The report was named “Informe Rettig” after its chairman Raúl Rettig. According to the, United States Institute of Peace “The commission’s final report documented 3,428 cases of disappearance, killing, torture and kidnapping, including short accounts of nearly all victims whose stories it heard” (“Truth Commission: Chile 90”). Two especially famous and impacting cases included in the report were of Víctor Jara, a well-known actor, director, musician and singer, and Eugenio Ruiz Tagle, a civil engineer and student leader of the Catholic University. These men were symbolic of the mass persecution of innocent people because both were young outspoken activists. It is also interesting to note that both of these young men were members of the upper class who are generally associated with the right. However, they still adequately exemplify the tension in Chile between the progressive ideals of the educated and enlightened upper class and the conservative upper class that did not want their comfortable lifestyles to be endangered by giving resources and political power to the masses (Moulián 174). That is because few things are more threatening than members of the elite class questioning the status quo. Despite the loss of these men and the staggering number of other atrocities and the poignant personal tales, it was not enough to bring swift and comprehensive justice for victims.

Before commenting of the initial limits on justice that followed the publication of the Rettig Report it is important to note that the report was the catalyst for reconciliation in Chile.

An important preliminary result of the report was an official apology on behalf of the state for the crimes by President Aylwin. This was important because it demonstrated that these deaths were no longer random “disappearances,” accidental casualties, or deserved punishments for crimes but were in fact, homicides. While blame was now officially cast, holding the man responsible for the bloodshed was very difficult. While in power Pinochet had enacted an amnesty law, Decree Law 2191, which made it impossible to convict him for his crimes in Chile. In addition, many members of the legislature remained sympathetic to Pinochet’s politics and would not support repealing the law (“Truth Commission: Chile 90”). Luckily this law was only valid within the borders of Chile and in 1998 the dictator was arrested in Great Britain. He was held there over one year until being freed and allowed back to Chile. This time, when Pinochet returned he was arrested on other charges and put under house arrest. The process continued at a stagnant pace and in 2006 Pinochet died without being convicted in any case. It is angering that such a repugnant offender could not be held accountable but Chile has continued to strengthen its democracy and improve the quality of life for its citizenry.

Three other presidents under the Concertación followed Aylwin: Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet. Frei continued much of Aylwin’s work to encourage economic growth and continue the process of privatization in Chile. He was also very successful at reducing the power of the military in Chile. At the end of his six-year term he had greatly advanced democracy in Chile and his then education minister, Ricardo Lagos, was a promising successor.

What is very remarkable about Lagos is that he was the first socialist president to come after Allende. This proved that finally the left faction of the country had made a re-emergence after many years of utter silence under Pinochet. Lagos also helped to further improve economic

conditions in Chile and made a firm stand to not block attempts to prosecute Pinochet. While his choice to take a firm stance against Pinochet was not popular with everyone in the country, he left the office in 2006 with record high approval ratings. Thus it is no surprise that another socialist candidate was able to be elected on Lagos' triumphant tail wind.

Bachelet succeeded Lagos with the impressive title of the first female president in Chile. Unlike her three male counterparts from the Concertación, Bachelet believed in participatory democracy. Shortly after coming into office though, President Bachelet had a rude awakening when the students of Chile took to the streets in a movement known as the March of the Penguins or *Revolución de los Pingüinos* to protest inequality in education, a legacy that was left from Pinochet's constitution. She was vastly unprepared to deal with a crisis of this magnitude and after what the students felt was a lack of response from what was supposed to be a "participatory democracy." The key difference between this form of democracy in comparison with the previous structure in Chile, is that the citizenry has a direct impact on legislation instead of relying solely on elected officials to represent their interests. The students wanted the quality of schools to improve and for the government to provide free transportation to students. In the end the issue the students were able to make their voices heard however, issues with the educational system in Chile persisted. This conflict shows the continued struggle in Chile for the right kind of government that allows citizens to participate while at the same time is effective in providing services.

Only time will tell where Chile's government will go from here but in order to create a brighter tomorrow the tragedies of the past cannot be forgotten. The best way to prevent another oppressive regime from gaining power is to remember how awful it was and utilize this pain as a motivator to continue progressing towards an effective democracy.

Chapter 4

#YOSOY132

There have been some very disturbing headlines in the news lately about Mexico. In September 2014, 43 students from a teachers college in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico, called Raul Isidro Burgos after staging a protest against discriminatory hiring practices. The students felt that urban hires were being favored over rural ones. During the protest police open fired into the crowd and 43 students were taken into custody. It is unclear what happened to the students after this but according to the *International Business Times*, it is believed that the students were handed over to drug cartel Guerreros Unidos after the arrests. The mayor of Iguala José Luis Abarca, and his wife have also been implicated in the kidnappings and accused of having close ties with the drug cartel. Recently a warrant for his and his wife's arrest were issued. In response to these blatant human rights violations people around the world have been making videos and uploading them to YouTube to show their support for the students (Iaccino). This current repression of students voices is reminiscent of the student led movement #YoSoy132 in 2012. This movement had roots in another governmental massacre of youths, the control of telecommunications in Mexico, and while it received mass public support, whether or not it was effective is questionable.

In May of 2006, there was a brutal encounter between the residents of San Salvador Atenco, Estado de Mexico, Mexico, and the police. It all began when members of the town helped to block the highway leading to the bordering town Texcoco as a response to the

implorations of the flower vendors who had been forcibly removed from the market in Texcoco earlier that week. The police's reaction to this act of defiance was extreme. The police attempted to take down the blockade that the citizens of Atenco had installed but were unsuccessful five times. This led to an escalation in violence and a slew of arrests. The real violence though came the next day when police raided the town, battering and even shooting individuals thought to be in charge of the prior day's disruption. In total 207 arrests were made, 2 people were killed and 26 women were raped. This occurrence was all too similar to the incident in 1968 surrounding the Olympic Games. Just as then, the government refused to acknowledge its wrong doings including then governor of the state Enrique Peña Nieto. To many people what happened that day in Atenco was a clear case of police brutality and totalitarian type government. It also exemplified the strict control Nieto and his party the PRI has over telecommunications in Mexico.

The PRI and the main source for media in Mexico, Televisa, have a long-standing relationship with one another. In fact, the precursor to Televisa, XEW, began one year after the PRI was elected into office, the first in 1930 and the latter in 1929 (Monsiváis). Since its inception, Televisa has worked closely with the party to help maintain its image in the public sphere. The company accomplishes this by reporting the facts that the party allows them to release. This kind of media control is the reason why, when one attempts to research incidents like the 1968 Olympic Games and 2006 attacks in Atenco, it is difficult to attain real facts because the government has altered them. The government of Peña also has the power to shut down cell phone reception during demonstrations and censor what people watch on the television and research online. For a democratic party, freedom of the press is sorely lacking. With these facts in mind it is surprising to find that there is a tri-party support for Televisa. The PRI, PRD

and the PAN have all expressed support for Televisa and the Azcárraga family (the owners) citing that, by keeping this historically Mexican company they have evaded a possible take-over of telecommunications by foreign companies. In addition, they have both expressed that under Azcárraga Milmo (the patriarch of the family until 1997) Televisa became more open-minded and party neutral (Monsiváis). However, while these politicians may be happy, a truly non-partisan group formed of students to protest Televisa, the PRI and the violations of rights the coalition of these two centers of power in Mexico enable.

In the spring of 2012, in anticipation of Peña's visit to the Ibero-American University (UIA), the students at this upper-class school organized a small protest by creating masks of Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Historically, these masks are worn in Mexico as a symbol of anti-neoliberalism since the ex-president, along with his cabinet, was a champion of neoliberalism during his time in office in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Similarly to Peña, Salinas had also been elected into office under suspicious circumstances. The students also resolved to question Peña about the incident in Atenco for which, as governor, he had largely been responsible. Therefore, on May 11th, 2012 when Peña came to give a speech to the students of an elite university he was very surprised to find that these students from "good families" were less than thrilled to see him. When they questioned him about Atenco he supported the government's response to the incident. The students were outraged and this only continued when on May 13th, the PRI released their own version of Peña's visit that day where all negative comments by the students were omitted (Constantini and Aviña). In response to this blatant manipulation of the media the 131 students present at the incident released their own video where they showed their university ids to exemplify that the students of this prominent university were not in support of Peña. This began the international sensation that on May 17th was officially named "*Yosoy132*."

This was symbolic meaning that every person who joined the movement was figuratively saying I am the 132nd student, standing with the original 131 who released the video.

The students organized a march for the following day from the Universidad Iberoamericana to Televisa Santa Fe and from the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), another upper-class university, to Televisa San Angel. To advertise the march and increase awareness about their cause the students utilized social media as an avenue for dispensing information. For example, a tweet from *El Globalista México*, which is an online magazine run by students from ITAM in conjunction with other universities to inspire debate and spread information about relevant social and political issues, from May 17th 2012 showed support for the movement saying, “Young Mexicans to show democratic muscle tomorrow in Mexico City.” Positive peer pressure can also be seen in the tweets from May 17th like in that of twitter user Compa Zazil Carreras who stated “#Iam132 for that reason this 18th of May, I am going to support the movement.”¹ This mix of both influential powers and everyday people demonstrating their support of the movement on social media yielded great results and solved the issue of mainstream media, which did not accurately portray the ideals of the movement or its level of public support.

Different reports cite conflicting numbers of participants in the March on May 18th, “the Economist reports 500, El Excelsior reports 250 students in front of Televisa Santa Fe” (Constantini and Aviña). Regardless the movement had gained momentum and widespread coverage on social media and according to CNN, on May 19th there were at least 46,000 demonstrators in Mexico City (Constantini and Aviña). This wave of change in Mexico would

¹ “#YoSoy132 por eso este 18 de mayo, voy a apoyar el movimiento” (All translations are mine)

continue to spread around the globe and to aid Yo Soy 132 in gaining legitimacy a manifesto was created which clearly stated the goals of the movement.

On the 26th of May 2012, a group of around 700 students and members of civil organizations gathered together in Tlateloco, which was the site of the 1968 massacre mentioned earlier, to create a manifesto for the movement and declare them in direct opposition with Peña Nieto (Constantini and Aviña). Here the discrete ties between past government collisions with youth in Mexico, and the present can be seen. It is interesting that a similar spirit of insurrection and revolt of youths from the sixties was relived in this hallowed spot. It also makes the words of the students more powerful because it demonstrates their acknowledgement of the long enduring tradition of the PRI silencing students' protests by whatever means necessary. To solidify their goals the students wrote a concise declaration to the government, the people, and the general public.

The written document created on May 26th provided a clear statement of what the movement did and did not stand for. One of the first clarifications made in the document is that it is a completely non-partisan movement and for that reason,

We promote an informed and reasoned vote. We believe that the current political circumstances, abstaining from or not voting are ineffective actions to advance the construction of our democracy. We are a movement concerned for the democratization of the country; as such, we think that a necessary condition to achieve it, it is through the democratization of the media. This concern stems from the current state of the national press and from the centralization of the media in the hands of the few (About Yo Soy 132).

However, there was some debate in Mexico as to the validity of the movements' party neutrality and four students who claimed to have been part of the movement eventually left and formed their own group called "generación mx" or Generation Mexico (Asención and Montalvo). The counter-movement, generación mx, was suspected to be created by the PRI to sully the integrity of the *YoSoy132* movement. Unlike the original movement they were not afraid to utilize mainstream media and were vocal about their dissent with the movement. According to one particularly vocal member of the new movement, Rodrigo Ocampo, "*YoSoy132* lost its essence and began to orient itself with the preferences of the leftist parties"²("Generación MX Acusa Que Ha Recibido Amenazas"). In contrast with the original movement, the youths of generación mx claimed that their movement was completely apolitical and does not "seek to attack nor support any candidate" they also state that for them "it is not a question of democratizing the media, it is of maximizing the availability media and ensuring its clarity and objectiveness so that people are well informed and can decide for themselves"³("Generación MX Acusa Que Ha Recibido Amenazas"). Members of *YoSoy132* adamantly refuted these claims and the movement never did officially recognize any one presidential candidate or make any official associations with political parties. The movement was very clear about their objectives and much more extreme in their views for the changes they wanted to see in the media.

The second major claim they state is that the movement is inclusive and does not just represent the students at UIA who began the protests, but is instead equally representative of every person who supports it ("About Yo Soy 132"). In addition to explaining who and what the

² ""Yo soy 132" se perdió y se orientó hacia preferencias de los partidos de izquierda."

³ "no se trata de democratizar los medios, se trata de maximizar la disponibilidad, información clara y objetiva para que la sociedad esté bien informada y pueda decidir."

YoSoy132 is, in June the students outlined eight distinct demands of the movement, all related to improving transparency and accurate reporting in the media to facilitate democracy. The first is for “real competition in the media sector, particularly with regard to the media duopoly of Televisa and TV Azteca” (“About Yo Soy 132”). The second demand advocates for the safety of the public and asks that all forms of media including radio, television and print incorporate “instruments to safeguard the public interest” (“About Yo Soy 132”). The third demand listed states “the various schools of communication publicly bid for their public channel’s license,” which obviously was not the case given the preference shown to the PRI by the government (“About Yo Soy 132”). The fourth demand was that “Internet be a constitutional right, under the terms established in the first article of the Mexican Constitution,” this had been a very contentious issue do to the government censorship of content on the worldwide web (“About Yo Soy 132”). The fifth debate stems from the lack of open discussion during Peña’s visit to UIA and demands that “there be spaces for debate between youth, academics, and the media about the above demands” (“About Yo Soy 132”). The final demand is perhaps the most simple and yet the most indicative of the danger the protesters felt themselves to be in by questioning the government,

We demand the safety for the members of this movement, who express themselves freely throughout the country, and for particular journalists, who have been struck by violence. Furthermore, we express absolute solidarity with the people who in recent days have been suppressed in different states of the republic for expressing their ideas. (“About Yo Soy 132”)

By ending with this statement a sense of urgency is created but also, it is a clear acknowledgement of the brutality of the Mexican government. At the end of the bulleted list, the

writers state that the most immediate action they want taken in response to their demands is for a televised debate to be hosted with all of the presidential candidates featured. From the demands one can ascertain that to the students for Mexico to improve the media must also improve. This is poignantly displayed in a photo of a girl protesting.

Figure 1 Young woman protesting with YoSoy132 Sign. Mexico City. Photo by Canal Sonora



She stares at the camera stoically and her sign reads “At age 6 I stopped believing in Santa Claus and at age 20 I stopped believing in Televisa y TV Azteca #IAM132”. This level of distrust and even malice towards the media and government is what inspired this revolution and is thus no great surprise that the students revised their request for the presidential debate to be streamed online instead of via national television. The debate eventually took place on June 19th and three out of the four candidates showed up to represent the PRD, PAN and PANAL however, the representative of the PRI, Peña, was not present. While this was a snub to the movement, the long reigning political party could not completely ignore this growing movement that had by late May sparked marches all over Mexico and even the world.

In late June, as the elections grew closer the anti-EPN (Enrique Peña Nieto) sentiments of the movement became stronger and they continued to conduct anti-Peña marches. They also hosted a large festival on in honor of the movement on June 23rd and reports said that over 50,000 people attended (Constantini and Aviña). Then on June 25th they launched the “Six days to save Mexico” initiative on YouTube which featured highlights of all of the atrocities committed while the PRI was in power including the repressions of 1968 and 1971, Acteal, Atenco, the fraud of 1988, and a section where an empty seat is shown to signify Peña’s dismissal of the June 19th debate (“Difunde #YoSoy132 Plan De "Seis Días Para Salvar a México"”). On the final day before the elections one last march was hosted called “En Vela por la Democracia” that left from Tlatelolco, through Televisa Chapultepec, and ended at the Zócalo (the main square) in front of the Palacio Nacional (where the executive power resides). Finally on the day of the elections members of the movement came to polling sites and reported to social media irregularities that they witnessed at the polls that could indicate fraud. Unfortunately, despite all of their many efforts Peña Nieto was the decided victor of the race and he ascended into the presidency on December 1st, 2012.

At first the movement tried to rally support against Peña and prove that voting fraud had caused his electoral victory. They believed that his rise to power was an imposition and not an act of democracy and held meetings to discuss strategies to prevent him taking office. They also created a video expose, which explained why they believed the elections were not fair. The students continued to host marches and held a mega march on July 22nd, 2013 where people marched in protest across Mexico and there were over 25,000 participants in the capitol city (Constantini and Aviña). While their efforts did not go unnoticed and continued to illicit support throughout the country and abroad, in August 2013 the Electoral Tribunal declared the election

of Peña valid. This caused the mission of the movement to shift since Peña was now officially sanctioned to take office.

Today the movement is still in existence and they continue to hold events and in order to fight for democracy and transparency in Mexico. In fact, they have recently supported marches and expressed their concern about the disappearances in Iguala. There is a new hash tag that has been trending that is called “yamecanse” (I am already tired) to express that people are already tired of the violence in Mexico. What they gained from their summer protests of 2012 is difficult to quantify however, according to the critics, two main accomplishments include:

(a) YoSoy132 had an impact on the campaign and election results so that no political party was able to obtain a majority in Congress and (b) put the issue of media concentration and democratization on the public agenda and helped to foster the so-called Reform of Telecom proposal made by the three largest parties (PRI, PAN and PRD) and the new federal government, in the context of a wider “Agreement for Mexico” (Pacto por México) that includes many other important reforms. (García and Treré 506)

Hence, these mass public marches not only protested the government and Televisa but also served as an example of how to protest government injustice in Mexico by taking advantage of social media.

YoSoy132 demonstrated that young people in Mexico were not apathetic as they had been characterized to be and were capable of organization on a grand scale. As the hash tag, the website, and the general following this movement created remains, it will continue to inspire change and dialogue in a country where young people have been silenced for too long.

Chapter 5

La Revolución de los Pingüinos

In the late 1980s and 1990s under the leadership of then autocratic leader, Augusto Pinochet, Chile underwent many changes in order to further privatize the economic activities of the country. During this overhaul of public to private, education was drastically changed. In Chile, a market-oriented strategy was implemented to make the quality of education received by young Chileans to be mediated by the forces of the market, instead of by the government. The control of public school administration switched from the federal government to the hands of the municipalities, and in 1980 a voucher system was instituted where both public and private schools were paid for each student's monthly attendance. According to proponents of this educational policy, the underlying goal for these changes was the facilitation of healthy competition amongst public and private schools resulting in the best schools receiving the largest amount of funding (Bellei and Cabalin). In practice however, the market-oriented approach to education has not accomplished its supposed goals. In contrast, on the whole the policy has been shown to exacerbate preexisting inequalities in education (Bellei and Cabalin). This is exactly what occurred when Chile enacted a rather stringent form of market-oriented education.

Years after the end of Pinochet's regime the educational policies he had put in place including the transformative law known as the LOCE ("Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza" 1990), were still in place. Students began to express dissatisfaction with the state of secondary education during the presidency of Ricardo Lagos to little avail thus, in 2006 with the election of Michelle Bachelet, and a promise for a participatory democracy, hopes for change in education rose. Yet, the road to educational reform would not be easy and students would fight

not once, but twice for their educational rights. The first student led movement for educational reform in Chile occurred in 2006 and was named the “*La Revolución de los Pingüinos*” or The Penguin Revolution, the second movement occurred in 2011 and was dubbed the Chilean Winter. By conducting a thorough examination of these two movements one can better understand the evolution of Chilean society and the changing expectations Chileans had of their government seventeen years after Pinochet left office.

As previously stated, Bachelet was a strong proponent of participatory government hence, with the vision of a Chile where every citizen had a direct impact on the government, coupled with an entire generation born into a world of democracy approaching the brink of adulthood, it created the perfect environment for a student based protest. The movement that would be called the Revolution of the Penguins due to the black and white uniforms of the protesting students began just two months after Bachelet came into office.

On April 24th, 2006 amidst rumors of increases for the price of student bus fares and the announcement of an increase in cost for the Chilean college admissions exam, protesters from fifteen different schools took to the streets of Santiago (Ruiz 40). The initial demands of the middle and high school students were for cheaper transportation passes and for the cost of the university admittance exam in Chile called the PSU or “Prueba de Selección,” which is similar to the SAT in the United States, to be lowered for middle and lower income bracket students. At first blush, the demands of these twelve to seventeen year olds were unimpressive to Bachelet and her Minister of Education, Martin Zilic. The young people in Chile at this time were characterized in the media and general opinion as being highly apathetic by the phrase “no estoy ni ahí,” which translates to neither here nor there (35). At the beginning of the movement, the media tended to portray the students as vandals and criminals by focusing on violence. For

example, the picture below is of a Chilean newspaper called *La Estrella de Iquique*, which says in large, bold, black font “*Vanadalismo Estudiantil*” or “Student Vanadalism.” The images are violent and give the impression that the movement is not a peaceful one.

Figure 2 Vandalism by Students. Photo by: La Estrella de Iquique Archivo



This mischaracterization is further evinced by another photograph taken of a young girl in the movement holding a sign which reads “Not terrorists, nor delinquents; Aware students.” It is clear that not only are the students cognizant of the negative opinions that have been perpetuated about the movement but they are also willing to challenge them.

Figure 3 Young Woman Protesting, Santiago. Photo by Juan Federico Holzmann



As a result of the students’ continued efforts, soon the world would find that this generalization could not be any further from the truth and that these young people would soon prove themselves to be a very determined and persistent force of change.

What began as a single protest soon evolved into a nationwide movement and students from public and private schools all over the country joined the cause. On May 19th two high schools in Santiago were overtaken and occupied by students. In the week that followed schools throughout the country followed suit and began to protest and occupy their schools. Of course, not only students joined in the effort, parents also helped and supported their children in their search for justice.

The collaborative efforts of young people and adults is evidenced in Jaime Díaz Lavanchy's documentary about the movement entitled *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* (2006) in which mothers are shown preparing meals and creating care packages for the children while they continue to occupy their schools. In the video the parents at the school express their support for their children's actions. The motivation for the parents and grandparents of the protestors to help the students is due in large part to what the Penguins' Revolution represented for them. It was a realization of true democracy and a chance for equality in opportunity in a country that had a long history of gross inequality and for a revitalization of hope for change not seen since the last democratically elected official before Pinochet's military coup Salvador Allende. These sentiments are poignantly demonstrated in the photo below. Their signs state: "Grandparents support their grandchildren"

Figure 4 Grandparents Supporting Grandchildren in March. Santiago. Photo by: Bercera and Kiko Espinoza



The support of the older generation extended beyond the students' family to concerned community members all over the nation including very influential members of Chilean society

like the Teacher's Union, oppositional political party leaders, The Association of Chilean Municipalities (ACHM), the Catholic Church and university students. As the number of supporters grew for the movement so did the students' demands.

In addition to lowering costs for bus fare and entrance exams, the students also began to ask for solutions to more long-term and complex issues in education like the end of the LOCE, that education would move from municipal control to regulation by the state, and the revision of the full school day which had been enacted by the 1994-2000 Concertación leader Eduardo Frei (Campodonico 274). In a broader sense, students wanted equality in education to increase by switching the role of the state from that of an apathetic bystander to a key player, decrease the discriminatory nature of the current system, and increase the availability of a quality education to all students.

On May 29th Zilic, finally realizing the gravity of the situation agreed to meet with the students. The students, who had now created a formal assembly called ACES or the Coordinated Assembly of Secondary Students, were more than displeased when they arrived to the meeting to find that the Minister had sent his sub-secretary in lieu of appearing himself. As a result students posted on social media platforms like Facebook and twitter calling for the largest protest yet on the following day. On May 30th approximately 250,000 occupied their schools in the nation's capitol, Santiago and 800,000 students in total showed their support by protesting and occupying their schools. In response to these massive protests Zilic and President Bachelet now finally decided to give the students the true respect they deserved.

To a large degree the students were successful in obtaining their goals including both the initial two demands, and the other more long-term proposals. The results of the students' hard work and long deliberations with Zilic were finally realized after the ACES released a statement

saying “If by June 2nd there is not a response, the schools will come to a stop and we hope it to be at a national level” (Campodonico 274). Whether Bachelet’s announcement of subsequent educational reforms was a direct result of the ultimatum or not is unclear however, on June 1st, 2006 she announced via multiple means of public media eight important new changes.

First, the beginning of the reengineering of the Ministry of Education including the separation of functions: the supervision and support of a Superintendent of education, and the design of public policies for the longer term. Second, Michelle Bachelet announced the establishment of a Presidential Advisory Commission on Education, which would work together to create a revised, consensual vision for: school curriculums, policies for the further development and training of teachers, systems of evaluation, parameters for quality, relations between the middle and high school systems and the labor market, and equity improvement and social integration measures. Third, in accordance with the students’ demands to change the antiquated LOCE, a message was sent to the Chilean National Congress about drafting constitutional reform modifying the LOCE so that all citizens would have access to a quality education and that any school, public or private, that receives state funding would no longer be allowed to reject students based upon unjustified or prejudiced means. Fourth, to incorporate legal changes to impose requirements for excellence to the public and private supporters for the services they provide. Thus, financial contributions would be linked with quality and results. The fifth announced change dealt with the students’ desire for a more centralized educational system. While Bachelet continued her support for the decentralization of education in Chile, she did call for promoting and enhancing relations between municipalities to promote new forms of administration and management of educational institutions. In addition, the sixth announcement was to increase the amount of free meals provided to students by half a million. The seventh

point addressed one of the initial concerns of the students; the government would distribute free transportation passes to students all students in Chile that would work seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day during the school year. Finally, the other catalyst for the protest was addressed and it was announced that the PSU (university admission exam) would be free for students who needed financial assistance (Campodonico 274-275).

This was an incredible victory for a group of twelve to seventeen year olds who just months before no one had taken seriously. However, the students were still not completely satisfied with the results. The final battle the students waged with the government during the Penguins' Revolution was over the newly created Presidential Advisory Commission on Education. The students felt that they should represent the majority in the commission. In the end a compromise was reached and a portion of students, about 17% of the total members was allotted. The strikes and school takeovers were finally announced to be over. The Penguins' Revolution had finished with much success and the entire world lauded the tenacity and organization of the students. From now on the way people especially youth saw their roles in national politics would never be the same. This sentiment of a change in expectations of youth of the government is adroitly expressed in an interview in the Washington Post with an education policy expert in Chile:

“I believe their greatest achievement was to change the way people think of the youth of the country,” said Rodrigo Cornejo, with the Chilean Observatory of Educational Policy at the University of Chile. “A lot of people thought the young people were simply individualistic, selfish consumers. But the long-term changes the students were pressing for this year weren't going to directly benefit them—it was for their younger brothers and sisters.” (Franklin)

In a nation now bridled with youth empowerment it is not surprising that educational changes in the university system of Chile would arise once more from the students themselves. According to NAME's documentary on the Chilean Winter Movement, *La Primavera de Chile* (2012), "until 2010 the government funded less than twenty-five percent of university level education making Chilean universities the most expensive in Latin America." Further adding to the students' frustration, not only has higher education traditionally been expensive in Chile, it is also known to be highly ineffective as evidenced by the fact that "fifty percent of students that enter higher education in Chile do not complete their degrees" (Del Campo). This combination of an antiquated, costly and flawed higher education system is the same kind of social injustice that precipitated the Penguins' Revolution. A few other important factors that served as catalysts to this new revolution that are important to consider are: the fact that students had experience with political activism and organization from the preceding movement; that the first leader from the political right, Sebastián Piñera, had been elected since Pinochet; and Piñera's discussion of fixing Chile's post-secondary educational system during his campaign. Thus, on April 28th, 2011, "8,000 university students marched in different cities across Chile" (Bellei and Cabalin 114).

The initial demands for this undertaking in contrast with the 2006 movement were based more on broad structural issues rather than specific complaints. The students were asking the government for more resources for public education and free access to universities for poor and middle class students (114). This sentiment was adroitly expressed by the charismatic leader of the movement Camila Vallejo, President of the University of Chile's Student Union, when she stated, "We do not want to improve the actual system; we want a profound change – to stop seeing education as a consumer good, to see education as a right where the state provides a

guarantee” (Franklin). It is important to note that an equally influential leader of the movement was Giorgio Jackson, President of the Student Federation of Catholic University. Soon these young leaders were able to gain a massive following and students from universities all over the country joined their efforts as did secondary students in Chile. In addition, the Chilean Winter gained the support of the Incorporated Teacher’s Union, certain workers’ unions of various labor sectors and several civil societies (Bellei and Cabalin 115). In order maintain the momentum of the revolution, the students utilized social media to promote both traditional protests like strikes and marches as seen in the Penguins’ Revolution but utilized less traditional forms of protest.

An integral key to the success of this movement was the way the students captivated the attention of the media and the public. They accomplished this by incorporating a level of shock value into their strategy. For example students organized “Kiss-ins” where they would occupy a street and kiss to draw attention to their cause:

Figure 5 Kiss In Protests. Santiago. Photo by: Fernando Nahuel/ European Pressphoto Agency



Other forms of protest aimed at eliciting the intrigue of the public include: hunger strikes, dances, and flash mobs. To further attract students and others to the cause, concerts, dances, street debates, carnivals and other protests marketed as opportunities for entertainment were employed. Clearly the students had not only learned from the successes of the last educational movement but also resolved to innovate new strategies for success. Their hard work and creativity paid off and not long after the launch of the protests governmental officials were listening to what the youths had to say.

As the popularity of the movement grew, the approval ratings for right-wing President Sebastián Piñera shrunk. In response he offered to create new scholarships for students to go to university, however, this was not the kind of vast structural change the students were seeking. Their demands grew from the aforementioned demand for free education for poor and middle class citizens, to extend to all Chileans. Thus the student leaders met directly with the Minister of Education to solve the problem and they were also invited by the Chilean Congress to discuss the 2012 national budget. These reactions are in stark contrast to the hesitance shown by Bachelet and her administration to deal directly with the protestors. Hence, the students were able to negotiate directly for changes to the post-secondary educational system.

The results of the Chilean Winter Revolution included: an increase in the number of available higher education scholarships for students, reduced student loan rates, tax reform to fund new education policies, special commissions were formed to investigate private universities pursuing illegal for-profit strategies (Bellei and Cabalin 118). While these improvements were considerable improvements in higher education in Chile they did not include everything the students had desired, similar to the results of the Penguins' Revolution. The desired free higher education for all and the end to government funding of private institutions were not realized.

However, it is arguable that the most important impacts of this movement and the one in 2006 are not necessarily the quantifiable changes in funding or in legislation but instead in the culture of Chile.

The Penguins' Revolution and the Chilean Winter re-defined many accepted norms in Chile. It proved that the youth of this country were not apathetic but, highly motivated and capable agents of change in their lives. This acceptance of the role of the citizen as a policy-maker and even more impressively young citizens, can be identified from the increase in willingness from the first revolution to the next on the side of the government to work with the students. Chilean society can also be seen to accept this new role through their support of the students throughout their protests. There is still room for improvement in the Chilean education system and now students are empowered to continue to advocate for more positive changes. The Chile of today with twelve and thirteen year olds occupying schools and masses of young people hosting kiss-ins is a far cry from the repressive society of Pinochet in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I did not comprehend the impact that history has on the present. Nor did I appreciate the interconnectedness of the human race and the effect that the actions, and even the thoughts of one individual can have on another. As the famous quote by John Donne in his poem “Meditation XVII” eloquently describes the human condition, “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” In the same way, each of these movements represents a culmination of hopes and expectations experienced over many years by millions of different people. The shared experiences and ideologies among the citizens of Mexico and similarly, among the citizens of Chile, are as much to thank for bringing these groups of young people together or arguably, even more so, than the twitter and Facebook accounts students utilized to communicate with each other and, ultimately with the global community. One such unifying element is the distinction in society as a subset of people from ages thirteen to their young twenties known as “youth.”

In the introduction of this thesis I proposed the idea of youth as a socially constructed concept, which is subject to the ever-changing norms of society. As I explained, the idea of “youth” and the role of this group in 1960 was very different than the one that people had when *YoSoy132* and *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* took place. I believe this is due to an overall ideological shift from one of revolution, hope, and urgency as Sorensen described in her book *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from the Latin American Sixties*, to one of apathy and discouragement. However, as Sorensen adroitly points out in the conclusion of her book, the visions of utopia and revolution from the sixties are not completely lost. What remains is the

memory and a sense of nostalgia for times when any dream seemed possible and within grasp.

Yet, as Sorensen posits in the final sentence of book “In the shift from its high-modernist aesthetic to the ensuing post-modern condition, the decade’s ongoing momentum keeps it before us as nostalgia or-more auspiciously- as hope” (211). This is an integral idea because the actions of the youths in Mexico and Chile demonstrate a revival of that hope that was never fully lost.

In Chile hope was for a long time, a dangerous thing. Under the ruthless dictatorship of Pinochet, to express ideas that were contradictory with the regime’s meant putting your life at risk since many people who pronounced leftist ideas were abducted and murdered. This sense of fear continued after he stepped down as the country’s leader in 1990. This could be attributed to the fact that while he was no longer formally the ruler of Chile, he was still allowed to hold onto his position as commander of the armed forces until 1998. He also assumed the role of senator for life, a right he was entitled to under a provision he had written into the constitution. Even after his death many of the laws and programs Pinochet had created were still in place. Thus, *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* was not just a movement aimed at education reform but also at eliminating some of the ghosts that remained from this terrible period in Chilean history. By abolishing the LOCE and making education more of a public good than a market commodity, the students in *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* acted in direct confrontation with Pinochet’s market oriented strategy for education, his neoliberalist ideals, and in a broader sense, with the vision of Chile he represented. The students did not stop there, later in 2011 the now college aged students fought again for their right to quality education at the university level. Some of the students from this second movement deemed the Chilean Spring including the prominent leader, Camila Vallejo, were even elected to congress. This accurately demonstrates the evolution in Chile from a place of persecuted young dissenters to one that relies on them for innovation. Of course there

are still issues in Chile including in the education system, but the future looks very bright. For Mexico, a similar revival of hope occurred though the response from lawmakers has been more stilted.

The protests of students in *YoSoy132* began in the midst of a highly contested re-election of the PRI to the presidency with candidate Enrique Peña Nieto. Similar to the archaic educational policies in Chile left by the dictatorship, the return of the PRI to power symbolized continued lack of change in Mexico. The PRI had previously led the country for over seventy years each president hand picking his successor and essentially making a mockery of a “democratic” system. However, in 2000 a member of a competing party, the PAN was finally able to win election. Unfortunately, this change in politics as usual in Mexico was short-lived with Peña’s election in 2012. Thus, in spring of that year when Peña came to speak the Universidad Iberoamericana the students demanded that the then candidate acknowledge his mishandling of the brutal attack on citizens by the government in Atenco in 2006 during his time as governor of the Estado de Mexico. Just as the students in Chile had reached a breaking point with dissatisfactory political leaders, the Mexican students were equally exasperated with the lack of change in the country. Not surprisingly, the government did not take the students seriously and instead sought to discredit them by manipulating the reports event in the media. This reaction of trying to contain and control the students by dictating the sequence of events was similar to the violent portrayals of the students at the beginning of *La Revolución de los Pingüinos* by the Chilean media. In response, the students in Mexico chose to avail themselves of the free media they possessed by posting videos to Youtube, tweeting, and posting on other social medias. Interestingly while they chose to deal more with social media than official sources, aside from their objective of preventing Peña from assuming the presidency, which they

were unable to achieve, they made their other central goal to make media in Mexico more democratic. This is a fundamental difference between the two movements because while Chilean students had the ability to slowly win over the media, the students in Mexico were fighting against them.

The control of media in Mexico is a central cause for the difference in success between the two movements. While the students in Chile were able to win over the hearts and minds of the general public by winning over the media, this was much more difficult in Mexico due to government control and censorship especially since not only does the media in Mexico benefit from the support of PRI, but it also maintains the endorsement from the opposing parties. For this reason, it is not shocking that Peña was able to become president and that little has changed in regards to media liberalization in Mexico. This is not to say that the movement accomplished nothing. It did create a platform for young people to express their concerns and to expose abuses by the state. This has become increasingly important in light of recent occurrences in Mexico like the disappearances of forty-three students from the Ayotzinapa Normal School in September of this year in Iguala, Guerrero, which were mentioned at the beginning of chapter four on the *YoSoy132* movement.

In fact not only was the hashtag 132 used to tweet support for these students and to demand justice, when one of the leaders of the movement, Sandino Bucio, was kidnapped after helping to protest the disappearances in Iguala his friends tweeted to rally support on his behalf. As a result Sandino was rescued and the police were prevented from gaining access to his Facebook and twitter accounts. This was very important since it prohibited the government from learning the names of other influential leaders in the group and kidnapping them. In this way social media was perhaps more powerful than mainstream media because it allowed students to

spread awareness about Bucio's kidnapping quickly and to a wide audience. This example gives hope that the change students in *YoSoy132* were seeking will not continue to elude even if government maintains control of other media outlets. In this way both Chile and Mexico are countries where youth have reinvigorated the sense of imminent change and infinite promise that existed in Latin America in the 1960s.

In the future social media will continue to serve as an outlet for people to exchange ideas and to learn about the lives of others which otherwise would likely have gone unnoticed. Even I have learned a great deal about the students involved in these movements by reading their tweets and looking at the comments and pictures they have posted on their Facebooks. No man is an island and this has never been more true than today in the age of information, where we exist submerged in a sea full of the thoughts and voices of people we may never meet. For this reason experience and ideology are essential because they are the catalysts to change and can now be shared with more efficiency and to a broader and more heterogeneous audience than ever before. The legacy that both of these movements leave behind is similar to that of their free spirited progenitors in the sixties, they leave future generations hope and an example of how to harness that hope and use it to effect change.

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ACADEMIC VITA

Melinda McDaniel
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Education:

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
B.A. in International Politics and Spanish, expected May 2015
Schreyer Honor's College Scholar
Paterno Fellow

Schreyer Honor's College Travel Grant Fall 2012, 2013

- Awarded to select students in the honors college that are participating in meaningful research or study opportunities abroad

Paterno Fellows Enrichment Grant Fall 2012, 2013 & Summer

2014

- Financial support from the College of the Liberal Arts awarded to select fellows toward meeting their research, study abroad, and internship goals to build an impressive portfolio of experiences

Institute for the International Education of Students, Buenos Aires, Argentina Spanish Immersion and Latin American Societies and Cultures, Winter 2013

Work Experience:

Mayor's Internship Program, Philadelphia, PA

Intern at the Office of the Managing Director Summer 2014

- Wrote talking points for the Managing Director's speaking engagements
- Assisted in recruitment efforts for hard to fill positions, including research and outreach to schools, contacting applicants and conducting interviews with potential candidates
- Analyzed and organized public applications for compliance with government regulations
- Performed extensive work with Microsoft Office Word and Excel, including the compilation of a record of feedback for the project management training program
- Conducted grassroots outreach campaigns in economically depressed neighborhoods to spread awareness about the Free Summer Meals program
- Presented the final project for the Free Summer Meals research team to the Mayor's executive board
- Participated in educational, civic and cultural city-wide programs

Ronald McDonald House, Buenos Aires, Argentina July-November

2013

Spanish Speaking Intern

- Served as an outlet outside of the children's immediate family for them to express their emotions and thoughts to another caring adult

- Adapted and created opportunities for fun and learning for families at the house through songs, games and activities

2012 Berks County Commissioner's Office, Reading, Pennsylvania Summer

Intern to the Commissioner

- Wrote speeches for the Commissioner's speaking engagements
- Researched and developed a plan for Berks County to become a bike friendly county

2011 Speaker of the House of Representatives, Harrisburg, PA Summer

Legislative Intern

- Communicated with community leaders about events and local attractions
- Integrated an array of cultural and political events to create an enriching experience for visiting diplomats

Academic Activities:

Present Penn State Nittany Greyhounds

Vice President

- Oversee volunteer project trajectories to ensure active membership at events
- Analyze club participation to identify trends in club satisfaction, engagement and productivity

Present Global Water Brigades 2011-

Social Chair and Member

- Global Water Brigades is a student powered NGO that works to create sustainable solutions to water and public health related issues
- Traveled to Ghana and Honduras to help construct rain water collection systems
- Facilitated networking among environmentally conscious youth

2014 Pennsylvania State University Literacy Program Spring

Adult-Learning Tutor

- Aided adult learners in improving basic language and computation skills
- Facilitated the growth of English language skills for ESL students

Language Partners Program Fall 2013
Member

- Engaged with Spanish speaking students to improve language skills
- Enriched understanding of Argentine culture