

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND
POVERTY REDUCTION IN
LATIN AMERICAN AND
THE CARIBBEAN

ESTANISLAO GACITÚA
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POVERTY REDUCTION IN
LATIN AMERICAN AND
THE CARIBBEAN



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YOUTH AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN CHILE

CAROLINA TOHÁ MORALES

INTRODUCTION

The use of the social exclusion approach in Latin America responds to a search for a better and more comprehensive prism for analyzing and addressing the problems of social inequality. The income-based poverty framework does not fully account for the heterogeneity and dynamics of all factors that contribute to the generation of social inequality, and does not permit us to understand the processes that reproduce and perpetuate this situation.

To measure poverty, a poverty line (income level) sufficient to acquire or meet a basket of basic needs is set for a family in a per capita basis. Those families who fall below this set income level are considered poor. There is a great awareness that the concept of poverty is too narrow to fully understand the complexity of the factors causing poverty. For example, the income-based approach does not explain why an increase in income may only result in a transitory improvement in the standard of living but not permanently moving out of poverty. Neither explains why certain social groups are not able to take advantage of existing social programs to improve their income levels and standards of living, while others are able to do it. Nor does it entail an understanding of the different dimensions (material and non-material) that cause poverty or that may help overcome it.

To address these limitations of the income-based concept of poverty, some alternatives have been devised, such as differentiating types of poor¹ that also respond in different ways to social policies. An alternative is to use a wider approach, such as the social exclusion framework. With this

1. For example differentiating between rural and urban poverty, or between poverty and extreme poverty or indigence, which refers to a situation of deprivation much more extreme. In the latter the opportunities for economic improvement and social insertion (education, work, social and political participation) are severely restricted.

approach, the emphasis is not based exclusively on income-based poverty, but in the relation between different factors, including social, economic and cultural.

In this chapter, the social exclusion framework is used to analyze the situation of youth in Chile. Since this is a relatively new concept, there are some important nuances in the use of the concept. Therefore, this chapter starts by establishing the conceptual and methodological implications of the social exclusion approach for the case of youth in Chile.

The relationship between the concepts of poverty and social exclusion can be understood in different ways. Following the ILO² studies, social exclusion can be understood as being part of the concept of poverty. In that view someone who has neither access to certain basic good (traditional concept of poverty), nor opportunities for social or economic participation (social exclusion) would be considered poor. Social exclusion could also be understood as different concept based on other indicators. In the middle, there is also a third option that views social exclusion as a broader framework to understand poverty, which would include other dimensions along the economic one. This perspective will be applied in this study. From this point of view, social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept, which involves economic, political, social and cultural elements. It is also a dynamic concept, which allows observation of these variables as processes.

In this paper, social exclusion refers to the impediments faced by a social group to have equal access to the markets and fully participate in society, acquiring full citizenship. Based on this definition, this study will consider the following factors as contributing to social exclusion:

- Weak participation in economic, social and political processes.
- Little influence in policy and decision-making.
- Failure to take advantage of existing mechanisms for social insertion.
- Failure to meet basic consumption, or the constant risk of becoming poor.

The concept of youth refers to an age range that has been standardized. In the Chilean context, youth has been defined as the population between ages 15 to 29. It is important to note that the United Nations uses a narrower age range, which only extends to 24 years old. This paper follows the definition commonly accepted in Chile and, when needed, the age range will be subdivided in different sub-groups.

2. International Labour Organization, "Social exclusion and anti-poverty strategies," Geneva, 1996.

From a qualitative perspective the definition of the term youth turns out to be very complex because it varies considerably from one society to another and in different historic periods. In general, youth could be defined as a stage that extends from adolescence and the initiation of sexual activities (end of childhood) to the stage in which the individual establishes a family and fully participates in the labor market and society. This definition, however, is highly vague, especially in defining the end of youth. Currently, in Chile, a person under the age of 30 could be classified as a youth even though he/she has a family and a stable job.

About 20 percent of the Chilean population is made up of population under age 30. As shown in table 1, this percentage has slightly decreased over the last 10 years:

Table 1
Total Population in Terms of Percentages
(1989 -1993-1997)*

	1989	%	1993	%	1997	%
Total Population	12.882.818	100,0	13.771.187	100,0	14.622.354	100,0
Population under age 15	4.640.057	36,0	4.819.867	35,0	4.995.154	34,2
Population between ages 15-29	2.936.937	22,8	2.950.203	21,4	2.925.868	20,0
Population between ages 29-65 and over.	5.305.824	41,2	6.001.117	43,6	6.701.332	45,8

* Prepared by the author based on data issued by the National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas).

Addressing the problems of social exclusion and youth together lends a special connotation to both terms. Social integration for youths is not synonymous with total insertion in the work force and political, social or cultural life. Instead, it is the smooth transition from a situation of dependence on the family – with all that this encompasses – to one of independence, a typical characteristic of adult life. During this process young people enter into various new situations, markets, institutions, roles, experiences, legal, cultural and social arrangements. In the case of the youth, social exclusion implies the inability to develop and complete the passage in all these dimensions, which are key components of future adult life. Incomplete education, informal and precarious insertion in the labor force, along with

an identity established from a marginal position or fragmented standpoint in society, have definite effects on the future possibilities for the successful social integration of the youth.

At the same time, the youth go through specific experiences unique to this stage, which have nothing to do with transiting to the adult stage, but simply respond to the way in which youth organize reality. In this sphere, situations of social exclusion may appear that not only affect future personal development, but also could impede or limit the possibility of being a youth.

The study of social exclusion and youth in the Chilean context is of especial significance due to the changes that have recently taken place in Chile. Economic growth, modernization, and the transition to democracy could represent a very favorable context for improving social equity and social inclusion of the youth. In particular, it could represent the optimal context for younger generations to make their transition to adult life with unlimited possibilities of social integration, not only from the material point of view, but also in other dimensions. This paper explores if the social and economic changes experienced in Chile have facilitated the social integration of the youth, and, if so, how and why this occurred.

The first section of this chapter analyzes three dimensions which are considered to be important in relation to the likelihood of social integration or exclusion of the youth: (i) the socio-economic, (ii) political and (iii) cultural conditions. Regarding socio-economic characteristics, the analysis focuses on educational and labor force participation variables. Issues regarding schooling, quality of education and opportunities for higher education, labor force participation, unemployment, and quality of employment are discussed. In the political sphere, electoral behavior and social participation of the youth are analyzed. Also, their opinions regarding political life and the conditions under which they are bestowed with the rights of full citizenship are discussed. On the cultural subject, self-perception issues and some key cultural constructions of the youth are discussed.

In the second section, specific policy instruments aimed at fostering youth social inclusion in Chilean society are analyzed. Special attention is given to job training and educational policies.

Finally, in the concluding section, the main causes of social exclusion among youth are integrated into a model that it is used to assess the pertinence of the public policies developed by the government after the return to democracy. Based on the above policy recommendations are suggested.

PART ONE
INTEGRATION AND EXCLUSION
OF YOUTH IN CHILE

Socio-Economic Dimension

Over the last ten years there has been an important decrease in poverty in Chile. In 1990, 12.9% of the young population was indigent and 25.7% was poor. For 1996, these figures had decreased to 5.4% and 16.6%, respectively.³ These figures could lead to an optimistic analysis of the situation if not for the existence of a significant disparity between high and low income sectors. This implies that despite the reduction in poverty experienced, there are barriers, particularly in the educational system and labor markets, which prevent the social integration of the poorest segments of the young population.

Education

There is a very wide conviction among academics, politicians and the public opinion that education is the main channel for social mobility and social integration in today's world. The Frei administration (1994-2000) emphasized education as one of the government's main priorities, making educational reforms a principal initiative along with judicial reforms. Nevertheless, analyzing the educational situation of Chilean youth through the social exclusion prism, a gray reality characterized by high disparities in levels of schooling, the quality of education and, educational performance emerges.

Schooling

According to the CASEN Survey of 1996 the average years of schooling of Chilean youth (between ages 15 to 29) is 10.8 years. This represents an

3. CASEN Survey 1996.

increase of 0.6 years from 1990, when schooling was 10.2 years. These levels of schooling are very high compared with those of several other countries in the region, and even compared to the older generations within the country. In fact, the population in the age range of 65 to 74 has only six years of schooling on average. That is, in fifty years the average years of schooling in Chile almost doubled.

Despite the significant increase in schooling, a more detailed analysis reveals that there are significant disparities behind these figures. Youngsters 15 to 29 years old from the highest income level have 50% more schooling than those from the lowest income level (13.3 and 8.9 years respectively, according to the CASEN Survey of 1996).

The reasons for this disparity are many. On the one hand, social groups with fewer resources usually tend to face problems in academic achievement, which diminish their desire to continue studying. In fact, students who attend public high schools, 50.9% of whom are from low-income families, require an average of 5.9 years to complete the four years of high school,⁴ while students in private schools take an average of only 4.4 years.⁵ This indicates a higher repetition rate among lower income sectors, and it would be even higher if only the poorest quintiles were to be considered. It is also important to highlight that for this sector, continuing studying has a major opportunity cost due to the alternative of working and providing an additional income to the household, which is key for poor families. Lastly, the third reason refers to the difficulty of entering higher education, whether due to the imposition of economic or academic barriers.

4. High school is synonymous with intermediate education, which refers to the final four years of basic education.

5. Institutional Project INJUV (National Institute for Youth) 1999, data from 1996.

Table 2**Average Schooling of Population 15 Years Old
or More by Income Sector 1996.**

Age Groups	INCOME QUINTILES					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
15-24 years	9.1	10.0	10.7	11.5	12.7	10.7
25-34 years	8.2	9.6	10.9	12.2	14.4	10.9
35-44 years	7.3	8.7	9.8	11.3	13.6	10.0
45-54 years	5.5	6.3	7.9	9.1	12.2	8.5
55-64 years	4.2	4.8	6.1	7.5	10.9	6.9
65 a 74 years	3.4	4.1	5.1	6.9	9.9	6.0
75 and over	3.0	3.5	4.1	6.3	10.1	5.5

Source: CASEN Survey-MIDEPLAN.

Beyond these disparities, nevertheless, the tendency has been toward increasing schooling within all sectors. Table 2 indicates that over time the increase in schooling has especially benefited the poorest fifth of the population. In fact, youth in the 15 to 24 age group have three times more years of study than individuals over 74 within the same income sector. Meanwhile, the richest sector has only experienced a 20 percent increase in the number of years studied within this same time frame. This is due to the sustained increase of retention in primary and intermediate education, which has particularly benefited the lower income sectors.

Quality of Education

Despite the high levels of basic and intermediate education achieved, disparities have begun to appear in other ways: (i) differences in the quality of education and (ii) differences in the access to the higher education. These disparities are shown (see Table 3) by the results of the standardized test for measuring the quality of education, (Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación, SIMCE), which reveals that, even though there have been improvements during the last years, there is still great inequality between private and public schools.

Table 3

**SIMCE Eighth Grade Mathematics, 1997
National-Results and Dependence on the Establishment**

Establishment	APCA*
Public	59.49
Semi-private Subsidized	65.37
Private Paid	80.86

* Average points of correct answers.

Similarly, the educational disparities can be shown by comparing the results of the SIMCE test (Table 4) according to the economical situation of the families:

Table 4

**Results in Spanish and Mathematics
SIMCE Evaluation According to Socio-economic Level**

APCA**	Socio-economic Level*			
	A	B	C	D
Mathematics	85.06	75.51	67.67	61.15
Spanish	85.67	76.73	68.16	60.62

* The categories A, B, C, D, correspond to the socio-economic level, according to the amount invested by the family on education costs. A corresponds to the upper 25 percent.

** Average points of correct answers.

School Dropout Rate

Another major source of educational disparity is generated by differential access to intermediate and higher education. Table 5 shows that the level of coverage of primary education is very high in all social-economic levels. However, significant differences are found in intermediate and higher education levels.

Table 5**Coverage According to Educational and Income Level**

Educational Level	Income Quintiles				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Pre-school	22.3	26.8	30.0	36.8	48.4
Primary	96.5	98.4	98.0	99.4	99.7
High School	75.3	81.0	89.3	95.3	97.2
Higher Education	8.5	15.1	21.5	34.7	59.7

Source: CASEN Survey 1996.

Existing data indicate that the dropout rate in high school is about 15%.⁶ This means that more than 140,000 young people between the ages of 14 and 17 are not in the educational system. Their studies are interrupted due to socio-economic problems (46.75%), and learning difficulties (25.89%)⁷ which tend to be connected to the former. While this dropout rate is not very high compared with other countries, it is worrisome considering the implications it has for the future of low-income youth. Since Chile has high and increasing levels of schooling, it is evident that, in the future, people who have not completed their school will become increasingly socially handicapped. In fact, 94.5% of youths in the penal system are school dropouts,⁸ and 60% of unemployed youths between ages 15 and 19 are also dropouts.⁹ These figures suggest a circular causality between dropouts and social isolation. In fact, dropping out of school represents a factor of isolation and vulnerability that increases the risk unemployment and delinquency and at the same time socioeconomic and social vulnerability increases the risk of dropping out of school.

6. Elaboration based on CASEN bulletin and Statistical Bulletin of the INE. Observe the relation between youths between 14 and 17 years old who are not in school and the total population of this age group.

7. CASEN Survey 1996.

8. INJUV, "Jóvenes reclusos: realidad, derechos, mejoramiento de su situación y perspectivas de rehabilitación" 1999.

9. "Desempleo Juvenil: Caracterización y propuestas para la política pública." Ministerio de Economía, November 1996.

Access to Higher Education

Regarding access to higher education, the opportunities for a majority of accessing it are very slim (see Table 6). Higher education has experienced an important growth, but low-income sectors have not benefited most from this expansion. According to the CASENSurvey, low-income youth increased their access to higher education from 7% to 8.5% between 1990 and 1996. Meanwhile, high-income youth advanced from 37.2% to 59.75, which is significantly higher.

The segmentation of the educational system (public/private) also has a strong influence on the differential opportunities of students to obtain higher education. Existing data indicates that the possibility of accessing higher education greatly depends on the type of educational institution as well as being directly influenced by the social and economic situation of the family. Table 6 shows that only 18% of the students who completed high school in public institutions – who are the majority and come from lower income families – have access to higher education. Contrarily, 47.9% of students from private schools (most of them from the top income quintiles), representing only 14.8% of the total, continue higher education.

Table 6

Academic Destiny of Youths Who Complete Intermediate Education According to Administrative Dependency of the Establishments*

Level of Schooling	Administrative Dependence			
	Public	Semi -Private	Private	Total
No Studies	72.4	65.1	39.4	65.7
Higher Education	18.0	21.9	47.9	23.4
Technical Education	9.6	13.1	12.8	10.9
Type of Establishment	57.3	26.9	14.8	100

* Second National Survey on Youth, National Institute for Youth (Encuesta Nacional de Juventud, Instituto Nacional de la Juventud).

In spite of these differences, it is important to highlight that students from public schools represent more than the half of all university students, due to the fact that they are more numerous.

Another relevant characteristic of the higher education system in Chile is the weakness and little coverage of technical and vocational training, which could be an important option for many young people who do not enter the university. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, of the 370,000 vacancies for students in the higher education system, about 259,000 correspond to universities, and only 110,000 correspond to technical and professional programs. Furthermore, students in technical and vocational education are not eligible for receiving financial aid (student credits), and there is no certification and control of these programs, making their prestige and quality highly questionable and, therefore, less attractive to prospective students.

In conclusion, while all quintiles have increased their school attainment and the gap in basic education (grades 1 to 8) between the first and second quintiles has been shortened, the differences between quintiles in the case of middle (grades 9 to 12) and higher education have increased significantly. Table 1 in the annex summarizes some key indicators regarding the Chilean educational system and the alternatives that young people from different income levels have after finishing basic, high school and higher education. The data indicates that while schooling increases and the opportunity for accessing higher education are better, the sharp differences in the quality of the education between private and public schools together with access barriers, give rise to processes of exclusion that clearly affect the poorest students. As a consequence, education opens important opportunities for many young people, but it is far from being an equally accessible tool for social mobility. On the contrary, it tends to reproduce and even compound the social disparities of Chilean society.

Labor Force Participation

Economic Activities of the Youth

Labor force participation can be an important mechanism for social inclusion, since it gives greater independence by allowing young people to broaden their spheres of responsibility and social participation. Nevertheless, existing data suggests that most young people encounter many difficulties in entering the work force, especially the poorest, the youngest and

females. When they find employment, the jobs are precarious and have low salaries. Employers tend to have preconceptions – partly having to do with social stigmas – associated to poor and marginal youth – that predispose them negatively for hiring youngsters. The outcome is a very hostile labor market, and, given the limited educational background of poor and marginal youth, it represents a clear situation of socio-economic exclusion for the poorest segments.

Data regarding the type of activities in which young people are engaged (Table 7), indicates that 40.1% of them work; this figure nears 52.4% among males.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the percentage of young people who both study and work is very low (2.7%), especially among the lowest income quintiles, where there should be a greater need to combine these activities. Furthermore, part-time jobs are scarce, and they're no employment and/or education regulations to support or facilitate the combination of education and work. Differences in education between women and men are minor in all income sectors. However, they are significant differences regarding participation in the labor force, especially in the first income bracket where the entry of men is four times that of women, and in the second bracket, where this is widely duplicated.

A high percentage of young women (27.7%) only have household responsibilities. Nevertheless, there are significant differences on the main economic activities of young women by quintile. The incidence of household work among young women from the first income bracket is five times greater than that of the fifth income bracket (45.9% *versus* 8.6%). At the same time there is a large discrepancy in the percentage of women with paid work between the different income quintiles. It rises from 11.6% in the first quintile to 40.9% in the fifth quintile, indicating greater possibilities of obtaining work for young women from high-income households.

The fact that young women from lower income levels have less access to the labor market is worrisome. Overcoming poverty is conditioned in great measure by the possibility of having a second household income. Women, particularly mothers, play a fundamental role as second wage earners. At the same time, schooling among women is nearly as high as that of men, especially in low-income sectors. Therefore, the fact that these women cannot get jobs reflects a loss of resources for society in addition to creating frustration for young women.

10. This data is from the 1996 CASEN Survey, but, according to the Second Youth Survey of 1997, this figure is only 30 percent. The CASEN figure was preferred because it is based on a larger sample.

Table 7
Population Between Ages 15 and 29, According to Income,
Gender and Type of Activity (%)

Gender	Type of Activity	Income Quintile					Total
		I	II	III	IV	V	
Male	Only Study	31.0	29.0	31.2	34.0	45.4	33.7
	Only Work	45.5	56.9	57.0	56.3	44.3	52.4
	Study and Work	1.1	2.3	2.9	5.1	5.2	3.2
	Domestic Work	2.4	1.3	0.6	0.1	0.2	1.0
	Neither Study nor Work	20.1	10.5	8.2	4.5	4.9	9.7
	Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female	Only Study	29.1	30.5	31.9	37.2	40.8	33.3
	Only Work	11.6	21.9	33.0	37.8	40.9	27.6
	Study and work	0.3	1.0	2.0	3.4	4.8	2.1
	Domestic Work	45.9	35.4	23.7	15.9	8.6	27.7
	Neither Study nor Work	13.1	11.2	9.4	5.7	4.9	9.3
	Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	Only Study	30.0	29.7	31.6	35.5	43.2	35.5
	Only Work	27.3	39.0	45.7	47.3	42.7	40.1
	Study and Work	0.7	1.6	2.5	4.3	5.0	2.7
	Domestic Work	25.8	18.8	11.5	7.8	4.2	14.3
	Neither Study nor Work	16.3	10.8	8.7	5.1	4.9	9.5
	Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Indoor domestic services and helpers are excluded.
Source: Mideplan, CASEN survey 1996.

One factor that holds back women's entrance into the labor market is the high rate of adolescent pregnancies among low-income women. Existing data indicates that among high-income households, women have children after the age 24 in 95% of the cases. Meanwhile, in low-income households, more than half of the children are born to mothers under 20 years old.¹¹

In the case of men, there is a relatively high percentage (20.1%) of low-income men (I quintile) who do not work or study. At the same time, for high income young men (V quintile) that figure are only 4.9%. It is important also to note that the percentage of employed men in the first and

11. "Desempleo Juvenil: Caracterización y propuestas para la política pública." Ministerio de Economía, 1996.

fifth quintiles is below the total average for all income groups. This could be explained by the fact that in the wealthiest sector entrance into the labor force is delayed (due to higher educational enrollment), while in the poorest sector, there is a higher unemployment rate and there is a significant number of young men neither searching for a job nor doing informal work or any other economic activity.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates in Chile had been very low during recent years, oscillating between 4.5 and 7.5 percent.¹² However, the unemployment rate for 1999 has been higher as a consequence of the adjustment required to offset the Asian crisis, reaching 9.8 percent in the second trimester of 1999.¹³

Table 8
National Percentage of Youth Unemployment:
1989-1997*

Year	Trimester	Youth Unemployment	National Unemployment
1989	Oct-Dec. 1989	13.2	5.3
1991	Oct-Dec. 1991	12.7	5.3
1993	Oct-Dec. 1993	10.95	4.5
1995	Oct-Dec. 1995	11.5	4.7
1997	Oct-Dec. 1997	12.97	5.3

* Source INE, National Survey of Employment (Encuesta Nacional de Empleo).

Nevertheless, unemployment among the youth doubles and even triples the average national unemployment rates at any time. This tendency has been a constant factor during recent years (see Table 8). Although higher, youth unemployment follows the national unemployment trend, always keeping a similar ratio (see Graphic 1 in the Annex). These phenomena would indicate that there is not a specific labor market for the youth.¹⁴

12. All of the unemployment figures presented here are derived from the National Employment Survey conducted each trimester in Chile. When comparisons are made, they are made between corresponding trimesters of different years.

13. National Employment Survey, March-May, 1999, INE.

14. See Patricio Escobar, "Desempleo Juvenil una aproximación al problema," Reporte Anual

Rather, the youth participates in the same labor market where adults and trained employees are preferred.

What are the reason for the deferral of youth employment and the response to it in cases where there are equal job offerings for young people and adults? There are three important reasons that explain these phenomena.¹⁵

First, the preconceptions that adults have regarding the relevance (quality and appropriateness) of the formal education received by the youth need to be considered. Employers think that the training provided by the school system is insufficient and inadequate to perform satisfactorily in the workplace. Therefore, they prefer hiring older workers with additional skills, meaning workers with job training and/or job experience.

Second, there is the problem of certification and standardization of vocational and technical training. First, despite the greater access to high school education, employers do not consider all to be of the same quality. Similarly, in the case of the technical education and training, since there is no official certification process (and, if there is, it lacks credibility in the market), employers do not trust the quality of it and question the value of existing certifications.

Also, as we shall see in the section on cultural aspects of youth and exclusion, Chilean society in general, and employers in particular, have prejudicial opinions toward youth culture, especially among the poorest sectors, which leads them to prefer workers either from other income segments or already proven in the work place.

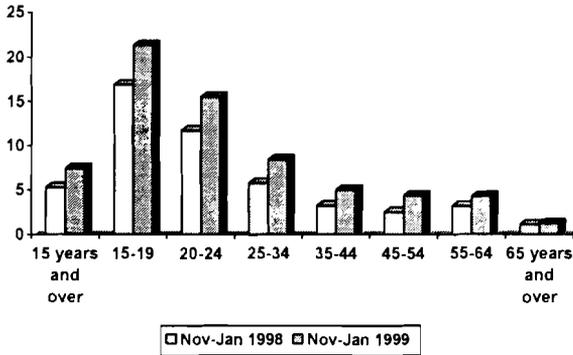
The analysis of unemployment rates according to age group indicates that the rates co-vary with age (see Graphic 1).

No. 8, Programa de Economía del Trabajo, 1998.

15. Julio Salas, "Pertinencia y coordinación de la acción gubernamental dirigida a la integración productiva de los jóvenes", 1999.

Graphic 1

Comparative Unemployment Rates by Age Group
Trimester of November-January, 1996-1999*



* Source: Prepared by the author based on the Employment Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Empleo).

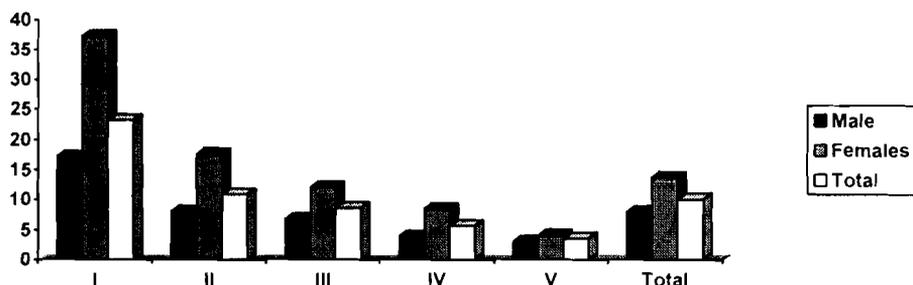
The data indicates that there has been an increase in unemployment over the last year, particularly among the youth. The National Employment Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Empleo) of April 1999 revealed that youth unemployment reached 20.4% for the 15 to 19 age group, whereas the year before, on the same date, it was only 15.9 percent. Furthermore, unemployment mainly affects low-income youth as Graph 2 indicates

Low-income youth, particularly women, suffer higher unemployment rates than other group. In 1996, average unemployment rate for the first income quintile was 25%, while for women reached 40%. Unemployment among women doubles that of men in almost all income quintiles. Women from the first income quintile experienced five times the unemployment rate of women from the fifth income quintile. This implies that unemployment is at the same time reflecting and widening the difference in opportunities that the youth, particularly women, is experiencing.

Most unemployed youth have incomplete schooling. According to the 1996 data,¹⁶ 61% of people aged 15 to 19 did not complete high school and dropped out of the educational system. In the 20 to 24 age group 43% did

16. "Desempleo Juvenil: Caracterización y propuestas para la política pública" Ministerio de Economía 1996.

Graphic 2
Unemployment Rates for Population Ages 15-29
by Income Quintile*



* Source MIDEPLAN, CASEN Survey, 1996; prepared by Salas, Julio. "Pertinence and Coordination of the General Government Direction of the Integration of Youth Production."

not finish school. There is a close relationship between dropping out of school and unemployment among the younger age groups. However, public policies or programs have not dealt with this issue adequately.

Quality of Employment

Quality of employment is equally significant than unemployment in generating social exclusion. In the past it could be said that unemployment in Chile was one of the main factors contributing to social exclusion and poverty. However, by 1996 more than the 80% of the poor had employment,¹⁷ which would mean that the social integration does not completely depend as much on employment but on the quality of it.

From this perspective, the situation of young workers is unfavorable because their working conditions are worse than the rest of the workers from other age groups. Participation in the labor market and ties with the work

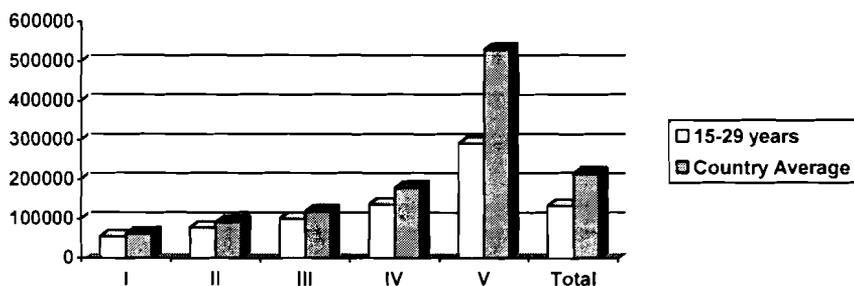
17. CASEN Survey, 1996.

place are weaker among the youth, particularly within the younger groups and within the lowest socio-economic sector. For these, informal work and self-employed, which are the most precarious, represent more than 60 percent of the total employment of the sector.¹⁸

Regarding wages (see graphic 3), existing data indicates that in general young workers from all income quintiles have average wages below that the average for the quintile. However, as expected, the wage gap is much higher for the high-income group (V quintile), as there are more possibilities for improving the income throughout the working years. Contrarily, for the lowest income group, upward wage mobility is almost null, as the workers tend to receive similarly low wages for the rest of their working life.

Graphic 3

Average Income of the Different Income Sectors - 1996



Source: MIDEPLAN, CASEN survey 1996; Prepared by Salas, Julio. "Pertinence and Coordination of the General Government Direction of the Integration of Youth Production," 1999. *Ad. lib.

The limited wage mobility affecting the poorest sector becomes a counter-incentive for young workers to seek and take stable jobs, as they do not see these jobs as a career opportunity that would result in higher wages and improvement of their status and living conditions. On the contrary,

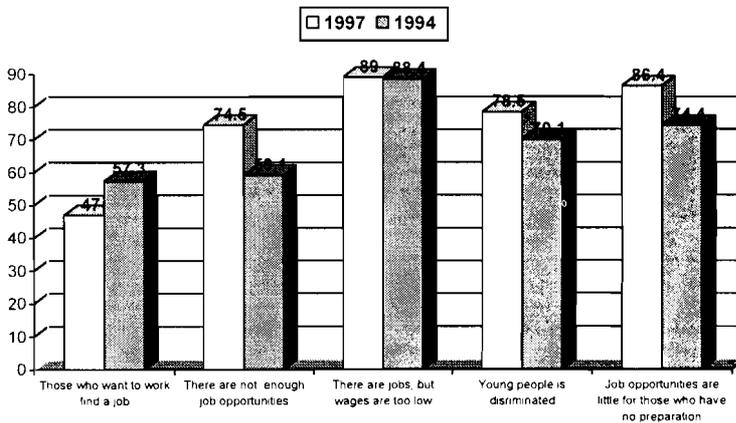
18. Second National Youth Survey.

young people compare their salaries to that of their parents and see that they are just about the same after many years of hard work.

The Second National Youth Survey (Segunda Encuesta Nacional de la Juventud, 1997) asked youth their opinion regarding work opportunities and compared the result with that of 1994 (see Graphic 4). Both years, a similar number of the interviewees indicated that there were jobs, but the salaries were too low. Regarding the importance of training and educational level, a higher percentage of the interviewees indicated that jobs opportunities increased for those who had better training/education. This reveals that youths, in spite of the limitations they have to face upon entering the work force, think that job opportunities increase with an adequate educational background. However, the survey also showed an increase on those who believed that there is labor market discrimination towards young people.

Graphic 4

Youth Opinions about Work Opportunities



Source: First and Second National Survey of Youth, 1994 and 1997.

Political Aspects

Youths played an important role against the military dictatorship and the return to democracy ten years ago. As a result, the leadership of the student movement and other youth organizations became an integral part of the political elite. Paradoxically, after returning to democracy, political participation of the youth has decreased systematically over time.

Under the authoritarian regime during the 80's in Chile all freedoms were suspended or severely limited. Civil rights and political participation were restricted for all social sectors. Nevertheless, within that framework, the youth had more influence in the political life of the country than they do today. Their participation was basically channeled through political and student organizations, as well as neighborhood and church groups, particularly among the youth from shantytowns and poor suburbs.

Beyond their active and decisive participation in the pro-democracy movement of the 80's, the youth were a key element for organizing, controlling and, finally winning the 1988 plebiscite which marked the end of the regime and the beginning of the democratization of the country. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that even though during the regime the youth did not have political rights and had no participation in the making of government policies which affected them, they were politically relevant, they were heard and, most of all, had the capacity to influence the course of the political events of that period.

After a decade, the situation today is quite different. There has been a substantial improvement in civil liberties. Democratic institutions and political rights are fully respected. Nevertheless, in comparison the youth is less influential in the political life of the country than it was during the regime. It could be argued that this situation is both the result of their own choices and interests as well as of institutional constraints that limit their participation. However, this situation is particularly grave among the low-income youth who lack the power to be heard by the rest of the society.

Registered Voters and Voting Rights

In democratic systems, the most common vehicle for political participation is the right to vote. In Chile, citizens age 18 and older have the right to and must vote after being registered. In 1988, in preparation to the plebiscite, a new electoral register was open. At that time 96% of the youth

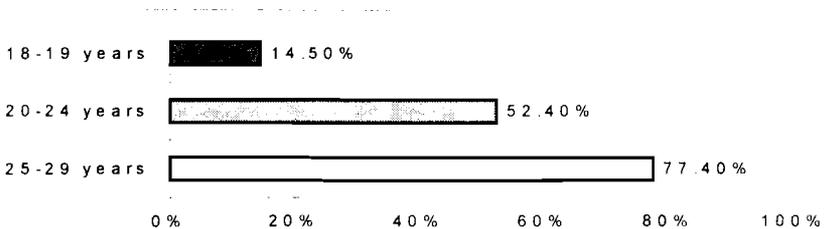
registered to vote. In 1999 however, less than the 55% of the youth is registered to vote.

Table 9
Population Registered to Vote 1989/1993/1997
(Totals and Percentages)

Age Group 18-29	1989		1993		1997	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total Population	2.821.314	100	2.954.452	100	2.924.429	100
Registered	2.719.957	96.40	2.310.818	78.21	1.605.011	54.88
Not registered	101.357	3.60	643.634	21.79	1.319.418	45.22

The data from this table reveals that during the last 10 years, young people have lost interest in registering and participating in the electoral process in a substantially and accelerated pace. Graphic 5 shows this tendency even more clearly by disaggregating the age data.

Graphic 6
Percentage of Youth Registered by Age Segment, 1997*



* Second National Youth Survey.

The characteristics of the Chilean electoral register system partly explain the low registration rate among the youth. On the one hand, registering is optional. However, once registered voting is mandatory for all registered citizens and there is no option of getting off of the register. On the other hand, those who do not register are free of this obligation; yet, they cannot exercise their right to vote.

Another reason that keeps young people from registering is the unfriendly work schedule of the electoral offices, which discourages registration. Ordinary working hours of these offices are only one week per month from 9:00 a. m. to noon. This schedule is almost totally incompatible with studying and working hours. Additionally, the registration period closes four months before elections, which is precisely the time when more interest in registering could develop. Finally, there are no other alternatives or services in order to facilitate the registration of young people, whereas this type of services exists for other areas of civil services (such as in the case of the required registration for the military service). In summary, the system does not facilitate registration, resulting in low voter registration among the youth.

Relationship with Politics

Low youth participation in the political system is not only due to the difficulties young people face for registering. In fact, electoral participation has also dropped among registered youth, either not voting or annulling their votes. The underlying issue is a growing distance of the youth from the political life of the country.

In the 18 to 24 age group, more than half of young people say they never talk about politics and declare themselves as little or not at all interested in it.¹⁹ At the same time, 34.4% say that they are bored by politics; 37% are indifferent; and 39% have mistrust in the political system. Sixty-eight percent of the youth manifested low satisfaction or total dissatisfaction with democracy, and 88.8% believed that many changes were required in order to achieve a real democracy. Finally, Table 10 shows that the confidence youth have in politics and politicians is the lowest from a list of relevant institutions of public life, and this figure has dropped even more in recent years.

19. Latino Barometer, 1996.

Table 10

Evolution of Confidence in Institutions and Politicians According to Sex, Age, and Socio-economic Level (National Youth Survey, 1994 and 1997)

Institutions/ public characters	Total	Sex		Age Group			Socio-economic level		
		Male	Female	15-19	20-24	25-29	High	Middle	Low
Church									
1994	81.0	75.6	85.9	81.6	79.5	80.8	77.9	81.1	80.5
1997	84.0	71.2	86.9	85.1	83.9	83.3	93.8	83.4	83.1
Media									
1994	75.0	71.0	79.0	75.0	76.0	73.3	74.5	75.0	75.0
1997	83.0	80.0	79.0	82.0	82.0	80.0	83.0	86.0	76.0
FF.AA and Police									
1994	70.0	61.1	73.0	71.0	66.0	63.3	77.2	69.4	61.7
1997	70.0	67.3	71.7	72.4	72.3	64.4	84.1	72.0	65.0
Government									
1994	59.0	57.3	60.0	54.1	61.6	60.1	72.0	60.9	53.2
1997	52.0	52.2	51.6	48.0	57.8	49.8	69.6	51.8	48.9
Mayor (Municipality)									
1994	58.0	54.8	60.7	56.2	58.2	58.8	75.9	59.9	51.8
1997	52.0	50.6	52.4	55.2	47.5	51.7	61.0	52.9	48.5
Business people									
1994	47.0	46.4	48.1	46.3	49.0	46.3	66.3	50.7	39.6
1997	56.0	56.7	54.3	58.0	57.5	51.1	69.6	56.8	51.7
Unions									
1994	45.4	47.3	43.5	40.1	47.9	48.5	48.0	48.0	41.9
1997	44.4	44.7	44.1	37.8	49.5	46.0	51.6	45.4	42.3
Elective representatives									
1994	41.5	38.7	44.3	40.3	45.6	38.7	54.3	42.8	37.3
1997	32.4	34.5	30.4	32.3	30.7	34.3	45.6	36.1	26.6
Political Parties									
1994	30.5	29.7	31.3	31.0	31.9	28.5	44.3	30.4	27.7
1997	26.5	27.4	25.5	26.9	24.6	27.8	33.3	28.0	23.8

Dissatisfaction, mistrust and lack of interest in politics are not attitudes exclusively attributable to youth. These are found in virtually every other sector of the population as is shown by diverse studies such as *Latinobárometro*, *Estudio Mundial de Valores* and CERC surveys.

There are diverse explanations for this lack of involvement, starting with the unfinished political transition towards democracy and the imperfections of the existing democratic system that has been attained in Chile. Another factor is that the political dimension has lost centrality in the every day life of citizens. The State is no longer the main entity responsible for distributing goods and services. At the same time, political parties are no longer the only representatives or mediators between different interest groups. These factors have contributed to a lack of interest in political activities, particularly among the youth, who choose not to participate in the political system.

On the other hand, a recent research done by Garretón and Villanueva²⁰ concludes that low voter registration among youth does not reflect anti-establishment sentiments or radical criticism toward the prevailing model of society. Rather, it would indicate that the youth prefers to put their hope for inclusion in the system on more functional goods that can be translated into obtaining a good education, a good job, o better social position and starting a family. Young people feels that society is not very sheltering and does not facilitate their hopes for integration. The lack of participation is not as much a criticism to the model of development and the government, but toward the impossibility of participating within it. In order words, young people, particularly the poor, would like to enjoy the same benefits available to other groups, but for multiple reasons they get excluded.

The same study confirms what has been said here regarding the dissatisfaction with politics being a general tendency within society. The peculiarity about the youth is that they have little political and civic socialization. Chile endured more than 15 years of authoritarianism under which politics was a forbidden activity and that lingers in Chilean society. After 10 years of returning to democracy, civic formation at school level is almost non-existent and, according to the youth, the family is not providing an appropriate place for effective political socialization of the youth because of disagreement between parents and children on these issues.²¹

Based on all the antecedents, the study cited concludes that there are "structural and institutional changes within Chilean society, politics and the prevalent paradigm on youth."²² In the current Chilean context, politics would play a less significant role and still is constrained by an insufficient democracy. At the same time, the youth are no longer a homogenous

20. Manuel Antonio Garretón and Tamara Villanueva, *Política y jóvenes en Chile: Una Reformulación*, Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 1999, Santiago.

21. Second National Youth Survey, also see next the chapter.

22. p.70.

organized collective actor, but instead a diverse and segmented group. As a result, there is a profound gap between both.

The experiences and expectations of youth regarding politics are different, and dominant political language and practices do not reflect them. As long as politics continue to be impermeable to the cultural codes and the new conditions of Chilean society, it will continue to be an activity with very little appeal for the youth. As a consequence, the political weight and influence of the new generations has decreased generating a vicious circle marked by a political discourse and agenda that do not represent the youth and a youth that has little interest and influence in the political life of the country.

We could endlessly continue with the analysis of this phenomenon, but for the objective pursued here, it is more important to understand the possible effects of this phenomenon in the youths' capacity to have some bearing on the decisions and public policies related to them. First, it must be stated that there is an under-representation of youth in the electoral body, as observed in Table 10. In fact, today, there is only one youth for every five voters; whereas, in 1988, there was one youth for every three voters, although there has been little variation if the composition and the weight of the youth in the voting population (between 1989 and 1997 they have dropped from 35.6 to 30.4 percent of the population).

Table 11
Proportion of Youth Registered to Vote According to
Population Registered on the Electoral Rolls* (%)

Age Group	1989	1993	1997
18-29 years	35.99	28.58	19.89
30 -39 years	22.62	25.66	27.90
40-49 years	16.15	17.70	20.56
50-59 years	11.74	12.28	14.11
60-69 years	8.08	9.10	9.86
70 years +	5.42	6.68	7.98

* Prepared by the author, based on data provided by I.N.E. and Electoral Service.

This under-representation of the youth produces a significant distortion of the electorate because it artificially ages the poll. Undoubtedly, this affects the degree of priority and the way of treating the problems that interest the youth by politicians. In fact, each time it is less profitable for the politicians to pay attention and take on youth issues. This strengthens the vicious cycle in which the lack of interest leads to a lesser participation, less political weight and, hence interest from traditional politicians to address youth problems, which confirms that the youths' worries.

Besides the electoral under-representation, the youth is not able to have any political influence in the country due to peculiarities and insufficiencies of the Chilean transition to a democratic system, such as the persistence of assigned senators and the excessive presence of the military in the political arena and deliberations. At the same time, the current electoral system results that under certain circumstances, the electoral majorities do not see their options reflected in the election of their representatives to the parliament, thus, in the impossibility of the government to carry out deep reforms that would allow more participation and better representation. True, this situation has an impact on everyone, but the youth is more skeptical and pragmatic. By and large, they don't want and feel no obligation of participating in a democratic process with all those restrictions and which does not allow effective participation in the decision making process.

The Chilean transition has been characterized by the search of consensus among the different sectors, avoiding the most conflictive topics. The constitutional framework inherited from the Pinochet regime has not been modified (due to the lock imposed by the electoral system) and human rights violations that took place during the regime have not been clarified. These restrictions, for the sake of stability, could be assumed and understood by a generation that lived through the political crisis of the 70's and the military coupe. However for the younger generations those transactions and restrictions are incomprehensible and unacceptable. Rather, the youth perceive in that attitude of the political class just the standardization of political discourses and styles among the different sectors, losing sight of the different conditions and political values that are behind those postures.

Youth and Social Participation

Beyond politics, it is important to look at the different ways of social organization and participation that the youth has in order to channel their interests.

About 52.3 percent²³ of the population below 25 years old, participate in some type of organization, a percentage slightly higher than that of the one presented for adults. This level of participation disproves the wide spread assumption that young people is apathetic and lack interest in public affairs.

The types of organization preferred by the youth, however, are different from the types of organizations that prevailed in the past. In fact, the youth sections of political parties have lost the relevance and power they have in the past. At the same time, students' organizations, which still maintain certain vitality, have lost the national leadership they once had.

Nevertheless, there are examples that demonstrate that the youth has interest in participating in society through other type of organizations, smaller, less institutionalized, and centered on cross-sectoral issues such as sports, music, solidarity, or religion. During 1998, two massive events proved the wide interest of the youth in social participation. These were the *Continental Conference of Catholic Youth and World Boy Scouts Jamboree*. While the content has strong social overtones, the type of organization and participation is completely different from those that existed 10 or 20 years ago. Similarly, there is high interest in participating in community outreach activities organized by student organizations, church groups and other civil society organizations. Also, it is important to mention the interest that recently has created a volunteer program for young professionals named *Servicio País*, which has attracted numerous volunteers. In all these cases, youth participation has been linked to specific objectives, more than an organization. In fact, the youth feels identified with issues or themes of interest, but not with the organizations that claim to represent them in a broader perspective.

While these types of organizations do not have a political origin, they are forced to confront political issues daily either because of the type of themes and activities they carry out or out of need of economic resources and institutional support. However, the encounter is uncomfortable due to their mutual mistrust and the lack of knowledge of their particularities. Government organizations, political parties, and congress representatives do not know how to deal with these organizations. They neither understand their informal character nor tend not to recognize and accept their autonomy. The weight of history and tradition is still too strong and traditional political actors are not used to deal with independent social organizations.

Most youth organizations due to their informal character have difficulties systematizing their experience and developing their organizational skills.

23. Latino Barometer, 1996.

Thus they have trouble dealing with the political and institutional world, stumbling over the same issues, such as difficulties in developing and getting approved youth-specific projects, unwillingness of the authorities to support them for fear of what the youth would do, or the opposition of the community to these activities.

Among the poor, youth organizations have even more unstable characteristics. Their participation tends to be channeled through very informal organizations, such as groups of youth that share affinity toward certain type of music, or the street-corner groups that may evolve into gangs.²⁴ In these occasional meetings they share experiences, make friends, develop bondage, and they waste a lot free time, (keep in mind that in the first quintile there was a 20 percent of young males who stated that they neither studied nor worked). This type of groupings is unknown to the traditional political actors and they are stigmatized, as they are related to gangs and drug addiction.

In summary, the current level and type of social participation of the youth derives from a combination of weak organizations and lack of receptiveness by the political establishment and society, in general. At the same time, existing institutional channels (the state and political representatives) are not perceived by the youth as means for voicing the youth's problems and to search for solutions. Rather, current institutions are perceived only as rules made by and for others. Be it the political establishment or the adults.

As a result, there is rather weak electoral participation, a limited communication with the political world, and a State unable to develop coherent and solid policies towards the youth. In other words, Chilean society does not offer many opportunities to the youth for political participation (it is a restrictive democracy, an unfriendly electoral system, and the establishment barely recognizes youth organizations) and, the few opportunities offered are rejected by the youth, (as the low rates of electoral registration, wide spread rejection of political activities, little credibility on politicians demonstrates).

Cultural Dimension

To confront the issue of youth social exclusion from the cultural point of view, different paths could be taken. In this study, it is understood as a consequence of societal value patterns and stereotypes that set apart young

24. See Pablo Cottet *et al.* *La Generación de los Descuentos* and Claudia Barril *et al.*; *Nuevas Modalidades de Agrupamiento Juvenil*.

people from the community. That is, the focus of this section would be the way in which Chilean society (the public opinion, the media, and political discourse) perceives and deals with the young, and we will analyze if this favors their integration or if it generates the exclusion. Secondly, we will analyze the cultural patterns of the youth to end up questioning the existence of a single youth identity in Chile today.

How Chilean Society Sees Its Youth

Over the last decade, the public image of the youth has changed dramatically. Ten years ago, the stereotype was that of a radical committed and idealistic student fighting for a better world. This vision reflected the positive perception of a society undergoing harsh times due to military dictatorship, and they wanted to be integrated.

Contrarily, today's vision – in a society that believes its success and knows it is not integrated – has two opposite images of the youth: one negative and the positive. The latter defines them as indifferent and superficial. Further, this stereotype relates youth (particularly among the poor) to social problems such as drugs, violence, and even delinquency. In fact, the media portrays young people in relation to gangs, violence in stadiums and drug-addiction. From the social participation point of view, far from being the active and generous democracy-fighters from a decade ago, today society condemns their electoral abstinence, skepticism, and their distancing from politics, assimilating all this with lack of interest on public problems.

However, at the same time, there is a second optimistic image that expresses a kind of veneration of the youth. From this point of view, young people incarnate the meaning of success, beauty, and the actualization of modernity and progress that everyone aspires for. Unlike the negative image, that is based on the media and the political discourse, this one is based on the use and portrait of the youth in advertising, and the economic discourse that sees the youth as the engine of the country. The conjunction of these opposite visions leaves a narrow margin of maneuverability to the majority of young people that do not fit into neither of the above stereotypes and, thus, do not see themselves as part of society neither in terms of their identity or concerns.

For the poor this situation is even worst. Marginal youngsters clearly perceive that to society they represent the "dark side" and feel stigmatized. They feel ostracized by society, they do not participate from the economical

success of the country, have less and unequal access to educational and work. Overall, they know that are perceived as a danger to society.

As Touraine²⁵ suggests, it looks like this dual image of the youth is a reflection of the perception that Chilean society has of itself and of its future: a country growing capable of an ordered transition to democracy progresses that at the same time must tolerate an incomplete democracy and great social disparity. This tension makes the extensive middle class – that is starting to benefit from economic growth – uncomfortable with the poor and, particularly the youth, as they represent the flip side of the system and a threat to their own success, as they fear they could fall into poverty at any moment. Poor young people inspire insecurity as they are seen on the streets and all negative attributes of the stereotype are pointed toward them. At the same time, poor and marginal youngsters are particularly sensitive to that rejection. They understand society does not want them and; at the same time, they feel they owe nothing to a community which excludes them.

Young people from low-income sectors not only have to bear the image of dangerous individuals, but also that they are a failure. The last 10 years of high and sustained economic growth has generated an image of success for the country in which everyone wants to participate. In a society like this, values and norms that clearly define the limit between those who advance and those who do not are clearly established, and these have to do with the economic *status* achieved. Unlike Chilean culture prior to the military regime, where austerity was a general norm, and there were other channels for social mobility and prestige (public service, leadership in political or social organizations), today it is very clear, that is only through economic success. Those who do not achieve a good economic *status* are seen as failures. Middle class youth lives with this fear, and the poor feel condemned to that condition, because the doors to prosperity, education and quality jobs is likely inaccessible.

Youth Culture and Identity

A few years ago, the notion that the Chilean youth, particularly those in poverty, was undergoing a process of cultural disintegration and anomie,²⁶ was widely accepted. From that perspective, youngsters neither share

25. Alain Touraine, "Juventud y Democracia en Chile," *Revista Última Década*, Vol. 6, No.8, 1998.

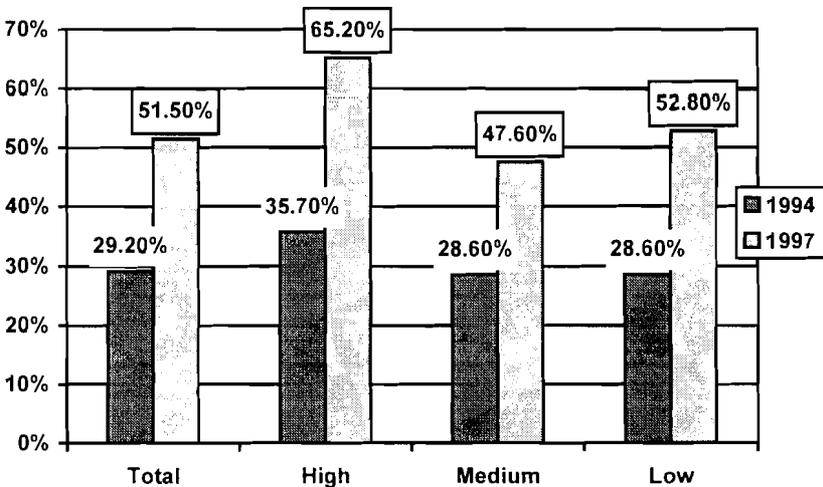
26. See *Sociabilidad y Cultura Juvenil*, Cuadernillo Temático del Instituto Nacional de la Juventud, 1998.

mainstream cultural patterns, nor were they able to develop an alternative world-vision. Thus, their attitudes were considered to be more anomic and anti-social than revolutionaries.

Today, the literature suggests that Chilean youth, even the poorest sectors, are not unaware of the cultural orientations and values that rule Chilean society. All field research, even among hooligans, indicates that the main aspiration of most of the interviewed youngsters is to study or to find good employment. The key aspiration of the youth is social integration, having the opportunity of participating and benefiting from the country's economic development and modernization, of having a place in society. To achieve that goal, most of them indicate that education is the main tool for having success (see Graphic 7).

Graphic 7

Percentage of Youths Considering Education to be the Crucial Factor in Reaching Success (1994 and 1997) *



Source: Second National Youth Survey.

According to the Second National Youth Survey, youths increasingly consider education to be the main road for advancing and obtaining success in life. Graphic 7 shows an increase in the percentage of youngsters

indicating education as the key vehicle for social advancement between 1993 and 1997 from 29% to 52%, respectively. This reveals that a significant percentage of the youth adheres to the public discourse of key sociopolitical stakeholders (government authorities, politicians, businesspersons, and churchmen) stating that education is the main channel of social mobility.

Similarly, existing data shows that there are no major generational conflicts between most of the youngsters and their parents, and the adult world in general. Table 12 shows there is a high degree of agreement between parents and young children on almost all matters (see below).

Table 12
Percentage of Youth Who Agree with Their Parents
(National Youth Survey, 1994 and 1997)

Aspects	Total	Sex		Age Groups			Socioeconomic Level		
		Men	Women	15-19	20-24	25-29	High	Middle	Low
Plans and Future Projects									
1994	77.8	78.8	76.8	81.8	79.4	72.4	84.9	79.2	74.7
1997	76.2	75.2	77.1	80.8	82.2	65.7	80.8	80.6	71.1
General Permission									
1994	73.8	79.9	67.4	70.3	78.6	71.8	80.0	76.3	69.7
1997	72.6	77.4	68.1	67.8	80.3	69.9	69.9	73.0	72.7
Amusement and employment of the free time									
1994	67.4	67.6	67.1	65.9	69.4	66.8	69.5	71.7	62.1
1997	69.8	69.9	69.7	68.2	74.9	66.4	75.2	71.3	67.4
Opinions regarding the life in couple									
1994	68.2	71.0	65.2	70.5	70.7	63.1	73.1	70.8	64.2
1997	68.6	69.2	68.0	69.8	74.8	61.3	75.3	70.4	65.7
Opinions about sexuality									
1994	65.4	65.9	64.9	73.5	69.8	52.7	77.0	68.5	59.5
1997	67.5	68.2	66.9	72.6	71.8	58.3	82.6	69.6	62.9
Political matters									
1994	60.0	59.7	60.2	61.7	63.8	54.9	75.4	59.0	58.0
1997	58.2	58.2	57.8	51.8	68.1	54.3	66.0	59.8	54.9

Is there a unique generation-based identity of the youths in Chile today? On the one hand the information provided above would seem to suggest so. However, in spite of those similarities, the youth in Chile is marked by diversity, mainly based on their socioeconomic *status*, and the lack of common bonds that would cut across those differences. Rather than "one" youth, there are various youth groups, so different from each other that it is difficult to consider them as a single social group. The data in Table 13 verifies this assertion while at the same time qualifies it.

Table 13

**Youth Agreement Regarding Statements Referring to Youth Identity
According to Sex, Age and Socio-economic Background
(National Youth Survey, 1994 and 1997)**

Statements	Total	Sex		Age Groups			Socioeconomic Level		
		Men	Women	15-19	20-24	25-29	High	Middle	Low
Youths think differently from adults									
1994	87.3	86.7	88.0	86.5	86.8	88.7	86.9	88.5	86.1
1997	87.8	89.0	86.7	85.6	89.9	88.0	86.4	89.1	86.8
All youths think and act similarly									
1994	50.1	46.1	54.2	53.7	49.7	47.6	42.9	48.7	53.1
1997	45.1	46.6	43.8	51.4	42.7	41.3	49.5	44.3	45.2
Youths from low and high think and act differently									
1994	73.5	75.0	72.0	67.2	74.7	78.8	68.2	74.2	73.8
1997	75.2	76.6	73.9	73.1	69.8	82.6	84.4	79.9	69.1
Female youths have the same opportunities as male youths									
1994	57.6	59.8	55.3	56.8	55.7	60.5	48.0	54.9	62.5
1997	41.9	44.8	39.2	46.2	40.5	39.1	48.7	39.0	43.6

Table 13 indicates that while most of the youth believe that they are different from the adults, only 45% believe that youth from different socioeconomic background think and behave in a similar way. In fact, there is a high agreement that youngsters behave and think differently according to socioeconomic status and gender. That is, they recognize their differences with the adults as well as among themselves. According to INJUV,²⁷ "youth behavior and social practices reveal a fluid and unstable social situation, in which internal social differentiation prevails over the generation-based social differentiation."

Different groups of young people develop specific group-identities, and among these groups there is little communication, overlap or cross-membership. At the same time, cities are highly segregated and there are no shared areas where these different groups could converge. Most cities as well as the educational system are highly segmented along income levels. Thus, there are few public places where groups from different socioeconomic backgrounds could meet. Furthermore, there are no public figures or youth leaders capable of bridging, reaching and mobilizing these different groups. The only institution that to some extent has that capacity is the Catholic Church. Beyond that, the only other common language that appeals to all is the media (Radio and TV) and the plea for consumerism.

The expansion and ease availability of credit paired with strong advertisement have created an ideal consumption pattern that most youth aspire for, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This phenomenon is extremely important because in the Chile of the 90s, consumption doesn't only reveals the purchasing power of the individuals, but rather it expresses preferences, identities and sub-cultures. Particularly, for youths that have been raised under this logic, not having access to certain goods has an even higher cost than not possessing them. It implies not being able to manifest their tastes and being excluded from the dominant model of youth.

As a result, there is no common ground for the development of a broad group identity while, at the same time, there is a strong influence of the media on the shaping of a unified consumption pattern. These two conflicting elements engender a situation in which most of the poor-marginal youth do not have a sense of membership: they perceive themselves alone and see only through consumption a way to relate to others. In practice, they feel alone, devoid of a common history, without a past and little to expect from the future.

The loneliness of the youth, a characteristic of present times, is even worst when it implies exclusion, that is to say, when the main channels of

27. *Op. cit.* Page 4.

the integration (participation in the labor market and having an income level enough to meet the group's consumption pattern), are not accessible. The youth, particularly the poor, is not only excluded from the "opportunities," but also of becoming a social subject with a clear role in society. As Touraine (1998) indicates, as individuals ascended in the social hierarchy, there is a stronger identification with the social mores that such position carries since these grant-increasing satisfactions. Contrarily, marginal youths do not see a link between what they do (either at the family, school or work levels) and the rewards they get. For that reason is very difficult for them to become social subjects that modify their environment to achieve their objectives. Rather, in most cases, they manifest at the same time an intimate rebelliousness and a social hyper-conformism.

In summary, the idea that marginal-poor youth would find organize and mobilize to force social change is no longer valid in Chile today. In general, social organizations are extremely weak, particularly those that seek structural social changes. The Chilean transition to democracy, with its moderation and pragmatism, has tried to put in the past those types of organizations and models of social participation. The youth has been the first one to internalize that change. Instead, the youth prefers more informal organizations that seek short term and very concrete objectives that allow them to move in and out of the group without losing much.

On top of this social and cultural dispersion, due to the history of political confrontation over the past 35 years, there is a lack of shared projects or forward vision. As a consequence, the youth do not have a unique identity, which would not be in itself a problem, but more importantly, youths have serious difficulties to establish significant group-specific identities that would serve as a basis for developing social networks and transiting to adulthood.

PART TWO

POLICIES FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE YOUTH

The arrival of democracy brought out the expectations of different social groups that felt their necessities had been deferred for a long time. The degree of satisfaction regarding meeting those expectations is variable. Yet, to many, democracy has not unfolded in the expected way. To be sure, Chilean economy has been growing steadily over the last 10 years, poverty has been reduced, and inflation and unemployment have been under control

until 1999. All of the above goes beyond the expectations that many had. However, despite the economic growth and the expectations created, there have been little changes in the social and economic policies aiming at increasing social services and promoting the inclusion of marginal groups in the economy and the benefits of growth. It is difficult to assess how much of the progress made is due to the positive economic cycle that Chile has experienced or to the social policies implemented in this period. In this section we will look at the social policies trying to establish if they have tackled the main factors that generate social exclusion among the youth.

What Democracy Had to Offer

The return to democracy implied for the youth very ambitious expectations: freedom and opportunity. To the government, meeting those expectations required a two-pronged strategy. First, it was necessary to revert the climate of repression and to open up participation at different levels. Second, it was essential to tackle the main social and economic problems that a significant proportion of the youth faced daily.

As a result, in the early 1990s several programs targeted to the youth were developed:

- Establishing the Youth's National Institute (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud).
- Launching a youth labor training program (Chile Joven).
- Drafting and submitting to the National Congress a bill on Youth Organizations.
- Launching the educational reformation.
- Developing a set of programs that sought to increase and facilitate the youth's access to cultural activities.
- Defining a legislative agenda that included several bills addressing youth issues.

The results of these policies and programs were diverse. Not all of them prospered neither were successful. In fact, the priority given to youth issues in the early 90s didn't stay long and it was slowly put in the back burner. Only the labor training and educational reform programs continued to have strong political support and resources to be implemented over time. It could be said that the two pillars of the government action on the issue of youth

social integration have been those two programs, which will be analyzed in detail. However, before a summary assessment of the other programs will be presented. It will be shown that these other tools have not been important components in the government policy towards the youth.

The Youth's National Institute

The 1991 the Youth's National Institute (INJ) was created. It was designed as a technical and autonomous agency under the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation. Its objectives were: (i) to coordinate activities and programs targeted to the juvenile population that could be implemented either by other public organisms or private sector providers; and (ii) to provide technical assistance and advice to other government agencies in the design and implementation of programs for the youth.

This technical and advisory role was criticized by some youth organizations, including the youth's sections of the political parties. Their posture was that the Institute ought to have a more active and direct role in promoting youth's participation and in representing their interests in the government. This conflict never finished and the debate about the role of the institution has permanently haunted and weakened its identity and credibility.

Among the specific tasks foreseen for the Institute, the main one was providing technical support to other ministries and government agencies in the design of policies and programs directed to youth and, in turn, to act as coordinator of the activities implemented by these organisms. However, in reality that role did not materialize in practice because the institutions that supposedly should have been advised and coordinated by the INJ were much more solid, powerful and specialized (Ministries of Health, Education, Justice and Work, Minor's National Service, Social Investment Fund, National Training and Employment Service, etc.). Far from coordinating youth's policies, the INJ finished being quite marginal in the decision making process that continued to be centered in the ministries and mentioned services.

Outside of this coordinating rolling, the INJ developed a series of programs whose execution was in charge of others. Among these the most important were the Youth's Houses (community centers for the youth), the National Youth Information Service, Municipal Bureaus for Youth Affairs (local government offices in charge of developing juvenile programs at municipal level) and the Youth-Card (an identification card that provides access to discounts and special opportunities).

This group of initiatives, even though were well conceived, did not have enough impact on the issue of the social exclusion. This was due to the lack of resources dedicated made available to the INJ, reaching at its peak only US\$6.3 million in 1997. In fact the INJ had one of the lowest institutional budgets in the social area.

In addition, administrative irregularities and bad management that ended up in a deep institutional crisis at the end of 1997 affected the action of the Institute. Several INJ officials accused of corruption and were indicted. The bad management decreased even more the role and influence that the INJ had in policy discussion, giving place to a long-standing institutional weakness and low credibility.

After the 1997 crisis, an internal reorganization took place, the INJ became INJUV (Instituto Nacional de la Juventud), and a new management was appointed. However, as part of that process, in 1998 the annual budget of the INJ was cut to less than half of what was the previous year. At the same time, several programs were closed, keeping only those considered fundamental to transform it in an orderly and efficient agency capable of playing a more effective role in policy making.

Law Proposal For Youth Association

In 1991, the Government sent to the Congress a bill of Juvenile Associations whose main objective was to stimulate the development of juvenile organizations and their participation in society. The bill proposed a simple mechanism to recognize and grant legal *status* to the various types of juvenile organizations, including student organizations, political groups, and many others. Also the bill provided for the coordination of these organizations through the establishment of Youth Councils at the municipal, regional and national levels. Lastly, the project looked for the strengthening of juvenile organizations by establishing a fund that would provide resources to support different types of activities.

The project began its discussion in the Congress and was approved by the Senate but later on, in 1994, the Government withdrew it from the legislative agenda. No official reasons have been given although it has been known that there was severe opposition to the bill by different key political actors who criticized the corporatist and centralized character of the proposal. At the end, this uncertainty has prevented reconsidering the issue through other less ambitious.

Access to Cultural and Leisure Activities

The policies and programs implemented in this area have been in hands of diverse institutions, without much coordination among each other. Some of these programs were mentioned before (Youth Card, Youth Information Centers). Along with the above, there are several small scale and low coverage programs. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to highlight some innovative activities that were targeted to urban poor youths, such as the Music (Rock) Schools and the Cultural Street Corners that have attempted to legitimate activities and gathering places of marginal youth and to strengthen their social capital. Traditionally, those activities and spaces have been discredited by society. Another interesting initiative in this matter has been the creation of the Centro Balmaceda, a cultural center that supports young talents and disseminates youth's art and other cultural expressions.

Legislative Agenda Towards Youth

The Aylwin and Frei administrations have given course to a group of legislative initiatives addressing youth issues, particularly youths' social exclusion. Among these it is important to highlight:

- Abolition of regulations that allow the police to arrest someone based only on suspicion.
- Promulgation of a Sports Law that would provide more opportunities to the youth for practicing sports.
- Elimination of legal differences between legitimate and illegitimate children.
- The suppression of the film censorship.
- The prohibition of demanding pregnancy test to the women seeking employment.
- The promotion of the juvenile associations.

In general, the treatment of youth related bills has been rather slow. Until the end of 1997, some 130 youth related bills had been submitted to the congress. Only 18 of them (14%), have been passed. Furthermore, some of the laws have been severely modified some of them are rather of repressive

nature, such as the Law of Drugs or the Law of Violence in the Stadiums. In summary, the rate of approval of youth related legislative initiatives is far slower than the general rate that is 23%.

In spite of this, during 1998 three significant youth related bills were approved. The first one was the elimination of the detention for suspicion, which has been the mechanism that traditionally the police have used to justify arbitrary detentions of young people. The same also establishes a series of guarantees for the detainee. The second bill passed was the recognition of the equality of children before the law. This put an end to a series of differences consecrated in the law between children born inside and outside of marriage regarding inheritance, benefits and allowances, and family kinship. The third one consisted on the prohibition of demanding pregnancy tests to women applying to employment. The latter two, even though they have a broader impact, they counteract social mechanisms that feed the exclusion and the stigmatization of young people in poverty.

Educational Policy

Educational Reforms

As in many countries from the region, Chile has launched a wide process of educational reform whose main objectives are to improve the quality, modernize the curricula to the requirements of society, and to improve access to the system and equity. Specifically, the educational reform has developed the following lines:

- Improvement of the quality and equity of the educational system: These programs seek the renovation, autonomy and decentralization of the system, assigning more resources to public schools (elementary and high schools), especially those for high-risk students.
- Improvement of teachers' professional careers: Gradual increase of wages, professional development and performance incentives and awards.
- Curriculum reforms: Modernization of the curricula, increasing school autonomy.
- Full schedule: Extension of the school day schedule allowing more time for extra (basic) curricula activities (autonomy).

Some key programs have been implemented under these new policies. Among these, it is important to highlight the following:

- The 900 Schools Program (P900). Started in 1990, its objective was supporting the lowest performing elementary education schools by improving their infrastructure and school supplies, developing weekly training workshops with the teachers and mentoring students with learning disability.
- The MECE (Improvement of the Quality of the Education) Program. This program aimed at improving the quality of education by providing teaching materials to facilitate innovation and to improve the learning process. The program started in 1992 with primary schools and in 1994 high schools were included in the program. One of the activities supported under this program was the Red Enlaces a computer network that links schools and supports information technology projects developed by the participating schools.
- Curricular reform. The reform begun in 1996 with the approval of the new curricula for basic education that set basic objectives and minimum contents. Within this framework, educational establishments were granted more flexibility to define their own plans and programs. In 1997 a nation-wide consultative process took place to review the reforms to the secondary education curricula proposed by the Ministry of Education.
- In 1996 the full-time schedule was introduced. This change ended with double shifts that still were common in many high schools and allowed more time for schoolwork and extracurricular activities.
- Lastly, a series of measures aimed at improving the *status*, training and teachers' wages have been implemented, including 125% salary increase over the last 9 years, scholarships and internships abroad for teachers, and continuing education programs among others.

These reforms have been supported by a steady increase in public expenditures in the educational sector which grew 112% in real terms between 1990 and 1997, going from 2.5% to 3.3% of the GDP (PIB).

All population 15 years old and younger attending school has gone through the reform process. This shows in the improvement of the average student performance as indicated by the Quality of the Education Measurement System (SIMCE) test results. Between 1990 and 1997 average performance has improved by 11%.

In spite of these encouraging results, the performance gap between high and low-income sector students continue to be enormous. The SIMCE

performance of 4th grade students from the higher income groups is 25% higher than that of the lowest income group. Yet, it is important to highlight that when a positive discrimination policy exists, such as the P900 program, the gap can be decreased. Indeed, the elementary schools that are part of the Program P900 have improved their performance by 4 points more than the average.

At the same time, some of the educational reform policies implemented have increased the inequality of the educational system. The introduction of co-shared financing that allows public (free of charge) high schools to start charging fees, if there is consent of the parents association, has practically ended with public free of charge high schools. As a result, an increasing segmentation of the educational system has developed based on the capacity to pay of the parents and, the poorest students are being clustered into the high schools with the least demand and less resources.

Likewise, the public dissemination of SIMCE test results has generated some unwanted effects. Initially, the measure was taken to provide parents with more information regarding school performance and thus, improve the targeting of the subsidy system by directing the demand to educational establishments with better performance. However, at the same time this measure prompts schools to drop or reject students with lower scores who would make descend the school performance. In this way students with low scores, mostly children of low-income families, are segregated.

In summary, most experts and analysts agree that the backbone of the educational reform has been improving the quality of the educational system more than its equity. According to Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro (1999), the marginal impact on the equity of the system is because the actions taken are not sufficient for addressing the needs of the poor, such as completing high school and adult education, specially for young adults, the reinforcement of the educational system (particularly the last two years of schooling) in the rural areas or improving access and quality of education for indigenous groups. It is important to point out that in spite of the low drop-out rates today exists in Chile, there is more than a million and half people 15 to 24 years old that have not completed its education and they are not in the school system. Most of them are poor and integrate the army of the unemployed. The origin of the problems is errors in the diagnosis and, therefore, in the type of policies implemented. First, the graveness of the inequalities has been underestimated. Thus, homogeneous policies have been privileged, focussing few resources on equity-oriented activities targeted to the poor. Similarly, the decentralization of the educational system has not provided mechanisms for compensating disparities and leveling the playing field.

Finally, the reform has focused only on the school system, without giving enough attention to the external social environment, starting with the family.

Higher Education

Higher education has not received the same attention than primary and secondary education over the last decade. Public policy has focused more on solving specific conflicts and introducing palliative measures rather than on developing a strategy, with specific objectives and resources.

Independently of the policy framework, between 1990 and 1997 the higher education offer duplicated, leading to a great expansion of university students enrolled. However this growth has not benefited the poor youth primarily due to economic obstacles that impede access to the university. Tuition and fees in most undergraduate degree programs are higher than the minimum wage (around US\$175). While there is a system of student scholarships and credits the resources allocated to these programs have not increased in the same rate (from US\$21 millions in 1990 to US\$81 millions in 1998), than the growth in tuition and fees (discounting the increased number of students seeking financial assistance). In summary, the growth in financial assistance programs to poor students has not keep pace with the costs of higher education and increasing number of students seeking to access the university system.

Table 14
Higher Education Undergraduate enrollment*

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Universities	127.628	143.526	163.426	188.253	205.738	223.889	244.494	259.790
Traditional Universities (Council of Rectors)	108.119	114.698	122.736	138.267	145.744	154.885	167.282	175.641
Private Universities	19.509	28.828	40.690	49.986	59.994	69.004	77.212	84.149
Professional Institutes	40.006	37.376	43.203	38.076	38.252	40.980	52.170	56.972
With state support	6.472	6.802	6.802	7.246	0	0	0	0
Private Institutes	33.534	30.574	38.076	38.076	38.252	40.980	52.170	56.972
Technical Education Centers	77.774	65.987	73.904	83.245	77.258	72.735	61.418	54.036
Total	245.408	246.889	280.533	309.574	321.248	337.604	358.052	370.798

* Source: Ministry of Education.

At the same time, most of the growth in new university vacancies has taken place on private universities, which in 1990 had less than 20% of the enrollment and in 1999 represented 50% of total enrollment. However, students from low-income families have not been able to take advantage of this growth because these universities do not have access to the state run scholarship and credit assistance programs.

Besides purely economic barriers, uneven academic background prevents low-income students to access the university system because of poor cumulative grades in high school and low scores at the Test of Academic Aptitude (PAA). Indeed, the results of this test are strongly conditioned by the type of educational establishment. In general, students from municipal high schools in poor neighborhoods systematically perform significantly below than students from private or partly subsidized high schools, and they rarely reach the minimum scores required to apply to the university.

The public policy strategy to tackle this problem has been centered in the improvement of the quality of public education. The results of this policy will only be visible in the medium term. However, as with secondary and primary education, the benefits to the poor will only be marginal if the reform does not explicitly address the issue of equity and the gap in performance between high and low income students instead of just focusing on improving educational quality and average performance.

Regarding technical professional training, the growth in this sector has been limited and financial aid programs for poor students have been cut. Further, there has been little progress in the regulation and modernization of the offer. There are serious problems with the official accreditation and certification of these programs which greatly vary in quality. This is particularly relevant for low income students who could turn to technical training as an alternative to improve their participation in the labor market, but currently do not see this as an investment that would pay off in their future.

A very promising possibility to face some of the issues discussed is the program for improving the quality of higher education (MECE-Sup). This program started in 1998 with the support of the World Bank seeks to improve the quality and to modernize the higher education system. Although equity is not an stated objective, it could contribute decrease existing inequalities by: (i) redesigning the student financial assistance programs; (ii) establishing a pilot monitoring program to assess the adequacy of higher education to labor market demands; and (iii) establishing a technical/vocational educational program linked with other higher education and employment programs. The latter would result in a modernization and strengthening of

technical education programs, which could provide a new set of opportunities for students that do not have access to the university.

Job Training Policies: Chile Joven Program

Unemployment and underemployment among low-income youth constitute the main obstacles to their social integration and participation in the benefits of economic growth. Several programs have been developing to address these problems. One of the main instruments has been the Chile Joven Program. The main objective of this program started in 1991 with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), is to support the creation of job opportunities for low-income youth. The program targeted unemployed youth with incomplete schooling and low job qualifications. Initially, the program was thought as a response to youth unemployment resulting from the adjustment policies of the second half of the eighties. Later on, the resilience of low-income youth unemployment and underemployment showed that even in a period of high growth and low unemployment the program was necessary. Accordingly, Chile Joven developed in two phases. The first stage, from 1991 to 1995, reached 120,000 beneficiaries. In 1996 the program was redesigned to improve its targeting and eligibility criteria, aiming to reach another 70,000 beneficiaries over three years. The annual budget of the program bordered US\$15 million.

Chile Joven beneficiaries are low-income youth that have dropped from the educational system and are unemployed or underemployed. The program seeks to provide technical skills to the participants through on-the-job training that combines classroom sessions and apprenticeships. The program has self-targeting mechanisms (scholarships offered to the participants are below minimum wage and the type of training offer is limited to basic-skills jobs only). The training is offered by private providers selected through public bid based on the quality and market relevance of the proposed training. Proposals and training provided are assessed based on enrollment, class attendance and job or apprenticeships offers provided to the participants. The training provided is organized in four sub-programs according to the type of training offered:

Training and job experience apprenticeships: The most important sub-program. In 1997, it represented 92% of the total beneficiaries of Chile Joven. This sub-program consists on formal training for a skilled job followed by an apprenticeship with pay below the minimum wage.

Training for self-employment: Provides participants with skills to develop self-employment income generating activities. It is targeted to youths that are reticent to establish labor relationships and prefer to undertake independent micro-entrepreneurial activities.

Basic job skills: It provides basic technical skills and work habits, including job searching, performing commands, social relations and other abilities to become a better worker. This sub-program is targeted to marginal youth who have problems adapting to formal jobs and entering the labor market. It includes apprenticeships without pay.

On the job training: In this sub-program, beneficiaries are hired as apprentices with the minimum wage to learn specific crafts.

The results of the program indicate a balanced gender participation in the program, with the exception of on the on the job training sub-program where women are under-represented. This is a great achievement for Chile Joven and it is the result of special measures taken to increase women's participation, which was insufficient in the first stages of the program. About 80% of the participants correspond to the targeted population (between 15 and 24 years old). As for the socioeconomic level of the participants, the program is reaching the targeted population. In the case of basic skills sub-program, for example, 64% of the beneficiaries are from the lowest quintile. Regarding schooling, more than 50% of the beneficiaries have not completed secondary school.

The main achievement of the program has been to decrease the rate of unemployment among its beneficiaries and it has also improved the working conditions of the participants. Beneficiaries of the program increased their employment rate between 25% and 35% above non-participants.

Nevertheless, certain inequalities persist within the program. Labor insertion of women participating in the program is on average 10% lower than that of the men. In part this is explained by the difficulties poor women, particularly young, have entering the labor market. There is also a difference in labor insertion based on age. Younger beneficiaries have more difficulties finding a job.

As expected, participants in the program tend to enter into formal contractual job relationships. However, wages do not experience a significant increase in the short term. This is probably due to the formalization of the contractual arrangements, which has a negative impact on wages in the short term. In fact, beneficiaries working on informal arrangements see an improvement in their remuneration.

Regarding the completion of secondary education, the results show that the program has either a marginal or negative impact, as some participants have dropped out from high school to participate in the program. In summary, the program has had positive impacts, but these are clearly insufficient considering the dimension of the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment among low-income families. In fact, youth unemployment and underemployment rates continue to be practically the same in spite of the program, which has trained some 150,000 youths. There are structural factors, much more complex than those that the program seeks to address, that contribute to maintain the unemployment and underemployment levels constant. To tackle those issues other policy instruments are required.

THIRD PART CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter has reviewed some key elements that contribute to the social integration/exclusion of youth in Chile: (i) schooling and education, (ii) entering the work force and job mobility, (iii) political participation, and (iv) the formation of the cultural codes that define what is to be young. There are specific socioeconomic, political and cultural factors that impede the social inclusion of the youth, particularly among the poor. The social exclusion perspective allows understanding how these mechanisms are intertwined.

The accumulation of lack of political participation, social stigmatization and fragmented identity, lack of educational opportunities, and unemployment/underemployment are combined the result is much more complex than lack of income, something more than poverty. It is an issue of citizenship, or not been able to exert it. From that pre-citizenship stage, it is difficult to achieve social integration. Social integration requires an integral qualitative change. Social exclusion cannot be reverted if the interactions and cumulative effects of the different factors are not addressed simultaneously.

The Chilean context of the 1990's characterized by a stable and growing economy and gradual democratization, should have been ideal to facilitate the social integration of the new generations. In fact, significant changes in that direction have been achieved, yet those changes have not been enough to revert the exclusionary process and reach the threshold of social inclusion. That turning point would be achieved only given when the minimum conditions of citizenship that would allow the youth to make decisions and

to fully participate in society and the economy are reached. Up to now, public policies have not addressed the causes of social exclusion in an integral manner. Policy makers have chosen a gradual approach trying to improve labor market participation (through educational reform and job training). This perspective has only looked into the economic dimension of social exclusion.

The partial negation of citizenship, particularly for the youth, has long lasting effects because it impedes them to assume all roles, responsibilities and rights associated with adulthood, thus, their social integration. The growing economy makes social exclusion for the youth much more incomprehensible and disruptive of what would be in times of crisis or uncertainty. The favorable economic conditions of the period could have provided a minimum base for the generation of a new citizenship *status* (regarding economic, cultural, social and political rights) for future generations.

Current public policies toward the youth have been clearly insufficient, too narrow in scope and disconnected. Apart from the educational reform and the Chile Joven Program there are no other targeted policy interventions for the youth. While there are multiple programs and activities reaching the youth, they lack coordination, have little resources, and do not address the issue of social inclusion in an integral way. There is much to be done, but promoting social inclusion policies for the youth has economic, social and political costs that require a clear political will.

School desertion

In a country with high and growing schooling levels like Chile today, not completing higher education is a severe social impairment. Even non-skilled jobs require secondary education, and technical/vocational training is essential for skilled jobs. The current policy has an indirect approach to the problem. It assumes that by improving the quality of the education and focusing on students with low school performance drop out rates will be decreased. However, after an initial decrease, the drop out rates have experienced no further improvement. To address the issue of school desertion in an integral way would require at least three types of interventions:

- Incentives for students from low income families to remain in the educational system. Students from poor families pay a higher cost for continuing their education when they have the option of to work and to take additional income to the family. The simplest mechanism

to revert this trend would be a retention voucher for poor families to maintain their children in the secondary education system. In Chile this mechanism has been tested with good results. Other countries from the region, like Argentina, have used the voucher system with excellent results.

- Support system for drop out students. Today, drop out students lose all contact with the educational system and no institutional effort is made to make it return to classes. Other countries have in place personalized tutorship systems in which schoolteachers follow up drop out students to attempt their reintegration in the system.
- Provide more flexibility in the curricula. Many students from low-income families drop out from high school, some with their parents consent, because higher education does not significantly improve their chances of getting a better job of higher pay. The educational reform addresses this issue through curricular changes and the improvement of secondary education in vocational schools. However, additional measures are needed. Secondary education for a large number of students is their final. Accordingly, it must be modified to reflect that reality and to increase its value to the students that will not continue in the educational system. To begin with, it would be necessary to develop a system that would allow students to combine study and work and receive progressive educational and technical certifications or degrees as they complete different levels of secondary education.

Women Social Integration

The condition of the young women is even more unfavorable than that of the young men. Women with the same schooling level of men face higher unemployment rates and lower salaries because of labor market discrimination. Another related issue is teenage pregnancy. Poor young women start their reproductive life early on in their lives. Due to the lack of support systems these young women see their possibilities to continuing their studies and entering the labor market reduced, besides being stigmatized. Modifying these conditions would require:

- To modify the current labor law and provide better and more maternal support. Today employers are required to provide child-care support (facilities) only if they have more than 8 women

working. That leaves without coverage women working in smaller companies or independently and, it operates as a stimulus to employers to hire fewer women, especially if they are initiating their reproductive life.

- To spread out the costs of maternal and child support. Legislation should recognize the right to child care and provide accordingly. Such a system could be financed by tripartite contributions among employers, workers and the State.
- To provide alternative daycare systems should be developed. For example, municipal daycare centers in the poorest neighborhoods, where informal self-employment are more common, should be available for working mothers.
- To provide better reproductive health services and education. Reproductive health and sexual education are poorly addressed through the educational system. Currently these issues are addressed through especial workshops on love and sexuality in which teachers, parents and students attend together. An alternative policy should mainstream into the curricula reproductive health and sexual education, so that the students could address their concerns in an integral among peers. Students should also have access to specialize counseling in their schools. Until now the emphasis on reproductive health and sexual education efforts have been on health issues and primarily directed to women. The focus from now on must be broadened to address man-woman relationships and their respective responsibilities in the decision-making process and the enabling of women to better bargain for their reproductive health.

Combining study and work

Today, studying and working are almost mutually excluding options either for high school or university students. Current figures indicate that there are only a small number of students who work either part or full time. There are multiple impediments for students to work. First, students can rarely find work suitable to their schedule and, if they do, it is primarily in the informal sector, where there are no norms regulating and protecting their rights. Second, the only incentive for employers for hiring students is their willingness to take low wages. Third, the educational system (establishments and curricula) has been conceived and organized as a full time-exclusive

dedication system. Students that also work have difficulties keeping up with their education and have fewer options. The current incompatibility of these two activities harms particularly low-income youth that are those that have more necessity to begin working before finishing their studies.

Combining study and work is common elsewhere and it is not stigmatized. Public policy should facilitate this transition between studying and working. Some of the ease this process include:

- High school students should not be penalized if they need to start work before finishing the school cycle. The educational system should provide more flexibility to allow students to work without having to abandon their studies for that reason. Also, it is important not to stigmatize the student-worker, and high school is the first place where this should be recognized.
- Employers should receive incentives to hire students and support workers that want to continue or complete their education. Tax breaks for employers that support and finance their employees continuing their education could be used.
- Labor regulations should be modified to facilitate part-time work and allow workers to continue their education. For example, administrative leave should be regulated to allow workers and part time students to study and take academic tests.

Access to Higher Education

Higher education, whether university or technical/vocational, is not a real alternative to low-income youth. Beyond the economic impact, this limitation engenders social and cultural exclusion. Any individual who realizes that she/he has no real option feels excluded. Having an option deeply changes the attitude youths have toward the future and the way in which they relate to society. There is an urgent need to open up and expand the opportunities low-income youths have to higher education. This review suggest the following measures:

- The economic barriers should be removed. Resources for student financial aid programs (scholarships and credits) need to be expanded significantly. Low-income students in private universities and technical schools should be eligible for public financial help. This simple measure would increase access to technical schools and

private universities that contribute a significant proportion of total enrollment.

- Equity issues need to be addressed. Improving the poor academic performance of low-income students will take a long time. However, it is important to point out that to solve this problem specific measures to bridge the gap between private and municipal schools are needed. The educational reform should emphasize the achievement of equity, leveling up municipal schools. More resources should be targeted to high schools attending low-income students and special programs need to be developing to curve down drop out rates.
- For the present, and awaiting the effects of the educational reformation, the State can motivate the opening from a parallel selection system to the one carried out through the Test of Academic Aptitude. This system can be based on the opening of a certain number of university shares for outstanding students of coming from poor high schools. Of what is it is independently of opening access opportunities to the university to those youths of their results in the one mentioned Test, assuming that their good school yield is enough evidence of their capacity and will of learning.
- Special admission procedures to higher education establishment should be set in place until the quality of education has leveled across schools. These procedures could include a quota system for qualified low-income students based on their comparative school performance.
- Technical and vocational training should be strengthened to improve their quality and market value. First, a certification system that regulates the quality and standards of technical education needs to be developed. Second, public education is needed to ensure the prospective students have the required information to assess the various alternatives they have. A monitoring system would need to be establishing to ensure the long-term quality of the technical training programs and to provide policy orientations regarding the labor market needs for new technical careers. Lastly, improving access to scholarships and student loans would be essential to ensure low-income students participation in the system.

Low political participation

Young people, particularly the poor, have fewer opportunities for participating and having their voice heard. The youth has fewer channels to express their opinions and influence policy decision-making. Participating in the democratic (representative) system and social organizations are the main channels available to them to become social and political actors. However, as it was indicated before, due to the specific characteristics of the Chilean democratic transition these avenues have not worked for the youth configuring a very deep marginalization and exclusion of the youth from civil and political life. Beyond the more or less complex explanations about the reasons for this situation, there are specific actions that could be taken to increase the social and political participation of the youth:

- **Modify the electoral registration process.** The low registration rate among the youth could be easily reverted if an automatic system of inscription for all people 18 years old would be set in place and voting would not be compulsory by law. This would have a great political impact as more than a million and half of young people would enter the electorate. Policy makers would need to pay more attention to youth issues and youth organizations would have weight more in the policy decision making process.
- **The different types of youth organizations should be strengthened and receive support to carry out their activities.** Traditional political actors need to recognize existing youth organizations and leadership and dialogue with them. To facilitate this process would be essential to legislate granting recognition to existing organizations and give them access to public resources to carry out their initiatives.
- **Political education.** Politics and policy making are discredited among the youth and (public opinion in general). This perception is not a purely image problem. Rather it reflects the disenchantment with a system with little political autonomy and with the way in which leadership is exerted. To start modifying this situation, the youth needs to have access to alternative political education and training that would allow them to participate in policy debates and have their voice heard at different levels

Stigmatization

Public opinion about the youth, particularly the poor, is based on stereotypes that emphasize lack of experience, irresponsibility, apathy, violence, drug use. Without a progressive change in these stereotypes it will be impossible to achieve a substantial advance in the social integration of the youth. Changing these perceptions is not simple, as they reflect and confuse societal fears and actual behavior. To start these changes, the state has to assume a proactive role in modifying the public discourse by:

- Developing public education campaigns disseminating the variety of activities and roles that young people have in a variety of situations, (such as students, workers, parents, social leaders, etc.). These activities and roles are frequently ignored by the media that emphasizes stereotypes. At the same time potential employers should be informed regarding the advantages of hiring young people, such as their flexibility and capacity to adapt to new productive processes and technological change.
- Providing resources and support the youth to develop their own self-image and identity. Young people do not have access to resources that would help them develop their own organizations and projects. Further, there are few public spaces for youths; some neighborhoods have community centers but they are not very accessible to the youth. The state and local governments need to support programs that would provide financial support to youth projects and would create public spaces for the youth.

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