

Media and communicative practices
in the quest for the commons:
Chile's 2011 student movement

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I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Wherever contributions of others are involved, these are clearly acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis is an in depth analysis of the communicative and media practices displayed by the Chilean students movement, in 2011, and the way these practices contributed to the building of a commons with capacity for the political to exist in Chilean neoliberal democracy. The thesis interrogates the concept of the commons and in the process questions literature on democracy, social movements and media and communication studies. I argue that in the context of the Chilean student movement the concept of voice should be seen as a political commons that has been expropriated from people in three ways: as a resource that is no longer relevant for the way neoliberal democracies are run; as a relationship curtailed by flawed spaces of mediation; and ultimately as a form of entitlement. Under these conditions, this thesis investigates the ways in which the commons of voice can be rendered from below and the political can be opened up in spite of the hollowing out of democracies in (neo)liberal times.

Embracing a qualitative approach involving interviews and focus groups to approach participants and thematic analysis and grounded theory to analyze data, the research presents four communicative and media practices: the knitting of trust in the intimacy of households and walled spaces; the displaying and representing of bodies in the urban realm; the construction of an imagined commons and the confronting of adversaries in mainstream media; the diffusing of information on the Internet and the failings of communicative exchanges on the web. These practices show the construction of a momentary commons based on practices of affection, presence, ideological dispute and collective identification that subverted neoliberal logics of coexistence, albeit for only a short period of time. The thesis hopes to provide insights that point towards the overcoming of the limitations of the communicative ecology of neoliberal democracies for a more lasting political imprint as well as imagining how politics might be done better from daily life landscapes and beyond outdated liberal frameworks.

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List of Acronyms

CONFECH: Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile (Confederation of Students of Chile).

FEUC: Federación de Estudiantes de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile Students' Union).

FECH: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile (University of Chile Students' Union).

CONES: Coordinadora Nacional Estudiantes Secundarios (Chilean National Coordination of High School Students).

ACES: Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (Chilean Coordinating Assembly of High School Students).

FEUSACH: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Santiago (University of Santiago Students' Union).

FEUMCE: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (Metropolitan University of Educational Sciences Students' Union).

FEC: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Concepción (Concepción University Students' Union).

FEUV: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Valparaíso (Valparaíso University Students' Union).

FEUAH: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad Alberto Hurtado (Alberto Hurtado University Students' Union).

PUC: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile).

FEUCEN: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad Central (Central University Students' Union).

FEUBB: Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad del Bío-Bío (Bío-Bío University Students' Union).

AEEA: Asamblea de Estudiantes de Arte (Art Students Assembly).

CORPADE: Coordinadora de Padres y Apoderados por el Derecho a la Educación (Parents and Guardians Coordinator for the Right to Education).

Introduction

Contemporary Chile is still a society where free market model rules, whose general guidelines were defined in dictatorship and where, naturally, associated plagues survive. These plagues are: a) a low-intensity democracy invaded by a technocratic ideology whose formality provokes strong indifference towards institutional politics and high discredit of professional politicians; and b) a culture in which individualistic and purchasing components rule over expressive and associative aspects. (Moulián, 2002: 9)

How is it possible that what is important for my daily existence is worth so little for history if history is only important when it organizes daily life? (Martín-Barbero, 1993: 57)

In a metaphor that will arise again in this thesis, Chilean sociologist Tomás Moulián (1997) compared Chilean democracy to a birdcage. Moulián's metaphor – written in his book published in the mid 1990's – provided a graphic snapshot of Chile after the end of General Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) and the beginning of democratic administrations: the bird represented democracy and whilst it could fly, it could not break free from the limitations posed by neoliberalism. In other words, Chilean democracy was fenced in by strangleholds related to the Constitution of the Republic written in Pinochet's time and the process of neoliberalization initiated in the late 1970's, and continued after the Washington Consensus (Panizza, 2009). The consequence of this merge of neoliberalism and democracy points us in two directions. On one side, international organisations such as the IMF or the World Bank have praised Chile as a prosperous and stable country (Silva, 2009). On the other side, institutional democracy has lost relevance for those whose perception is that it does not listen to the people's voice (PNUD, 2002); it does not address problems connected to basic rights – such as access to water or the right to public education – and is unable to change the unequal distribution of income that makes Chile the most unequal country within OECD nations (Larraburre and Torchia, 2014). To put it bluntly, since the restoration of democracy there has been a growing perception that institutional democracy has stopped providing meaningful channels for voice and participation (Garcés, 2012) and that, as the 2012 PNUD report on Chile shows, the most basic reason for the

varied and ubiquitous expressions of dissent in Chile, is inequality (PNUD, 2012). Several contentious movements in the last 26 years have made explicit in Chile the need to build alternative ways to be listened to. The most relevant of all and the focus of this research is the students' movement of 2011 (Bellei, Cabalin and Orellana, 2014).

From May to November 2011, the South American nation experienced a seven-month wave of contention expressing its desire for an end to the segregated, privatized, market driven education system (Guzmán-Concha, 2012) implemented during the Chilean military dictatorship (1973-1990) and deepened by the hand of successive social democrats and right-wing administrations (1990-2011) (Cabalín, 2014). With only a limited opportunity from the outset to have voice and be heard within the institutional framework of Chile's democracy or through mainstream media, the Chilean movement employed a diverse repertoire in which media and communicative practices played a key part. Constituted by innovative expressions like flash-mobs and classic repertoires such as marches and rallies (Tricot, 2012), the movement gained a sizeable presence throughout the nation. Its presence extended from local to national realms; from the classroom to the street; from conversations between parents and sons to rounds of dialogue with the government; from barbecues at home to the screens of laptops and televisions. On an unprecedented scale, the Chilean movement contributed to the emergence, display, confrontation, and collaborative work of a large amount of the population involved in, or close to, the movement who, through their actions in their daily lives, were finding a meaningful way to speak, to be seen, and to be present as actors in a Chilean citizenry.

Through a specific case study situated in a particular place – the 2011 students' movement in Chile – I seek with this thesis to contribute to a discussion that goes beyond the borders of Chile to explore the value of communicative practices in landscapes where the dialogical features of democracy have been subsumed by the technocracy of political parties, where the installation of neoliberal hegemonies

prevails, and where the discussion about 'a life in common'¹ is closed to all but a few actors. The case of Chile – the first country where neoliberal economic policies were implemented in the 1970's (Harvey, 2005; Klein, 2007) – provides a particular vantage point from which to analyse how these three elements have been contested from grassroots positions through communicative practices that have attempted to prise institutional politics and create communicative ecologies in which everyone could take part. In this sense, this research connects with literature that comes from diverse areas – economy (Linebaugh, 2004; Ostrom, 2011), politics (Mouffe, 2005; Ranciere, 2004), media and communications (Couldry, 2010; Fenton, 2016; Martín-Barbero, 1993) and social movements (Melucci, 1985, 1995, 1996) – and aims to understand and find ways in which forces outside of institutional politics can undermine the barriers to participation in neoliberal regimes and enact or improve the quality of democratic practices and systems. Considering the vast amount of studies on contemporary movements such as Occupy, the Arab Spring, and the 15-M movement in Spain (Castells, 2012; Graeber, 2013; Juris, 2012; Mason, 2013; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014), this research adds a perspective from a less observed region – for the English speaking world at least – and through its geographic and temporal specificity, aims to contribute to this literature contextually and theoretically.

The media and communicative practices of the student movement appear in this research as part of an opening act that follows an act of closure. Taking Moulián's metaphor of the birdcage, the first part of this research aims to observe insights drawn from a vast literature, and the type of closure that the deep relations between neoliberalism and democracy have engendered. The idea behind this approach is that it is only by understanding better how such relations operate that it

¹ The commons and the life in common is a central concept of this thesis that emerged in the research process. In the subsequent chapters, the concept will be discussed in detail but for now it must be understood in terms of resources and relations. As resources, the commons refers to those elements –water, air – that are fundamental for life (Mattei, 2014) and consequently should be open to all (Ostrom, 2011), to the point that no one could claim them as their private property (Dolcerocca and Coriat, 2015). In terms of relations, the commons relates to the cultivation, preservation, and distribution of those resources in a collective (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992) and cooperative way (Mattei, 2014) that is, certainly, political as long as it is not absent of conflict (Mouffe, 2005).

becomes possible to fully understand the communicative and media practices undertaken in 2011, and to calibrate the relevance of communicative and media practices for 'the political' today.

Through a critical appraisal of literature on democracy, social movements, as well as media and communication studies, the first part of this research sustains that the lack of voice is a product and foundation of neoliberal democracy. Voice, in this research is broadly understood as the process in which people give account of their life and make that narration a constituent element of democracy (Couldry, 2010) rather than as the act of citizens channelling information and claims to policy-makers (Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012). As such, among all the expropriations that neoliberalism conveys over common resources for living, such as water and land, voice comes up as an expropriation that neither liberal nor representative democratic positions have been able to cope with. The latter appears as more complex in Latin America, due to the way in which modernity has violently silenced the voice of those regarded as marginalised in history – the natives, the non-white, the people without knowledge (Mignolo, 2011) – and the manner in which neoliberal policies were installed and perpetuated in the continent (Calcagno and Calcagno, 2015). What I suggest here is that in neoliberal democracies voice is one of those commons that, whilst belonging 'to the people as a matter of life necessity' (Mattei, 2014: 37), has been expropriated with consequences in Chile such as the perception amongst people that democracy does not listen to what they have to say (PNUD, 2012) and the need to speak up through social mobilization to claim back basic rights, such as education (Jackson, 2013).

This thesis seeks to contribute to the academic debate in three ways. The first contribution relates to the consideration of voice as a political commons – in terms of a resource that is a foundation for the political – that has been expropriated in neoliberal settings within and beyond institutional politics, affecting the self-determination of nations (Calcagno and Calcagno, 2015) but also the way in which people feel part of a collective in their daily life (Martín-Barbero, 1993). This

contribution questions democratic and social movement theories addressing the lack of voice – whether in a more institutional way (Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012) or from a more grassroots perspective (Couldry, 2010) – in neoliberal democracies. I suggest that these insights, especially in the context of Latin America, are unable to provide appropriate answers to the fundamental concern of how to overcome the lack of democracy in neoliberal contexts and empower people's voice. The problem, from the perspective of this research, is not only that people are not listened to by their governments, but also the idea that talking has become useless, irrelevant, incongruous with the way in which democracies are run and therefore expropriated from the people.

Following the first contribution, this research expects to locate a second contribution related to the mediations of voice within contemporary settings. The latter is triggered by a question that arises once the idea of the expropriation of voice, as a common resource, has been established. This question is: what occurs in the places where voice is denied, pursued, and contested? The origin of this query emerges from the premise that voice is situated in real landscapes within and beyond the formal arenas of institutional democracy. For the purpose of observing the broad settings in which voice is displayed, I explore key theoretical debates on public space. In this overview I find that there is a selective and exclusivist character in different notions of the public space, when compared with the Greek notion of public space (Fraser, 1992; Rabinovitch, 1997) or in more contemporary perspectives on the matter – such as Dominique Wolton's 'new public space' (1998). In all cases, a mass of people is deemed unable to speak for themselves and is not considered in the distribution of the opportunities to speak (Martín-Barbero, 1993) for reasons such as virtue, wealth, class, or large-scale mediation.

In the account of the closures of the political, voice appears not only as an expropriated resource but also as expropriated from a place to be displayed. As such, this research questions four media and communications perspectives and challenges them to reveal means of overcoming the expropriation of voice in

particular contexts and under particular conditions. Analysing contributions from Latin American communication researchers, such as Luis Ramiro Beltrán (2005); perspectives closer to liberal understandings of the press (Waisbord, 2009); more contemporary insights assessing uses of the internet (Kavada, 2005, 2010); and studies about grassroots mediations (Graeber, 2013), I reach the conclusion that before we can inquire about the space within which to *display* voice we must deal with another expropriation: the people and their entitlement to *have* voice. In other words, it is not only that people do not have voice or a place to make it come to life. The main issue is a more fundamental expropriation: people's entitlement to having voice in the first place.

This finding leads to a third contribution to the debate in the junction of politics, social movements, and media and communication based upon three factors. Firstly, it positions the question of overcoming the lack of voice from a technical matter into an ideological field that, nonetheless, is rooted and affects people in their daily lives. Secondly, and derived from the latter, the question about overcoming the lack of voice must look beyond the realm of institutional politics and consider those realms of daily life and ordinary culture where neoliberal ideology and the absence of democracy is contested. Thirdly, I attempt to highlight a gap in the literature that fails to address the issue of how to produce voice when people are not entitled to do so and where they exist in oppressive conditions. Here, I draw on John Holloway's idea of the 'scream' (Holloway, 2002) as a metaphor for the reconstitution of voice from below, from oppressive situations, from that place that still in the most precarious conditions of life, people will be able to at least mumble their right to exist, and where we find the most delicate fabric of sociality and human existence.

This research concludes its initial section focused on the closures of the political with a certainty and with a question. The certainty concerns the relevance of looking at the juncture between media and communication, politics, social movements, and everyday culture where attempts at contesting the hegemony of neoliberalism with old and new means can be found. These attempts need to be

carefully analysed especially because they do not necessarily represent an assault on the state, but proffer new ways to conceive democracy, such as in the urban assemblies of Occupy (Juris, 2012) or in the same decision-making processes of the Indignados in Spain (Castells, 2012). The question relates to the inquisitive will triggered by gaps in the literature and observation of the uniqueness of the Chilean mobilization in its innovative means, mass, omnipresence, and support. After a revision of the closures of the political, this inquisitive drive launches the opening act of this research.

To mobilize this drive in the form of a research project, I devised a qualitative methodological design within a social constructivist paradigm (Charmaz, 2008) following the spirit of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) as the most appropriate way to address the resistance and constructions of media and communicative practices. In order to move this aim into the field, this thesis uses semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and archive analysis as a means to establish a dialogue with activists involved in the events of 2011, and to gain access to their testimonies, memories, interactions, and reflections. This approach was never fixed or predetermined but was rather driven by my research subjects with a sense of liberty to modify initial explanations as well as guiding questions that changed throughout the course of the research (Morin, 2002).

Indeed, my initial approach was concerned with addressing the following main (and deceptively simple) research question:

- What is the role of communicative and media practices in the Chilean student movement of 2011?

This main question was underpinned and guided by sub-questions aiming to discover the place activists thought they occupied in relation to mainstream media and politics; the sources, characteristics, and purposes of their communication practices; and the place activists' assigned to these practices as well as the consequences of those practices. Thus, the main question was underpinned

through four sub-questions: a) how did the actors involved in the Chilean student movement understand the Chilean public sphere and their place in it? b) What were the sources, characteristics, purposes, and restraints of the student movement communication practices? c) How and why were their communication practices considered significant for the movement? And d), what were the perceived consequences of their communicational practices for the Chilean mainstream public sphere?

The focus of my research was refined after the first of two fieldwork trips to Chile in 2014 and 2015, to attend to the ways in which media and communicative practices built a commons with capacity for the political to exist in the Chilean neoliberal democracy. This normative and pragmatic framework emerged out of my attempts at an explanatory framework in the first stage of my analysis. As a consequence, the above questions were supplemented with further sub-research questions:

1. How did media and communicative practices contribute to the emergence of something approximating 'the commons' in both public spaces and mainstream media?
2. What types and forms of organization were involved in media and communicative practices in the creation of the commons?

Ambitious in its expectations, the research was also at pains to account for my own role as researcher, as someone who has been a student in Chile and taken part in previous student movements. These experiences enriched the research process. I was able to approach the field with a certain knowledge and awareness of the complexities of meaning for activists, as well as their different sensitivities (Rivas, 2012; Walsh, 2004). In this sense, I did not start out with the purpose of achieving objectivity – as a synonym of aseptic perspective – in this research. The aim was to enquire upon my topic through valid qualitative methods (Seale, 2004) and then to move from a process of familiarizing myself with collected data (Ritchie and

Spencer, 1994) to map the patterns emerging from the ground (Berg, 2001). This thesis recounts four chapters addressing the sub-questions posed by the research and, ultimately, provides insights to the main question.

In this thesis the notion of the 'commons' appears as a key concept to understand social unrest coupled with the prospect of imagining emancipatory futures. It does this in three ways: first, as a means of interrogating the political bond between those put aside by contemporary relations between democracy and neoliberalism (Dardot and Laval, 2014); second, as a way to achieve emancipation from a certain condition of subalternity; and third, as a reconstitution of the political bond by recognizing a political counterpart, an adversary, that can bring political subjects abandoned by liberal democracy's notion of citizenship back into being (Harvey, 2012). Thus, the construction of the commons – the commons as a process, labelled in this thesis as *commoning* – poses a challenge to weakened liberal democracies with low levels of participation, where social rights are not guaranteed, where voice exists only in a media system ruled by private companies with no public service will, and where neoliberalism has tended to promote an individualistic sociality – as in Chile – telling people to mind their own business (Jackson, 2013).

This thesis is, ultimately, motivated by a desire to reconsider ways to open up Moulián's (1997) birdcage; to find a way to reclaim the life in common and to stop telling people that it is none of their business. The notion of the commons relies on 'practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation in a common world' (Hardt and Negri, viii), wherein the production of social instances of communication beyond the state and the market appear not only as the 'most basic and necessary form of resistance' (Gilbert, 2013: 177) but also as a way to render a chance for the political to exist. This thesis is ultimately motivated by helping to address in a better way the setbacks of liberal democracy, the rise of neoliberal logics of existence, and the lack of voice for people desperate to get out of the birdcage.

2011: A brief history of the biggest mobilization in the last 30 years

The student mobilization in Chile took off in the autumn of 2011 with the call for a national strike and a march in the main cities of the country on May 12th. The call was made by the National Confederation of University Students of Chile (CONFECH), an association that gathers 25 student unions from state and private universities belonging to what is known as the Rectors' Council (CRUCH)². The reason for the call was to denounce the general crisis of higher education, and specifically to claim more financial support for universities³; for the inclusion of students from low-income families that did not have the opportunity or means to pay high fees; and for more participation from students within institutional boards and decision-making processes (Figueroa, 2012). Along with the latter CONFECH accused the Ministry of Education, Joaquín Lavín, of creating a plan to allow universities to make profits and demanded the immediate end to any policy leaning in that direction (Salinas and Fraser, 2012).

The movement of 2011, however, was not completely unexpected. Prior to the events of that year, student protests were part of the social and political landscape due to permanent protests against the precarious conditions of public education at high school level and due to increasing university fees. The most direct background of 2011 protests occurred in 2006 with the so-called 'Penguin Revolution'. This was a mobilization led by high school students (usually called "penguins" because of their uniform) (Bellei, Cabalín and Orellana, 2014) that lasted from April though to June, and occupied several school buildings in the major cities of Chile, hosting rallies in urban centres from north to south. The main objective of the movement was to end the precariousness of public education and the general 'neo-liberalization of education in their country' (Chovanec and Benítez, 2008: 39). Before the beginning of the student mobilizations in 2011 there

² The denomination 'traditional universities' or CRUCH universities is used to name those state colleges and long-established private universities that were created before the legalization of private superior education under the rule of Augusto Pinochet.

³ <http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2011/05/12/contundente-manifestacion-estudiantil-en-la-antesala-del-21-de-mayo/>

were also two other important situations that contributed to a perceived need to mobilize in Chile. One was the earthquake of February 2010, and the other was the protest to stop the construction of dams in Patagonia during the first months of 2011⁴. In both cases there were expressions of grassroots solidarity – in the case of the earthquake – and peaceful and joyful protests –in the case of the dams in Patagonia – in different cities of the country that made people – as it will be mentioned in further chapters regarding the earthquake – realise their power to do things without state intervention and made them understand the need to manifest these actions urgently. A last, but not least, element that forms part of the background for the student movement is the fact that at the head of the government was – for the first time in 21 years – a right-wing administration led by president Sebastián Piñera who wanted to extend the market-driven model of education in Chile.

Precisely for this reason, in the first two weeks after the march of May 12th, students' demands progressed from being a matter concerning university students, to an issue in which high school students, represented by the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES) and the National Coordinator of High School Students (CONES) also became involved. The National Union of Teachers, the rectors of CRUCH universities, and even federations of parents and guardians joined the students, creating a broad coalition for the reform of the education system. The most notorious expressions of this growing movement were national rallies in all major cities of the country, bringing people in large numbers and also with more diverse ideation than the usual activists⁵. This time there were students, but also professors, parents, grandparents, grassroots supporters, and even the rectors of state universities.

By June, the students' target was clear: Free public, high-quality education at every level. In pursuit of these goals the students occupied hundreds of university and

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-13445300>

⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/05/world/americas/05chile.html>

high schools buildings, refusing to leave until their requests were met. The government responded in different ways. Firstly, the government 'tried to discredit the student movement' (Cabalín, 2014: 485) focusing on publicly rejecting strikes and the occupation of buildings and using police force in the marches. Once the movement was gaining support, the government proposed a solution to the conflict called the 'Great National Agreement for Education'. The proposal had four main agendas⁶: To inject more resources into schools and universities through an education fund; to increase scholarships, loans, and to lower interest rates on debts contracted by students' families; to raise standards in higher education accreditation; and, finally, to create the Superintendence of Higher Education⁷. With this package the government expected to quell the anger of the students and take them back to the classroom, but after consulting on the proposals in their assemblies the students rejected every single proposition for 'leaving untouched the market policy orientation and for not addressing key student demands, including a ban on the illegal practice of profit-making by higher education institutions' (Salinas and Fraser, 2012: 22). Consequently, the movement called for a national march on July 14th to demonstrate their rejection of the government's offer (Bellei, Cabalín and Orellana, 2014).

In the period between May and November, fourteen national rallies occupied streets in different cities from north to south, congregating the largest number of people in the streets since the recovery of democracy in 1990. These rallies were marked by their impressive dimensions, the carnival style of the protesters, the clash between protesters and police⁸, and by the increasing number of participants rally after rally, that exceeded government and convenors' expectations. Nonetheless rallies were not the only method the movement used to spread its message: the occupation of TV channels, the use of social networks, the creation of viral videos, mass street choreographies, marathons around the government house, were other means used during the mobilization. The movement seemed to

⁶ Newspaper La Tercera, July 6th, 2011. Page 2 and 3.

⁷ <http://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/chiles-student-protests>

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/10/chile-riot-student-protest-violence>

be everywhere, gaining empathy and recruiting a broader population in their claims. At some point it was not the student movement anymore, it became a national mobilization for education reform.

In the same period – May to November – meetings were held between the students, rectors, teachers, and the minister of education, one of them involving the presence of the President of Chile, Sebastian Piñera⁹. After these meetings, some improvements were made to the student issues concerning loans and debts, but nothing that was considered sufficiently substantial by the students. Joaquín Lavín, minister of education resigned in June and was replaced by Felipe Bulnes. In October, a round of negotiations – called ‘dialogue table’ – was settled between student representatives and government with the purpose of finding a solution to months of strikes in schools and universities. The ‘dialogue table’ ended abruptly with the students leaving the negotiations claiming that since the government was not willing to discuss free education, there was in fact nothing to discuss.

After the end of the ‘dialogue table’, government and students went their separate ways. On one side the government called a commission of ‘education experts’¹⁰, composed of engineers and a representative of the World Bank to conduct a study of all the things required by Chile to modify its education system. On the other side, students went to the National Congress in an attempt to exert some influence on the discussion of the 2012 national budget on education. They were invited to take part in a special parliamentary commission to inquire about profit in private universities. At the end of 2011, the movement was weakened and decided to end strikes and occupations and return to classes in order to avoid losing that academic year. From 2012 until today (2016), students have continued to go to the streets in their bid for education reform. In spite of the level of awareness and interest in the topic, it is not clear what type of reform today’s centre-left-wing administration, led by Michelle Bachelet, is trying to implement. The reasons lay

⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-15086916>

¹⁰ Newspaper La Tercera, October 15th, 2011. Page 9.

with the opposition the reform has encountered amongst right-wing parties¹¹, the economic situation of the nation¹² - and therefore the impossibility of passing the law granting free, equal, high-quality education. So far, free education has been granted to students coming from low-income families through presidential decrees¹³. It is not certain if these decrees will continue each year, or what could happen after current president, Bachelet, leaves power. What is clear is that students continue to protest for the same things in the streets¹⁴.

Outline of the thesis

The first chapter of this thesis opens the theoretical framework in which this research is set and where the research questions are launched. This chapter begins by discussing the notion that the act of speaking and being listened to is part of a commons that is vital for the political to exist and that a word to define that action and that commons is 'voice'. To locate the concept in this research, I first review different approaches to the commons and how they refer to basic foundations for a more egalitarian, horizontal, and participative type of relationship. I then review how voice is conceived in two prevalent perspectives of democracy and in major branches of student movement scholarship. Considering this research is set in Latin America and more precisely in Chile, I observe how voice presents a serious problem in the region. Making an overview of the way modernity was installed and on the way the subalternity of the Latin American subject was deepened by the hand of neoliberalism, I conclude that voice is a commons that has been expropriated, a resource that by its absence undermines the opportunity for people to talk and intervene in discussion and decisions concerning the life in common.

¹¹ <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Chilean-Students-March-Against-Education-Reform-20151222-0019.html>

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/20/chile-michelle-bachelet-reform-plans-delayed>

¹³ <http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/free-education-frustration-chiles-student-activists>

¹⁴ <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Students-in-Chile-Protest-New-Education-Reform-20160705-0015.html>. In the conclusion chapter, I provide a longer description of the evolution of the educational issue in Chile between 2011 and 2016.

As Couldry and contemporary literature on the commons asserts, voice is 'not the practice of individuals in isolation' (Couldry, 2010: 8) and thus requires landscapes of mediation. Therefore, chapter 2 launches its review by assessing public space literature and finding that public space approaches are not alien to the general tendency of narrowing the realms of involvement and dissent. Placed in the Chilean context of few opportunities to exert voice, I analyse four contemporary perspectives of scholars that at the juncture of media, communication, and social movement studies, have sought to break the settings where voice is socially discharged without major success. In this chapter I conclude that voice – as a commons – has not only been expropriated as resource but also as a place. The latter indicates an ultimate expropriation, the entitlement of people to have voice in a more egalitarian, horizontal, and participative way. In light of this last expropriation, I suggest that any attempt to have voice would have to start rebuilding this entitlement individually and for the broad collective. I call the latter the rendering of a commons, a task within and beyond the limitations of the public and the private, and beyond the limitations of formal liberal democracies, displayed through different means in the quest for voice, participation, and recognition.

Whilst the purpose of chapters 1 and 2 is to locate this research in an area of study, determine its nature and how it contributes to political, communication, social movements, and cultural studies, chapter 3 demonstrates and explains my methodological approach to the topic. This research is devised from a qualitative perspective that, embracing elements of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), goes from a general overview to the specific interest in the media and communicative practices in which Chilean students render a political commons to open up the political (Mouffe, 2005). Using qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and archive analysis, I collect data on the diverse range of actions carried out by activists' that go from the intimacy of homes to the public displays of emotions, from mainstream media work to the use of social media. Within this chapter I explain largely the rationale of the approach and methods, as well as the ways in which data challenged my initial assumptions to the point of modifying my research questions. In the end – and after a back and forth analysis

of the data – I describe the categories shaping the map of actions where it is possible to identify distinctive media and communicative practices that give form to the four data chapters of this research.

The four following chapters of this thesis, therefore, describe and analyze four areas and types of practices that played different roles in the rendering of the commons. Chapter 4 focuses on what I call ‘walled intimacy practices’. Composed of conversations at home with family and friends, with classmates in occupied buildings, and between students and student representatives in local and national assemblies, practices of walled intimacy mark a process of emergence of the commons based on webs of trust. In this emergence I highlight three key elements: The relevance of closeness and confidence to beat fear and individualism in order to mobilize; the redefinition of time and space in order to have conditions to discuss at their own pace; and finally the importance of participatory ways to arrive at collective agreements. In the end, the chapter underlines that for the students there was no opportunity to establish dialogues and discussions without breaking and subverting neoliberal logics of time and space as necessary ways to share and debate common concerns.

Chapter 5 moves from the intimacy of walls, to urban realms where the body was displayed in contentious events like marches, rallies, flashmobs, leaflet distribution, and art interventions. The practices I term ‘urban embodiment’ imply three types of actions: Holding face-to-face informative encounters in Chilean city corners, squares, and streets; art interventions, flashmobs, and other old but renewed repertoires placed in urban points; and marches and rallies in the main avenues of Chilean cities. I analyze these actions from a performative and representational perspective. With reference to the first of them, I understand their display as an embodied collaboration inviting people to be part of an engaging cohabitation and raising awareness of a common life. In terms of their representational side, the movement had a lively experience of a ‘we’ that allowed people to see and be part of something bigger than the individual, with a growing awareness of the power of a growing social and political body. I conclude in this chapter that intervening in the

city and disrupting its 24/7 rationale (Crary, 2013) through the bodies of activists, carried a collaborative will that, along with rendering a 'we', brought the opportunity to feel that as a body, people were finally speaking to a political adversary.

Chapter 6 considers the question of what to do with mainstream media. At this point, this thesis has given sufficient information about the property of Chilean mainstream media, their pro-neoliberal agenda and how the students of 2011 were aware of that situation. In spite of what prejudice might lead one to think, students' decisively faced mainstream media trying to optimise that relationship. In 2011 the movement devised a strategy towards media, identifying publics and audiences as well as messages and goals. The scale of their action was national and regional and was sought to be present in media spaces debating, arguing, and expressing from that position, a clear image of the 'us'. In other words, students worked to create an imagined commons that implied work of both disarticulation and articulation. In the first place, they worked to disarticulate the neoliberal discourse on education and the common-sense of market-driven education as 'the' only way for the Chilean education system to be; whilst they also tried to tackle the idea that only institutional actors of Chilean democracy could intervene in political debates. Secondly, their media work intended to establish that free, equal, and high-quality education was not only necessary but possible, and that anyone – certainly the students – were valid actors to discuss education. At the end of this chapter, I express that although students managed to signify in simple terms the problem of Chilean education and contributed to the creation of an imagined commons, their actions were limited. These limitations are related to the enormous task of their media work and the improbable chance of sustaining it in the long term; to the property of mainstream media and their ideological bias; and because ultimately large scale mediations for conveying and deepening a social movement exceeds what is possible to do through mainstream media.

Chapter 7 deals with the opportunity to engage in a more autonomous – without the need for mainstream media – and large-scale mediation thanks to the uses of

the internet. In 2011 the internet was relevant for a wide range of actions that I observe in this chapter divided into two groups: those who fostered a more vertical relationship, and those who enabled a more horizontal logic. Within these actions are the creation and use of websites, the use of social media – especially Facebook – the coordination of concerted actions on the web and also the internet as a realm of dialogue and discussion. After observing these actions I find that the uses of the web favoured a more aggregative and individualistic type of participation as expressed in the diffusion of information, such as the call for marches or flashmobs. However, it is on the collaborative and more horizontal type of participation where the internet does not appear to be successful, due to a tendency to speak rather than to listen, to treat difference as a synonym of threat and, in the end, to narrow the scope of people to talk only to those who share the same beliefs and stances. Accordingly, in this chapter I conclude that the uses of the internet passed from holding a solidary will, to a position of cultivating ghettos of political identities unable to talk to each other without harming the other, rendering further collaboration and even discussion impossible. Consequently, the uses of the internet for communicative practices appear in this chapter as a trigger to an uncommoning process that made the commons burst into pieces. Why, having autonomous media and the opportunity to increase communication from one person, to thousands – no matter the geographical location – did the latter happen?

Precisely reflecting on this question I approach the final and conclusive chapter of this thesis, providing an answer to the general question of this research, an analysis on the original contribution of this thesis and a reflection of its limitations and as a starting point for future investigations. The answer to the general question points out that the movement opened up the political due to communicative and mediated practices successfully mending the social fabric in realms of trust; creating spaces for being together and making a representation of the 'we'; gaining also recognition as political actors and achieving the creation of an imagined commons; and finally expanding participation and the image of the 'we' in a larger web-scale that nonetheless could not sustain deliberative and collaborative

relationships in the long term. In other words, this answer says that this movement built a commons with capacity for the political to exist in the Chilean neoliberal democracy only in the short term because of its incapacity for subverting neoliberal logics of communication. Later in this conclusion I reflect on the relevance and theoretical contribution of using and developing the notion of the commons in media and communication studies due the chance it gives to overcome outdated frameworks of liberal democracy – such as the public sphere – and to provide elements for thinking about different types of progressive politics and more compelling democracies. Acknowledging the limitations of this research regarding its methods and the shortcomings relating to certain areas not covered by this research, as well as underlining certain paths for future research, I end this thesis with an overview of what has happened with the educational issue in Chile and with cases that in the last months of 2016 have shown a certain ‘commons’ spirit emerging in the South American nation as a way to deal with its neoliberal democracy.

Chapter 1

Social movements' struggle for voice in times of neoliberal democracy

The fundamental *problématique* of our society therefore is no longer to construct a democratic regime starting from a situation of civil war, authoritarianism, or a military regime, as it was in the 1980s. Rather, it is to construct a new social base in which democracy has meaning and relevance (Garretón, 2003: 184).

In 2011, the Chilean students' movement expressed its will to end the unequal, privatized, market-driven education system implemented during the period of military dictatorship (1973–1990), and deepened by the hand of successive social democrat and right-wing administrations (1990–2011). The events of 2011 were an expression of their determination to fight for what many people consider to be an inalienable human right to high-quality and free, public education for all, irrespective of ethnic background, household income, or geographical location.

This mobilization took place in a country with a formal representative democracy ruled by technocratic political parties¹⁵ prone to neoliberal policies (Garretón, 2007; Feres, 2009; Guerrero, 2006), where it is claimed that political participation outside elections has been increasingly discouraged by political parties, and where a media system owned by few pro-neoliberal corporations has consistently criminalized social mobilization (Cuadra, 2012). In this neoliberal democracy, therefore, people campaigning for free, public, and equal education – a basic right they considered themselves to have been deprived of – demanded to be listened to, and demanded that the government's actions be fully accountable. In this regard, education was considered an *expropriated commons* – a concept that I will

¹⁵ By technocracies I refer to 'a system of governance in which technically trained experts rule by virtue of their specialized knowledge and position in dominant and political and economic institutions' (Fischer, 1990: 17). In the case of Chile, authors like Silva (2006), argue that after Pinochet the nation became a democracy run by technocrats. This meant that political and social challenges were only able to achieve within the frames of neoliberalism and problems were technical issues, therefore always able to fix within the frames of neoliberalism. In other words, neoliberalism was never put into question.

discuss later, but suffice to say here, the commons is primarily understood as 'resources that belong to the people as a matter of life necessity' (Mattei, 2014: 37). However, was the commons, in the context of this mobilization, only restricted to the demand for education? It does not seem so if the analysis goes beyond the main petition to observe the varied set of media and communicative practices of 2011 with regard to its different aspects and its diverse intentions.

Resistance through symbolic media and communicative practices has been part of what social movement scholars, media and communication researchers, and political scientists have been studying over past decades (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Melucci, 1996). But in the Chilean case, where democracy has been increasingly a matter for elites (Yoccelevzky, 1998; Delamaza, 2013) and in which neoliberalism¹⁶ has privatized many aspects of life – from water to education, from healthcare to pensions (Budds, 2004) – overcoming silence and lack of participation has more to do with an opening of 'the political'¹⁷ than passing a claim

¹⁶ In this research, neoliberalism is understood as an economic and political doctrine that has settled as an ideology, reaching macroeconomic structures as well as people's daily lives. In economic terms, neoliberalism proposes that 'human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (Harvey, 2: 2005). Neoliberal economic commandments include the shrinking of the state and the building of structural conditions for the laissez-faire of private enterprise, leaving room for privatization and the arrival of foreign capital (Calcagno and Calcagno, 2015). Crafted at the University of Chicago by the economist Milton Friedman, neoliberal policies were first implemented in Chile under the military regime of Augusto Pinochet and later in other Latin American countries. Under Pinochet's regime, at the end of the 1970's, the Chilean market was deregulated and public assets privatized (Cannon, 2016); import tariffs were reduced (Solimano, 2012); natural resources such as fisheries and forests were open to private exploitation, 'in many cases riding roughshod over the claims of indigenous inhabitants' (Harvey, 2005: 8); new private pension and healthcare systems were introduced; and an open-door policy was implemented for foreign investment. Neoliberal doctrine was later implemented in other regions of the world, usually through forced means (Prashad, 2014). The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the US Treasury in 1989 sealed this one-dimensional global perspective in the 'Washington Consensus', a set of policies including fiscal discipline, tax reform, interest rate liberalization, trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation, securing property rights, redirecting public spending priorities and liberalizing foreign direct investment flows (Panizza, 2009). As an ideology, neoliberalism is said to promote values such as individualism over collectivism; freedom as the unregulated development of markets; inequality as something natural and inevitable; a capitalist mode of production as the engine of history; and state intervention as a disruptor of social order and social peace (Brown, 2005; Garretón, 2012). Today, researchers on the commons consider neoliberalism as the cause for destroying 'the conditions of life in the planet and lead[ing] to the destruction of men by men' (Dardot and Laval, 2014).

¹⁷ Within this chapter and thesis I will use the terms 'politics' and 'the political' in different ways. These uses are intended to reflect a quantitative and qualitative difference in the way Jacques

to institutional representatives. This will be discussed later in the chapter, and I will observe and analyse two broadly different ways of understanding democracy and social movements in the context of Chile.

Upon this premise, the nature of the problem appears to be more elemental, relating to the basic foundations of political participation: the chance to speak and to be listened to when discussing issues that concern us all – the life in common – beyond the limitations of individualism and the strictures of privatization and deregulation that prevail in neoliberal democracies (Calcagno and Calcagno, 2015). The questions that arise, accordingly, are: What is the nature of the problem of not being able to enact one's citizenship and participate in political debate in the context of a neoliberal democracy, and how can it be overcome from grassroots positions like the one held by the Chilean students for claiming high-quality, free, public education? In this and the next chapter I will try to address these questions using the available literature.

I launch this chapter from the understanding that the opportunity to speak and to be listened to is an elemental commons for the political to exist, and I label that commons as 'voice'. To anchor the concepts, firstly, I approach the primitive and more contemporary notion of the commons and its pertinence to observe beyond the constraints of certain political discussions, as well as its salience for understanding the minimum foundations for a more egalitarian, horizontal and participative political association. Secondly, I address the ways in which voice is understood by the literature on democracy and social movements, finding two major patterns – voice as a channel to pass claims towards mainstream democratic institutions, and voice as a way to bring the political to life through discussion and disagreement. As long as these communicative conditions remain unfulfilled and the impossibility of breaking the closures to political participation in

Rancière and Chantal Mouffe (2005, 2013) critically define them. In this sense, 'the political' refers to the conflictual and antagonistic dimension of human societies, whereas 'politics' is understood as 'the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political' (Mouffe, 2005: 9).

neoliberal realms continues, this chapter contends that what occurs in neoliberal contexts like in the Chilean case is the expropriation of voice as a political commons.

Given that this research is set in a specific place, in the second part of this chapter I will move the discussion on to discover how this expropriation relates specifically to Latin America. Observing the politico-cultural foundations and the subsequent quests for independence, emancipation, and liberation in the continent, I conclude that the expropriation of voice finds fertile soil in Latin America, and specifically in Chile, where it occurs in a manner that is fundamental to the politics of the region. Mainstream politics, in this sense, appears unable to provide answers defeating the lack of voice. But social movements do seem to bring insights beyond the limitations of the institutional realm in two ways: firstly, by giving relevance to non-mainstream actors, and secondly, by underlining the main aim of those who are not permitted to have a voice – to overcome cultural patterns in which their voice is diminished or rendered useless.

The chapter ends with the affirmation that the commons of voice has been expropriated in neoliberal democracies, that this expropriation is deeply rooted in Latin America, and that an expropriated voice undermines the chance of active citizen participation, a more dialogical democracy and basic political rights. On this sense, the chapter gives a step forward to the idea that overcoming this expropriation implies overcoming a cultural hegemony beyond the limitations of institutional politics. The next chapter follows the previous step through an enquiry into the broad spaces in which voice – as a commons involving resources, relationships and placements to convey those relationships – has been accepted, contested, and challenged. I argue that only once the latter has been observed and understood will this theoretical insight be in a position to understand the nature of the problem and what is needed to generate the minimal resources and relationships required for a political commons.

Voice as commons: speaking and being listened to beyond institutional politics

Why the commons? The notion of the commons has been gaining in popularity among theorists (Mattei, 2012), activists, and intellectuals, with the continuous emergence of social movements following the 1999 protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the subsequent demonstrations claiming that another world is possible, as expressed by the World Social Forum (Fisher and Ponniah, 2003; George, 2004). But the commons is far from being a new concept. As the organization On The Commons (OTC) expresses, the commons is a new way to express an old idea: that some elemental resources for life belong to us all and that they should be accessible and open to all (Ostrom, 2011) with no one being able to claim them as their individual property (Dolcerocca and Coriat, 2015).

This definition of the commons has been expanded in the last 30 years. Originally centred on land property, natural resources, and land management, today it is applied to diverse issues such as the collective management of resources (Ostrom, 2011); the overexploitation of natural resources (Linebaugh, 2014; Amin and Howell, 2016); the creation, use, and distribution of knowledge and information against legal and technical barriers for the free flow of information and creativity (Lessig, 2001); new collective and horizontal political organisation (Hardt and Negri, 2009); the critique of private enclosures on urban spaces (Stavrvides, 2016); and revolutionary attempts contesting neoliberal globalisation (De Angelis, 2006; Dardot and Laval, 2014).

In this sense, the revival of the commons is linked to the awareness of inhabiting a common world (Hardt and Negri, 2009) where living conditions have been impoverished (Blomley, 2008) and where people increasingly perceive their lack of decision-making power over collective life through institutional political processes (PNUD, 2010). This is evident in the case of Chile, as expressed by the report of the United Nations Development Programme in 2004. The report said that while

the distance between political parties and citizenship grows and elections attracts less interest, the political discourses of mainstream politicians do not respond in an adequate way to people claims, making grow the distance between public deliberation and political decisions. In sum, says the report, “there is an increasing distance between society and the way democracy is conveyed” (PNUD, 2004: 247)

In these conditions, the question about the commons relates to basic resources not only for physical survival but to enact a more egalitarian relationship and collective engagement in which everybody could take part of the discussion and decision making process about the life in common (Linebaugh, 2008, 2014). In this quest, voice appears as a foundational resource and as a basic relationship – to speak and to be heard – that students and people living in Chile’s neoliberal democracy have tried to render through non-institutional means. As Camila Vallejo, spokesperson for the Confederation of Chilean Students (CONFECH) and one of the most salient leaders of the movement in 2011, stated in her explanation of the means used throughout the student mobilisation: ‘without pressure mechanisms they do not listen to us’¹⁸.

To understand why voice is understood as a commons in Chile today I will firstly analyse the evolution of the commons as a concept connected to resources and, secondly, I will analyse the actual understanding of the commons as a type of collective, horizontal, and inclusive political engagement.

The origin of the commons as a concept goes back to discussions about land property and the management of goods coming from the land (Linebaugh, 2008). In this discussion there have been two distinct sides: On one side, those in favour of individual and private property (Locke, 1980; Hardin, 1968); on the other, those in favour of communal property (Harvey, 2011; Wall, 2014). The cause for private property goes back as far as the 4th century BC, with Aristotle’s belief that goods and properties owned in common receive less care than those in the hands of a single person. Accordingly, for Aristotle, the prevalence of private ownership was

¹⁸ Newspaper La Tercera, edition of September 14, 2011.

not only a rational concept, but also a natural condition: 'People are much more careful of their personal possessions than of those owned communally; they exercise care over common property only in so far as they are personally affected' (1982: 108).

The major American civilizations, like the Aztecs (in territories where today we find Mexico and Guatemala) and the Incas (in a region where today we have Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile) believed otherwise. While there was some private property owned by those at the top of hierarchies of the empires (Martínez Estrada, 1990), most of the land was communal (Wall, 2014). The *calpullis* and *ayllus*, in the Aztec and Inca cultures respectively, were communal properties on which communities settled to live from the land (Lucena Salmoral, 1982). The land, however, was not only for collecting goods to survive, but was also the headquarters of an economic, social, political and religious system. Every *ayllu* or *calpulli* was a small state which, along with other states, created a confederation (Martínez Estrada, 1990). In this sense, land was linked to the provision of resources for eating and acquiring shelter, but also for political existence. The Spanish conquest however changed the previous logic and – in the name of the Spanish crown – distributed land to private lords who granted varied access to soil and goods. After the independence of Chile that practice was continued such that native communal lands progressively disappeared to create *haciendas* – economic and political regimes similar to European feudal systems (Bengoa, 1990).

This logic of lords owning land and granting different degrees of access to its goods was present in Europe through feudal systems of governance (Wall, 2014). But, as Wall warns, during the 12th and 14th centuries, common land became private territory in which neighbours and farmers held common rights only for using that land (Wall, 2014). From the 15th to the 19th century, English common lands were enclosed and 'the previously common land was simply converted into private property, generally controlled by a single landholder' (Boyle, 2008: 43). In these enclosures, a certain number of people – the commoners – had the right to access,

use and/or to exploit the resources within those enclosures (Wall, 2014), but the property remained private. As Silvia Federici (2009) underlines, ‘in the 16th century, “enclosure” was a technical term, indicating a set of strategies the English lords and rich farmers used to eliminate communal land property and expand their holdings’ (69). A key supporter of this progressive privatization was liberal English thinker John Locke (1632–1704). Taking a similar position to Aristotle, Locke strongly believed that the most rational type of land occupation and exploitation was that of private ownership. In one of his most notorious statements on private property, Locke expressed: ‘God, who hath given the world to men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life and convenience (...) he gave it to the use of the industrious and rational; not to the fancy or covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious’ (Locke, 1980: 18).

In this way, the modern liberal approach implied a turning point for the commons: it placed land and its resources at the service of an intensive private exploitation. But in a capitalist and more populated world, the idea of having unexploited land collided with alternative conceptions about land and the use of its resources, much like those of the Aztecs, Incas, and the North American natives (Wall, 2014). However, this trend towards privatization was not limited to America or to England, and liberal thought continued to reject common enclosures even to a marginal degree (Dardot and Laval, 2014). As a consequence, and moreover in a capitalist context, ideas on common property and common use of land became regarded as ineffective – if not irresponsible – and outdated (Wall, 2014).

A defining position rejecting communal lands in the 20th century is marked by Garrett Hardin’s article ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ (1968). Continuing Aristotle and Locke’s defence of individual property, Hardin criticized the concept of common enclosures as viable economic endeavours. His contempt of the commons was based upon the assumption that people – as part of their human condition – would pursue personal gain in an uncontrolled spiral (Hardin, 1968) that was detrimental to the long-term exploitation of the land as long as users, looking

to satisfy their needs, were going to deplete the land's resources (Wall, 2014). The most likely outcome of a common administration was, therefore, disastrous for land productivity and, ultimately, for human life. For this reason, Hardin and his supporters saw private property as 'preferable to the "total ruin" imposed by the commons' (Murdock, 2013).

Hardin's contribution in 1968 garnered sufficient support to ensure a landmark debate on nature, property, and common management of resources, especially within the defenders of private property (Kornberger and Borch, 2015). By centring the discussion on the best administration of land, Hardin rejected anything other than private ownership and private exploitation of the land and its resources. His position, in this sense, could be labelled as a pre-neoliberal argument but also as the post from which new approaches to the commons began to grow.

The most relevant approach to contest Hardin's arguments came from Elinor Ostrom's influential book *Governing the Commons* (1990). After the demise of state socialisms and the triumph of capitalism, Ostrom triggered a renewed interest in the commons, opening up a new alternative after economic models and grand narratives were no longer in a position to challenge capitalism. She did so by proving that common pool resources could be productive in the long term, empirically tackling the liberal idea that the commons signalled tragedy and that privatization was the only possible way to manage it (Rogers, 2010). Interestingly, Ostrom also rejected an idea closer to state socialisms: that a big and strong control state – she used Hobbes' notion of Leviathan to stress the point – was necessary to impede the overexploitation of communal land and to save the commons from tragedy. In this way, Ostrom demonstrated that it was possible to build a long-term sustainable environment through collective action based on certain principles¹⁹.

¹⁹ Based on her research on practical cases of common-pool resources (CPR) and aware of the peculiarities of each case, Elinor Ostrom (1994) defined eight principles of sustainable community-governed commons. These principles involve, first, defining clear boundaries about the limits and

In doing so, Ostrom opened up the concept of the commons in two ways that have been richly developed in the recent work of activists, academics, and researchers. The first is the use of the commons as a political type of engagement that goes beyond usual economic and political dichotomies – such as the one posed by the state versus the market. The second is the understanding of the commons as a collective engagement needing basic resources and relationships for its preservation. Both are key factors to understand why the commons today appears as a political alternative to weakened democracies and against the influence of neoliberalism on varied areas of life (Bruun, 2015; Dardot and Laval, 2014)

Ostrom led the first of these by stressing that the state and the market were not ‘successful in enabling individuals to sustain long-term, productive use of natural resource systems’ (2011: 1). In the face of this inefficacy, she argued that the commons was a feasible way ‘to govern some resource systems with reasonable degrees of success over long periods of time’ (2011: 1). In the context of progressive globalization (Castells, 1999), the declining power of nation-states (Beck, 2000; Habermas, 2000) and the aggressive expansion of neoliberalism (Panizza, 2009; Garretón, 2012), the commons expressed an alternative to old dichotomies such as the private versus the public (Harvey, 2011). Labelling these dichotomies as reduced and reductionist, the idea of the commons represented a move to embrace politics in areas formerly not considered political. These areas will be later observed in the section addressing the literature of social movements, but for now it must be noted that the notion of the commons helped to imagine

limitations of a commons. The reason for this definition is because ‘as long as the boundaries of the resource and/or the individuals who can use it remain uncertain, no one knows what they are managing or for whom’ (37). A second principle is the congruence between the use of a resource and the availability of it, in order to not deplete that resource. The third principle tells that most of those affected by the rules of a CPR can take part in the modification of those rules. The fourth and fifth principle refers to monitoring members’ behaviour and sanctions for those who violate rules. The sixth principle says those who share the common pool resource should have accessible and low-cost mechanisms to resolve conflicts, while the seventh principle seeks to assure that the rights elaborated by the people of a CPR are respected by outside authorities. A final principle summarises all the above-mentioned principles and actions related to the ‘appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution and governance’ (41), establishing that these must be enabled ‘in multiple layers of nested enterprises’ (41).

political alternatives in what the German-Chilean scholar Norbert Lechner called ‘the backyards of democracy’ (Lechner, 1988): those daily life activities (De Certeau, 2000; Maffesoli, 2005; Martín-Barbero, 1993) in which a social action – not accounted as fully political by liberal democratic approaches or state socialisms and not attached to grand narratives either – expresses grassroots efforts to build a better life in common. Once this contribution of the commons is taken seriously, ‘certain republican or democratic political philosophy’ (Dardot and Laval, 2014: 51) seems not to be enough to deal with the current phenomena of people demanding another democracy, reshaping practices and spaces (Stavrides, 2016) as in the Argentinian and Ecuadorian *asambleas de barrio* [neighbourhoods assemblies] (Argento, 2015; Pasadena, 2011), the Spanish urban camps (Della Porta, 2015), or the Chilean intimate spaces, urban realms, mainstream media labour, and online mobilisation (analysed in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this research), where the discussion and construction of the life in common is actually happening.

The second way in which Ostrom’s contribution helped to open and expand the notion of the commons, was by making evident that the use and preservation of resources implied a type of relationship that was collective, rooted in specific cultures and political – as long as it implied a conflictual dimension (Mouffe, 2005). In this way, Ostrom moved the exclusive understanding of the commons as natural resources ‘often claimed to be the inheritance of humanity as a whole, to be shared together’ (Hardt and Negri, 2011: viii) to a mode of governance (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992)²⁰ based on shared responsibility, cooperation, and the promotion of

²⁰ The commons implies a certain type of governance that is democratic because it follows certain principles already explained although it is not an entirely developed notion when put into practice. The clearer insight on the governance of the commons comes from Elinor Ostrom and the notion of Common Pool Resources (CPR’s). A CPR is a ‘natural or man-made resource system that is sufficiently large as to make it costly (but not impossible) to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use’ (Ostrom, 2011: 30) that following a set of principles (mentioned in the previous page) become live experiences of self-organization happening with or without a bond with the state. This type of governance is, however, challenged when moved from local to larger dimensions, as Ostrom et. al. (1999) observe when ‘organizing, agreeing on rules, and enforcing rules’ (1999: 281) at global scales. Issues such as cultural diversity, the connection between different local groups, the acceleration of social, economic and political changes and the need of unanimous agreement as a collective-choice rule are part of these challenges. In other insights of the commons, governance guidelines are less clear, like in the case of Dardot and Laval (2014),

cooperative logics (Mattei, 2014) through which it is possible to ensure human preservation. By understanding the commons in this way, Ostrom and subsequent researchers signalled, although they did not develop, the idea that the most elemental resources and relations needed to generate a commons were those required to enact communicative ecologies of conversation, dialogue, discussion, and resolution. In this sense, voice – a concept that will be developed later – becomes a fundamental resource to move forward with a ‘commoning’ process (Euler, 2015; Murdock, 2012; Ostrom, 2011) in which the life in common can be discussed on an equal footing (Euler, 2015) while not following or obeying top-down hierarchies (Helfrich, 2012).

This last understanding of the commons expresses the relevance of communication and mediation in the process of generating a commons. But the problem posed by this literature review, and not resolved by Ostrom – and actually one of the issues in debate around the topic (Dardot and Laval, 2014) – is how to move forward with the process of commoning in neoliberal democracies in which logics of dialogue, dissent, and cooperation have been systematically discouraged (Crary, 2013; Lazzarato, 2012; Harvey, 2012) and in which people feel increasingly excluded from the decisions made about their own lives (Latinobarómetro, 2008), as observed before in the Chilean case (PNUD, 2004).

So here lies a partial and initial response to the question posed at the beginning of this section: why is the notion of the commons relevant to the study of a mobilization around education such as that which occurred in Chile during 2011? It is because the way to enter into discussion on the life in common in the Chilean context is through recognising that the commons needs voice, a fundamental resource and basic democratic right not afforded by neoliberalism in Chile. One of the scholars adopting this position is Jeremy Gilbert (2014). For Gilbert, the most basic and

who offer a general description as to what the governance of the commons might look like, but without providing light on how to overcome social and political trends that would be detrimental for a commons environment. This is a problem they recognize when questioning ‘how to make common the political principle of the reorganization of the whole society in the conditions of an irreducible plurality of commons of varying size and dimension, from local to world commons?’ (2014:527).

necessary forms of resistance to neoliberalism nowadays are the creation of social forums and instances for litigation²¹. But to mobilize acts of speaking, talking, and debating the life in common, voice needs to be produced. Before exploring how voice could be produced in contemporary democratic settings, it is necessary to understand voice as a concept with different political meanings. An observation of these meanings will give a better understanding of the notion of voice as a necessary resource for the permanent reproduction of a commons.

Democracy and the meaning of voice

The place voice occupies in political thought is a matter I will review, following David Held's (2006) account, in two prevalent models of democracy: liberal representative democracy, which circumscribes voice towards the polity; and direct democracy, which understands voice as a foundation for the political that becomes threatened due to the influence of neoliberalism on the participative, dialogical, and conflictual components of democracy. Both models are general and US-Eurocentric perspectives, but help to encompass two distinctive visions of democracy and pose the question about what it means to exert voice in neoliberal democracies.

Robert Dahl's (1989, 1998) account of the liberal representative model identifies democracy in broad terms as a space in which ruling institutions are conducted by elected representatives voted for by the citizenry, and where people participate in elections covering periods long enough to prove the performance of the elected representatives. Dahl ponders as essential elements, the need for permanent elections, the existence of democratic beliefs and political culture, and the absence of strong foreign control hostile to democracy. From his perspective, there are two

²¹ I use the term litigation not in the legal sense, but in the way in which Jacques Rancière (2004) uses the term in his own work 'Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy'. For Rancière the foundation of the political is disagreement, not in terms of a particular topic or issue, but about what is common, what is the logic defining society and who is entitled to have voice. Litigation is disagreement in motion, what makes it possible to install the conflict, the difference, and the presence of the excluded from a conflictual and political relationship.

other elements that favour this kind of democracy: a modern market economy and society; and a weak subcultural pluralism. For Dahl, 'we cannot escape the conclusion that a market-capitalist economy, the society it produces, and the economic growth it typically engenders, are all highly favourable conditions for developing and maintaining democratic political institutions' (1998: 159).

Within the extensive liberal representative democracy literature, there are points of view of democracy that consider elements other than elections, market-driven economies, and cultural homogeneity as foundations for the model to function. These perspectives understand citizens as actors more engaged in decision-making processes. Charles Tilly, for instance, considers that a regime is democratic when 'political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected, mutually binding consultation' (Tilly, 2007: 59). For Tilly, the best possible scenario – mutually binding consultation – implies a relationship based on trust networks that are permanent dialogical bonds embedded in daily life. Thus, Tilly introduces a dialogical element to the liberal approach that exceeds the mere act of voting.

Posited in this way, the liberal representative vision of democracy conveys a vision of voice that is clearly depicted by Schlozman, Verba and Brady (2012). They define political voice as: '...any activity undertaken by individuals and organizations "that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies"' (2012: 10). For these authors (whose research on the topic is centred on the United States), voice conveys two democratic actions: to communicate information to policy-makers; and to provide incentives to policy-makers (2012). Consequently, political voice runs within the paths of institutional democracies. As the authors remark, their definition of voice 'excludes political discussion' (2012: 13).

The problem of understanding voice in this way is its limited character which is even more reduced in contexts where the market does not sustain democracy – as

Dahl claims – and where people’s voice does not find a place for changing the logic with which governments handle their nations under a neoliberal rationale. This problem – which some influential liberal thinkers with limited appreciation of democracy, such as Hayek (2001), would not actually consider a problem – is not addressed by Tilly. Tilly points out that the path towards a better democracy faces serious problems when the state is subordinated by autonomous market powers and certain degrees of inequality (Tilly, 2007). However, he leaves unanswered the question of how democratization can be sustained within neoliberal hegemony. This question needs to be answered when – to mention just one element that becomes critical – the dialogical element of Tilly’s more inclusive model is precisely weakened by a rationale based on the ‘health and growth of the economy’ (Brown, 2005: 42) that affects, in Chile for instance, basic human rights such as the public access to water (Baer, 2014).

Under the notion of direct democracy, I gather – following Held’s (2006) scheme – experiences and theoretical approaches ranging from Marxist to post-Marxist critical reflections. These perspectives express their distance from merely legal democracies as well as towards the influence of neoliberalism, basing their critique on elements that modern democracy does not accomplish or accomplishes unsatisfactorily. These claims are, according to Norberto Bobbio (1989): the distribution of power; the ideal of political representation; the end of the rule of oligarchical power; the scarce number of spaces for participation; the failure of the accountability of power; and the detachment of people from formal democratic principles. The outcome of this dissatisfaction has been a demand for more pluralism, deliberation and participation in the consideration of current democracies as systems benefiting the actions of oligarchies (understood in Aristotelian words as ‘the wealthy’) and states are in a position where ‘politics and government are increasingly slipping back into the control of privileged elites in the manner characteristic of pre-democratic times’ (Crouch, 2004: 6).

Within most contemporary literature on this broad political stream, neoliberalism occupies a central place: it is accused not only of damaging democracy in its

pluralistic, deliberative, and participative aspects, but also of defining the space where democracy is allowed to exist. From this viewpoint, neoliberalism holds a hegemonic status (Balibar, 2002; Mouffe, 2005; Dean, 2009; Brown, 2003, 2005) close to an authoritarian order (Mouffe, 2005) and far from democratic politics (Balibar, 2002; Rancière, 2004) that defines the current shape of democracy. Just as in Moulián's metaphor expressed in the introduction to this research, the merging of neoliberalism and democracy entails the exclusion of critical perspectives (Balibar, 2002; Žižek, 1998) by reducing the chances to speak, to be listened to, and to participate in real instances of litigation about the life in common (Harvey, 2012), making politics a matter for a few. From this perspective, the reductionist and technocratic vision of politics installs the idea that social life does not have a conflictive dimension (Mouffe, 2005), thus making it irrelevant to recognize dissidents as part of the discussion (Fraser, 2000).

So what does it mean to have voice in direct democracy approaches? A succinct way to understand voice within this thread is presented by Couldry (2010), who considers voice as the process in which people are able to give an account of their lives, to narrate their conditions of life, and to make that narration a valued and constituent part of living in a human collective. To deny that chance is, for Couldry, 'to deny a basic dimension of human life' (2010: 7). In political terms, this understanding of voice appears as a counter-value and a threat to neoliberalism in the same way that the rationale of neoliberalism represents a threat to voice. In that clash of threats, however, voice is losing the battle and neoliberalism is winning it, as long as people are not regarded 'as relevant to the distribution of speaking opportunities' (2010: 107) for the life in common. The consequence, in this case, is that the political status of voice is not achieved.

Neither of the two theoretical threads reviewed above offer real alternative models to overcome the influence of neoliberalism on democracy. However, direct democracy approaches – contrary to what happens with liberal representative perspectives – give a hint by acknowledging political value in areas not usually regarded as fully political (Maffesoli, 2005). This recognition is relevant because it

gives political validity to, and opens the question about, voice on what has usually been termed as the periphery of the polity (Tarrow, 1998): social movements. With the aim of observing the political understanding of voice, I will now discuss how the literature on social movements understands the role of voice and how that understanding continues and breaks the constraints of previous democratic theories.

Social movements: dialogues and ruptures

A first branch of theoretical approaches on social movements, comprising the 'resource mobilization' theory and the 'political process' approach (both mostly US-based) is close to the liberal representative model of democracy in the way they conceive voice and in the reach of its action. The perspective of 'resource mobilization' relates to the tactics of unconventional forms of political action (Della Porta and Diani, 2006) that can only emerge when there are enough resources to get involved in a mobilization (Klandermans, 1984). Among these resources are moral, cultural, socio-organisational, human, and material elements (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004), as well as networks and bonds (Oberschall, 1973), providing cohesion, independence, and enough strength for a particular movement to rise up before political authorities. The 'political process' approach is concerned with the relationship between social movements or organizations with institutional political actors (Reese, 2005), especially in terms of the opportunities yielded by the political structure to place their issues. This approach considers social movements and organizations as strategic actors (Kriesi and Wisler, 1996) comprised of people developing repertoires to 'interact in contentious politics' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2004: 16). For both 'resource mobilization' and 'political process', social movements are bodies adjacent to mainstream politics; their role is to fill the gaps to which the polity, for whatever reason, is not paying attention. This way of understanding their place in politics determines a way of conceiving voice through media practices: even at the cost of being depicted in 'a very selective way' (Halloran, Elliot and Murdock, 1970: 313), it is necessary to have a presence in the

media to 'reinforce the position of sponsors of the movement's concerns within the policymaking domain' (Kriesi, 2004: 857).

A second branch of the study of social movements is embodied by the New Social Movements' (NSM) approach. Emerging at the beginning of the 1980's, it introduced a particular interest in the microstructures of cultural and social practices as realms of collective action (Foweraker, 1995). NSM theorists acknowledged as political the type of social and grassroots action that was happening in local territories and organizations not necessarily related to political parties (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992). In this sense, NSM theorists focused on analysing identities (Ortiz, 1998), subjectivities (Touraine, 2000; Lechner, 1988), daily life spaces, and networks (Garretón, 2001), as locations of people struggling for cultural recognition (Habermas, 1981), challenging hegemonic representations (Touraine, 1985) and disputing the rules declaring what and who was normal or abnormal, right or wrong (Melucci, 1985, 1995, 1996; Offe, 1985).

But beyond modernization, beyond cultural innovation, movements question society on something 'else': who decides on codes, who establishes rules of normality, what is the space for difference, how can one be recognized not for being included but for being accepted as different, not for increasing the amount of exchanges but for affirming another kind of exchange? This is the deepest and the most hidden message of the movements. (Melucci, 1985: 812)

Emerging in a decade when state socialisms were on their way out, NSM perspectives stressed the division between old and new politics; old and new channels of representation (Habermas, 1981); old and new oppositional actors; and old and new spaces for decision-making (Klandermans, 1991). From this point of view – and marking a clear distinction from liberal perspectives – the aim of media and communicative practices was not to affect policy-makers' agenda, but to challenge the very way in which nature and reality were depicted (Melucci, 1985).

After exploring these two branches of democratic theories and social movement approaches, we can see a line connecting two different ways of understanding the political. One remains within institutional structures of democracy and, these days,

within the borders of neoliberalism; the other focuses on the political constitution of democracies beyond the constraints of neoliberalism. Within this contrast, these two ways of understanding the political carry two completely different conceptualisations of voice and the role assigned to communicative and media practices for trying to make voice come to life. It also becomes clear that, for liberal representative theories of democracy and the 'political process' approach to social movements, the growing claim for more instances of deliberation and recognition (Fraser, 2000) does not come up as a problem, as long as the established democratic channels between citizenry and politicians keep working (Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012).

The weakness of this liberal standpoint is the lack of institutional answers to the question about what happens when democracy gets subsumed under the sovereignty of neoliberal policies (Saad-Filho and Yalman, 2010). This problem is what Moulián defined in the introduction of this thesis with the metaphor of the birdcage: a free country that cannot fly (Moulián, 1997); and what people involved in the mobilizations of 2011 clearly expressed as two of the reasons to protest and mobilize: the fact that in the last 30 years 'free market policies has not shown advances in quality and equality in education' (Cabalín, 2014: 487) and the crisis of legitimacy of the whole system of representation (Fleet, 2011). However, it seems that the lack of sovereignty facing the economy on a global scale (Saad-Filho and Yalman, 2010; Dean, 2012) does not tackle liberal democratic foundations and, consequently – according to Schlozman, Verba and Brady (2012) – does not affect voice. The reason is that, under the neoliberal perspective, mutually binding consultation (Tilly, 2007) is not a cornerstone of democracy, as Eduardo Silva (2009) depicts using the Latin American case:

Liberal democracy emphasized procedural conditions for individual freedom regarding political participation and representation, meaning voting and elections. It absolved the state from commitment to substantive economic or social rights. The state, or rather, government, had a duty to focus on public order and macroeconomic stability, and to establish strong, efficient, legal-rational institutions to support private property rights. Liberal democracy legitimized free-market economics by means of the electoral process (Chan and Scarritt, 2002). (Silva, 2009: 6)

Following the liberal understanding of democracy and voice established by Schlozman, Verba, and Brady (2012), it is unlikely a substantial change in the conditions for dialogue, debate, and consultation for the broad population within neoliberal democracies. The consequences of the latter are twofold. Observed from a direct democracy approach, it means that the political becomes more and more minimised in neoliberal settings as long as that which constitutes the political – disagreement (Rancière, 2004) – has been drained from institutional landscapes. However, from an NSM approach, the consequences are less surprising and not alien to what originally moved theorists to place their sight on social movements: the thought that ‘conflicts and contradictions of advanced industrial society can no longer be resolved in meaningful and promising ways through statism, political regulation, and the proliferating inclusion of ever more claims and issues on the agenda of bureaucratic authorities’ (Offe, 1985: 820).

At the end of this section, it becomes clear there is a problem in which voice could be produced in contemporary democratic settings. The reason for this problem is that the place voice occupies in democratic thought and social movements is either meaningless or functional to neoliberalism, or, has been denied to the broad population. Voice thus appears as an expropriated political resource and as an expropriated relationship. Nonetheless, expropriation takes place in real territories, in physical landscapes. In this sense, the observation I am conducting with regards to the Chilean case needs to look toward the land where this research occurs in order to see how these insights relate to Latin America, to its modern democracy, to its social revolts, and to its quests for voicing. In the next section of this chapter I will place these questions into the broad cultural, social, and political territory where the mobilization studied in this research is anchored: Latin America.

Latin America: politico-cultural matrix and the long silence

A problem for the discussion about voice, the commons and democracy in Latin America is to determine whether the observation is from, in, or about Latin America. This is not naïve because, as Walter Mignolo expresses, Latin America

has been historically located and pictured from a European perspective that is considered universal (2005). This statement reflects the first problem: the locus of enunciation, i.e. the place from which Latin America's history is narrated. A second issue is the possibility of talking and thinking about Latin America as a unity, something addressed by Nelly Richard as a consequence of the 'unevenness of Latin American own matrices, which integrate unequal historical-cultural processes' (1993: 156). For now I will say that a Latin American locus can be no other than a syncretic place, understanding syncretism as the encounter of different traditions that become part of a system – in this case meaning that 'popular groups, whether indigenous or Afro-Americans, have the chance to translate into their own language the elements of the dominant culture' (Ortiz, 2000: 46). Thus, when acknowledging the differences between different regions of Latin America, it is also possible to find strong commonalities on what could be defined as the Latin American cultural and political matrix. From the time of the Spanish Conquest – when, according to Dussel (1994), modernity arrived swaying the sword – until today, three cornerstones comprise this matrix: violence and oppression; race as a heavy stain; and backwardness as a permanent state.

With regard to violence and oppression, for several scholars Latin America's modernity was shaped using the sword as its main tool, generating a modern subject that 'is the product of a traumatic origin' (Moraña, Dussel and Jauregui, 2008: 3). Mignolo calls this contradiction the two sides of Latin American modernity: enlightenment, on the brighter side; and coloniality, on the darker side (Mignolo, 2011). This darker side brought about territorial devastation, slavery, genocide and exploitation, as well as a world vision that considered the colonized as barbarians (Dussel, 1985, 1994). In this way, violence was an action conducted on behalf of modernity, on behalf of God (Catholicism was the religion of the Spanish and Portuguese crown), and on behalf of the natives' own good.

According to Quijano and Ennis (2000), race was introduced in the transitional period from the 15th to the 16th centuries as part of European domination to 'mark the exploited populations' (Schutte, 2008) and to understand the destiny of Latin

American nations in a fatalistic way (Ortiz, 2000). Race has been considered the biggest instrument of social domination created in the last 500 years (Quijano, 2000), and for centuries treated the colonized as people who were naturally wrong (Reding, 2007) and 'incapable of performing rational acts' (Ortiz, 2000: 50). Interestingly, after the triumph of independence from Spain, the young nations' leaders deepened this world vision. People considered founders and shapers of Latin American nation-states (Mignolo, 2011) – such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in Argentina, Javier Prado in Perú, or José Gil in Venezuela – shared the European perspective and believed race to be the principal obstacle to Latin American development. From their perspective, race was a biological condition that needed to be corrected in the continent (Larraín, 2000) to achieve healthy societies and social evolution (Ferras and Paredes, 1999).

The third element of Latin America's cultural and political matrix is its location in the rear wagon of history. According to Santiago Castro-Gómez, the European enlightenment considered America (the continent, not the country) as a place out of history, as long as it had not 'developed the political institutions and philosophical thought that would have allowed them to incorporate themselves into the progressive movement toward liberty, characteristic of his Universal History' (2008). What this misrecognition created was the assumption that America was always going to be following sets of instructions until it eventually became modern in the European way and, thus, became part of the world (Dussel, 1993). In other words, native Americans could not even live their lives in their own way because difference meant backwardness (Martín-Barbero, 1993) and consequently there was always a set path to follow -including the best administration of land, as discussed in the earlier section about land, modernity and liberal thought.

What the installation of this politico-cultural matrix left on Latin American soil were the foundations of coloniality: the continuation of colonial-dominant thought without the presence of the conquerors (Grosfoguel, 2007). Lacking this major epistemological break, coloniality became the axis that 'organized and organizes the colonial difference, the periphery as nature' (Mignolo, 2001: 24). The effect of

the latter meant that the region could never be detached from this matrix, with consequences such as the permanent rule of oligarchic sectors imposing models of life and excluding cultures, identities, and political endeavours of subaltern sectors. The following key periods in Latin America's history illustrate the way in which hegemonic methods of organizing life set back the chances for voice, and installed a restricted neoliberal democracy.

The first of these moments came in the dawn of the new nation-states, between the mid-19th century and the beginning of World War II (Sotelo Valencia, 2005), when the embraced paradigm was European positivism (Clark, 2013). Its target was to overcome the consequences of the traditional and colonial order (De la Vega, 2007) and break the 'stranglehold of a conservative colonial mentality' (Martí, 2013: 69). Following an Anglo-Saxon capitalist model of industrialization, young nation-states fostered economic expansion based on the export of natural resources and the import of manufactured goods (Larraín, 2000). However, they soon realized that the biggest companies' surpluses were not channelled towards productive local investment, but instead to imperialist countries and local ruling classes (Larraín, 1989), causing a wave of indignation in the face of an unsatisfactory and abusive relationship (Martí, 2013; Mellado, 2002). This indignation came not only from those who were part of Latin American democratic oligarchies (Hartlyn and Valenzuela, 1995) but mainly and most importantly from peasants and workers who organized into fledgling unions and emerged from their invisibility to protest against the 'appalling conditions prevailing in the space of production (factory) and housing' (Ziccardi, 2001: 85).

What continues as a second moment in Latin American independent history is what Arturo Escobar defines as developmentalism, a discourse constructed when United States administrations 'felt increasingly justified in intervening in Latin American affairs' (1995: 27) as a consequence of its imperial status (Mignolo, 2005). In a post-World War II context, the United States intervened in Latin America to help Latin nations leave behind their 'rural', 'backward' and 'underdeveloped' societies for 'urban', 'developed' and 'industrial' ones, although

this reshaping enterprise did not imply better conditions for the broad population (Larraín, 1989). Within this context was created, in 1948, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), a United Nations regional institution aimed at fostering ‘the production of a distinctive and coherent approach to the development problems of Latin America’ (Larraín, 1989: 86). ECLAC-based researchers pointed out that Latin America’s biggest problem was a centre–periphery relationship in which being in the peripheral areas meant being alienated from the advantages of technical progress (Rodríguez, 1980; Vuskovic, 1990; Grosfoguel, 2008).

Following developmentalism, a third key moment in the evolution of Latin America came from the contribution of dependency theorists. ‘Dependentistas’ stated that Latin America lived capitalism in a condition of slavery through the exploitation of indigenous populations, an economy based on wage earners (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979), and the acquiescence of local groups that held the same interests as imperialist agents. So, even when there was a structure of formal political parties and formal elections (Garretón, 2004), Latin America still lived on the verge of military coups (Bethel, 1997; Loveman, 1993), revealing a weakness to overcome dominant structures and thus let the subaltern subjects emerge (Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios Subalternos²², 1995). The response of dependency theory however seemed mild after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the process surrounding the 1968 Conference of Latin American Bishops at Medellín, and the knowledge obtained from years of imperialist intervention in the area. All these elements contributed to the end of the centre–periphery relation (Mendieta, 2005; Scannone, 2009) as the key to understanding Latin America.

In this shift, the word ‘liberation’ came on top of the notion of dependency through three theoretical contributions: Liberation Theology, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and the Philosophy of Liberation²³. Emerged in the 1970s, these three

²² Latin American Group of Subaltern Studies.

²³ Liberation’s Theology focused on the poor and the oppressed (Boff, 1984) and its main aim was the abolition of injustice and the construction of a more free and humane society (Gutiérrez, 1971). In a similar guise, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed was a body of knowledge mainly rooted in the

approaches had a political stance that resembles the Chilean case of 2011 in the value assigned to people's voice and in the value assigned to education. Authors like the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire claimed that to advance in a revolutionary endeavour it was necessary that those regarded as oppressed gained freedom to speak with their own voice. For Freire, voice was a basic human resource carrying a specific type of relationship close to the notion of the commons set out earlier in this chapter. 'To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it', said Freire (1996: 69) in a poetic way that referenced the notion of self-determination for those under oppressive circumstances. Only when this voice was released from social, cultural and political chains it was possible to move on 'practices of popular (not populist) governance, and ultimately to the advent of a robust culture of real democratic politics (as opposed to legalistic formal democracy)' (Grosfoguel, 2008: 307).

The main stress of the aforementioned liberation theories was to create another type of democracy based on people's cooperation, dialogue and communication. In other words, on people's cultural reality and not on political recipes imposed from above. To do so Freire and other liberation theorists considered the task of education as fundamental. And while their definition of education had a particular type of pedagogy, the argument that education was a basic right and the key to escape from an oppressive condition remained, as the Chilean mobilization for education in 2011 shows. Interestingly, years before the movement emerged, the 2004 report of United Nations Development Programme highlighted the relevance to the access to education within Chilean people. Among other things, the report underlined that for Chileans education was observed as a source of dignity. It also represented the chance to 'acquire the capacity to understand and interpret the

work of Paulo Freire. For Freire, education in Latin America run under a relationship in which the educated one was conceived as a receiver of information to fit in a world where she/he did not have a say (1996). In the same vein, Enrique Dussel's *Philosophy of Liberation* (1975) sought to create an emancipatory thought from Latin American soil. Connected to Foucault's interest in knowledge as a disciplinary power, Dussel understood as an urgent matter the use of inter-subjectivity and otherness as a standpoint to reconstruct society (González, 2007) and to build sovereignty from below.

messages and arguments wielded in public deliberations about issues concerning people's life and society's destiny' (2004: 139), strengthening 'self steam and security on people's own capacities' (2004:139). The report acknowledged that in the Chilean case the education system was in conflict for matters related to the unequal and segregationist access to education and because of the difference in the quality of private and public schools. The report established the roots of these flaws in the beginning of the 1980s: the installation of the neoliberal project (Calcagno and Calcagno, 2015).

The 1980s meant in Chile the moment in which intellectual, social, and political contributions like the ones posed by the liberationists were violently shattered (Dinges, 2004; Klein, 2007; Franco, 2013) as a consequence of the direct intervention and influence of US National Security Doctrine (Salazar, 2009; Míguez, 2013). Left-wing and progressive administrations in several Latin American countries, as in the case of Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay, were replaced by military-civic administrations under US influence that increasingly installed a neoliberal economic model weakening the state and changing the face of Latin America in its social, cultural, political, and economic domains (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2009; Borón, 2005). In educational terms, Chile became the 'continental laboratory' in the application of education reforms (López Guerra and Flores, 2009). These reforms commodified the whole education system, making parents responsible for the education of their children, while the State played a subsidiary role (Cabalin, 2012)²⁴.

²⁴ Among other changes, the Chilean reform decentralized government's control over primary and secondary educational institutions giving that role to local municipalities (Burton, 2014). But instead of funding schools or municipalities, the reform funded students, who had the chance of going to a public school with low resources or an expensive private school. To resolve this issue, the government opened the chance to 'profit-oriented institutions to establish primary and secondary education schools that would also compete for student enrolment' (Taylor, 2003: 33). The reform also allowed the creation of private universities, changed contractual conditions for teachers, and severely damaged the right of education workers to unionize. The reform also intervened the contents at classrooms and textbooks. In primary and secondary schools contents reflected 'the national security doctrine preached by the regime' (Taylor, 2003: 32) while higher education 'was recast to promote studies functional to the new productive structures of Chilean society, whereas traditional arts and humanities studies were discouraged' (Taylor, 2003: 32).

With this background, in the 1990's Latin America faced the collision between the recently recovered democracy with neoliberal impositions coming after the Washington Consensus – such as the payment of its external debt – and the insertion of Latin economies into global markets (Martínez Rangel and Reyes Garmendia, 2012). That collision between democracy and neoliberalism modelled Latin American economies within narrow margins, consequently affecting democracy's range of action (Panizza, 2009). The response to the way in which democracy could be improved within such constrained space came in two main variants, similar to the aforementioned branches on democracy and social movements. On the one hand, those close to liberal and representative democracy focused on the macrostructures of politics and economy; on the other hand, those proximate to the areas of human agency and grassroots politics believing that these held the possibility to reconstitute the political beyond the padlocks of constricted democracies.

The contribution of the Argentine political scientist Guillermo O'Donnell reflects the first branch of this dichotomy. He developed a work, liberal in nature, stressing the role of institutions in the process of strengthening democracies, avoiding practices such as clientelism, patrimonialism and corruption (O'Donnell, 1994) in order to prevent falling into military dictatorships again, but leaving behind the problem of unequal distribution of wealth and power (Chirinos and Rincón, 2006; Reygadas, 2006; PNUD, 2010) and the participation of people in decision-making processes beyond elections (Max-Neef, 1991). In this sense, it is the actually existing functioning of Chilean democracy the one that while following a normative framework of representation and participation has been subsumed by the logics of neoliberalism, that ends up affecting the very principles that liberal democracy entails. As Della Porta (2013) stresses – highlighting the division between actually existing democracies versus their normative versions in a way that applies to the Chilean case - liberal conceptions of democracy have been challenged from two positions. From a participatory type of democracy 'involving citizens beyond elections' (2013: 9) and from a communicative dimension of democracy in which

'decisions are, in this sense, not made by counting votes, but rather through the more complex process in which opinions are formed' (2013: 9-10). It is precisely on this communicative aspect – far from a deliberative paradigm, for instance of Habermas (2006) – where the commons of political voice emerges meaningfully in the cracks of an unachieved democratic model that when put into practice cannot achieve its normative foundations.

Indeed, on the other hand, there has been an array of theories delving into political microstructures as a means of observing the 'backyards of democracy' (Lechner, 1988). The backyard metaphor refers to the activity of groups not immersed in classic modes of organization – such as political parties or unions – and not necessarily attached to ideological frames but embracing ethical positions. In this new space comes to the fore a subject that like the people mobilized in 2011 in Chile privileges social movements and grassroots actions instead of seeing participation as being solely the preserve of mainstream structures. Hopenhayn refers to this activity as a new way of doing politics: 'less interfered by the mediation of parties or clientelist practices and more centred in the cultural determinations of their actors' (Hopenhayn, 2004: 148). For scholars like Hopenhayn (2004) and Reguillo (2000), what these new actors have expressed in different corners of Latin America and in the Chilean case – as is it will come clearer in the upcoming chapters – is the will to instil a democratic culture, not just to cheer or dethrone governments elected by majority vote. In this sense, the most important contribution of this insight has been recognizing non-mainstream actors as political actors. However, these perspectives have left unaddressed the question about how these actors could be moved from microstructures of power towards the ability to influence macrostructures of society.

Challenging cultural hegemony

The review of the Latin American politico-cultural matrix, as well as its attempts at achieving emancipation and liberation, provides elements to calibrate the way in which theoretical insights on democracy and social movements relate to Latin

America's democracy, its social revolts, and its quest for voice (Couldry, 2010), such as the one conveyed by the students movement in Chile during 2011. In the following paragraphs I describe on the one hand, how the flaws of liberal representative and direct democracy approaches are increased and intensified when confronted with the influence of neoliberalism in Latin America. On the other hand, I analyse the ways in which social movement theories open paths to contest that influence, and the extent to which these approaches provide answers that move towards that direction.

Liberal representative perspectives find three flaws in the Latin and, specifically, the Chilean case. The first relates to the way in which Latin American projects of emancipation were shattered and replaced by administrations running within strict neoliberal guidelines. Even when pro-market thinkers such as Adam Przeworski (1991) and Kurt Weyland (2004) state that neoliberalism 'seems to have boosted the sustainability of democracy in Latin America, both by exposing the region more to external pressures for maintaining competitive civilian rule and by forestalling internal challenges to its survival' (2004: 141), the facts express the opposite. Two reasons support this claim. Firstly, in Chile, neoliberalism was introduced under a military regime supported by the US, privatizing and commodifying natural resources and social rights (Harvey, 2005; Collier and Sater, 2005). And whilst the international community contributed later to the restoration of democracy, it also backed neoliberal policies deepening the privatization of basic commons through the Washington Consensus, like Chile's education system (Cabalin, 2012; Taylor, 2003). Secondly, in the last fifteen years, there have been five coup attempts in the continent, all of them against administrations seeking alternatives to neoliberalism. Whilst in Venezuela (2002), Bolivia (2008), and Ecuador (2010) the interventions were controlled after days and weeks, in Honduras (2009) and Paraguay (2012) non-democratic and pro-neoliberal administrations were successful in seizing power.

As long as the market has reached a ruling position challenging the sovereign character of the states, their institutions and the realm of citizenry, a second flaw

and evident contradiction emerges. One of the pillars for democracy, according to Dahl, was the absence of strong foreign control hostile to democracy. This point has become increasingly absent in a global world in which the range of action for nations has been narrowed. Interestingly, for the heirs of this liberal political approach, such as Weyland (2004), the reduced range of action is simply the price to be paid for democracy. Furthermore, 'both the external and internal effects of neoliberalism diminish the range of political choice, but precisely in this way, they contribute to the persistence of democracy itself' (Weyland, 2004: 151). The demise of unions is, from this perspective, a healthy enforcer of democracies for 'putting economic and political elites at greater ease' (2004: 143). This last assertion contradicts basic notions of plurality and human rights – such as the rights of workers to unionise – shaping a pseudo-totalitarian type of democracy in which people do not have a say. It is this narrowness the one in front of which the ones involved in the Chilean movement saw no other chance than occupying schools and university buildings – as expressed in chapter 4 – or board a public bus to talk to the passengers and raise awareness about the crisis on education and the mobilization process – issue developed in chapter 5.

A third flaw of the liberal representative approach on democracy is the way it conceives cultural identities. For Dahl, 'subcultural pluralism' (Dahl, 1989: 145) is a problem for running nations under democracy. As a place where different cultural backgrounds have coexisted in a very complex way and where violence towards cultural diversity has been permanent, Dahl's criticism of cultural identities is, at the very least, problematic²⁵. And it is so not only for cultural identities such as indigenous cultures, but also because Dahl considers disagreement and difference as burdens to be eliminated, not as positive and substantial elements of

²⁵ Recent events in Bolivia represent a challenge for Dahl's critique on cultural pluralism. The Andean country passed from being a one-nation state to a constitutionally plurinational state. And, as this 'plural nationality has to be concrete and not only discursive' (De Sousa, 2007: 59), the 2009 constitution acknowledged the plurality of Bolivian cultures in different aspects of their lives, for instance in the health system. Indeed, the Bolivian state assumed as the 'state's responsibility to guarantee and promote the respect, use, research, and practice of traditional medicine, recovering the knowledge and ancient practices from the thinking and values of all indigenous people and peasants' (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009: 24).

democracy. On this understanding, people's voice should only be granted within selected types of culture and political identity.

With reference to direct democracy approaches, on the other hand, Latin America reveals two important differences when compared with Western democracies. Firstly, it is a continent that passed through an era when parties were the natural vehicle through which to become a social actor (Garretón and Villanueva, 1999) in the 1960's, to an era when political parties were prohibited and, finally, reinstalled in formal democracies running as neoliberal technocracies that locked mainstream political parties (Silva, 2009; Mirza, 2006: 20). The hope that, along with the recovery of democracies in the 1980's and 1990's, social movements could relate to mainstream politics to 'participate actively in discussions about development alternatives' or in 'a space of institutional conflict in which to express their demands' (Calderon, Piscitelli and Reyna, 1992: 29) did not fall on fertile ground, as a consequence of what Néstor García Canclini calls the hegemony of neoliberalism as the only thinking (2010). Indeed, for the respondents of this research, most political parties, the government and mainstream media represented an adversary that – as explained in chapter 6 – was going to use different means to undermine student validity as political actors and to block their active participation changing Chile's education system. In the words of Sebastián Farfán, one of the activists interviewed for this research, the aforementioned actors 'always tried to depict us as delinquents, violent guys'.

The second difference concerns Latin American strains and motives for uprisings. In various countries from Rio Grande in the north, to the southern shores of Chile and Argentina, in the south, uprisings have demanded basic needs and human rights such as land, education, food, and an end to exploitation. Examples include the 1994 Zapatista armed rebellion in Mexico; the Mapuche uprising in 1997 in Chile; the cocalero movement in Bolivia through the 1990's; the 2001 occupations in Argentina following the collapse of the economic system; the 'Sem Terra' (Landless Workers) movement in Brazil, or the contemporary fight for access to water in several parts of the continent (Terhorst, Olivera and Dwinell, 2013). In this

regard, at a time when there is no agreement to define whether the region is premodern, modern, or postmodern, Latin America's main struggles are still directed towards obtaining access to basic resources that are no longer guaranteed for its inhabitants. Giorgio Jackson, one of the leaders of the mobilization in Chile during 2011, summarized this type of claim, saying that their demands were 'at the bottom, for dignity, for basic things...' (Jackson, 2013: 75). In other words, these demands in Latin America keep returning to elements regarded as elemental commons (Hardt and Negri, 2009) that have been expropriated from people's access.

In contrast to overarching approaches to democracy, it is possible to find some agreement in the encounter between social movement scholarship and quests for democracy in Latin America. These agreements provide insight to address more adequately, questions about Latin American subalternism and the relationship between democracy and neoliberalism, though leaving gaps that are necessary to consider in order to steer this review into narrower zones where, ultimately, the questions of this research are located.

A first agreement is the recognition on the value of the wide array of processes occurring within social movements, such as self-affirmation; permitting people to act according to their own values and thus 'providing meaning, purpose, and direction' (Gecas, 2000: 95); collaboration and solidarity (Taylor and Van Dyke, 2004: 270); collective action, including a diverse range of participants, organizations, and networks (Tilly, 1999); belonging beyond a mere group (Della Porta, 1999) while at the same time a reaffirmation of individuality and pleasure (Reguillo, 2012); meaning enough to 'insist that life makes some sense' (Jasper, 1997: 2); attribution of discontent, enemies and adversaries (Gecas, 2000); and shelter to assess the costs and benefits of their action (Bilgic, 2003). Today's collective identities are much more situated in daily life and the course of inter-individual communication (Hund and Benford, 2004). The idea that 'life experience occurs not in society as a whole, but in small, relatively specialized units composed of others' (Stryker, 2000: 28) was indeed a key element in the way the Chilean

students experienced the emergence of the movement, as will be explained in chapter 4. Most of data collected actually will point in the direction that collective identities are not monolithic constructions defined by a party or a nation-state for the infinite and beyond. Quite the opposite; they will show that identities are diverse and evoking emotions – whereas in occupied buildings or in the heat of a dispute on the internet – formerly dismissed by critics of collective behaviour theories, for being too personal and too idiosyncratic (Goodwin et al., 2004).

A second agreement is about the nature of the fight in contemporary social movements. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani (2006) state that current social movements' struggle begins with a quest to be recognized as legitimate subjects of the political activity against, within, and beyond the recognition of states weakened by its capacities to resolve problems (Offe, 1985) and against, within, and beyond markets that are more keen to recognize consumers than the damaged notion of citizens (García Canclini, 1995; Lechner, 2002; Castells, 2010). According to the literature reviewed, the main struggle of social movements today is 'the definition of the social meanings of life' (Reguillo, 1993: 124) and the overcoming of hegemonies defining 'the world as we see it' (Jasper, 1997: 12) with its norms, values, traditions, artefacts, and expectations (Fine, 2003). A motto held during 2006's 'Penguin Revolution' in Chile – taken by the students in 2011- depicts the tension of this struggle. That year students' motto was 'we are students not clients' (Donoso, 2014), a sentence shouting the Chilean state that market-driven education system damaged people's dignity by conceiving them not as citizens with rights but as consumers with fees to pay. This example helps to illustrate the second agreement on the nature of social movement's struggle in our days: to contest hegemonic cultures that using codes, contexts, and institutions (Swidler, 2003), legitimate a particular order of things defining who can talk and who can not do it (Melucci, 2003), who is entitled to talk and who represents a dangerous otherness (like Dahl's 'subcultural pluralism'), and who establishes the 'rules of normality' (Melucci, 1985). Consequently, the agreement on these points indicates that social movements task is – in a similar way to what Freire exposed earlier – to overcome the 'exclusion from the power of naming' (Melucci, taken from Couldry,

2012: 98) in order to contest dominant cultures (Johnston and Klandermans, 2003) through a symbolic challenge over hegemonic meanings (Tarrow, 1998: 32) capable of redefining their terms (Swidler, 2003: 34).

A third agreement leaves this discussion in a problematic situation that pushes this literature review one step further. If the main struggle of social movements is to overcome cultural patterns – in this case, neoliberal cultural patterns – the space for that struggle should be allocated where these cultural patterns run through, with the media being a relevant – but not the only – place of contention for voice. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to those places of contention, disputes, exclusions, and challenges.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have discussed how the notion of the commons does not only apply to the demands of Chile's student movement – free and high-quality education, and the end of profit-making education. It also applies to the act of speaking out and to the prospect of being included in the discussion of the life in common at times when the neoliberal rationale seems to determine the will of the nation, the life of the people, and the way democracies are run.

I have also discussed the ways in which democratic theory understands voice, finding two different meanings. In the case of liberal representative democracy, voice was restricted to channelling claims towards institutions and politicians. In this case, neoliberalism does not represent a major threat to democracy, as long as it is not understood as severely lessening the structural conditions of democracy. However, in the case of direct democracy theories, voice represents a foundation of the political so neoliberalism appears as a challenge to the foundations of the political. In observing social movement approaches as a means of investigating the realms of non-institutional politics, I found a similar stance towards voice, to that in the above-mentioned democratic approaches: one understanding voice as a supplier of the institutional channels of democracy; the

other observing the need to struggle for voice beyond the padlocks of neoliberal democracy.

In this sense, these perspectives allow the chapter to arrive at the understanding that voice is an expropriated political commons. As such, it needs to be constructed as a condition to break the cultural and political hegemony of neoliberalism and reconstitute the political, i.e. the conflictual dimension of human life in which divergent positions can confront, discuss and/or resolve their points of view. The question in this chapter was, therefore, how to do so. Located on Latin American soil, this question brought to the fore, a local notion of voice that has been subjugated, forbidden, and shut down. Neoliberalism, in spite of the overall democratic framework that has prevailed in the region in the last 30 years, has deepened this lack of voice. In this sense, the expropriation of voice is no different from the expropriation of basic resources and basic rights. As Giorgio Jackson, one of the most notorious leaders of the movement, states: 'these are not problems that can be resolved, because they were never conceived as problems, that is how the rule is, this is how the system works' (2013: 40).

As well as the withdrawal of voice from the inhabitants of a territory, on the grounds of irrelevance 'to the distribution of speaking opportunities' (Couldry, 2010: 107), people seem to become invisible and their voice inaudible, illegible, excluded, in a process that is not violent (like in the case of a coup) or sudden (like in the case of curfew or state of exception). Thus, the more fundamental problem is not only that voice becomes unheard, but the idea that talking has become useless or irrelevant, especially in times when consumer logic rules over citizen logic, becoming 'not just forms of consciousness but forms of life' (Hardt and Negri, 2011: 80).

Therefore, deprivation of voice occurs in line with deprivation of active citizen participation, of dialogical organisms, of basic rights in different fields, in a narrative whose only certainty is to be competitive in order to cope with the 24/7 logics of economy (Crary, 2013; Lazzarato, 2012) – a narrative that sets life in permanent crisis. In this context, the idea of contesting neoliberal landscapes to open up the

political (Mouffe, 2005), when the mere means of exerting voice has been wiped out as a commons, is problematic, and exposes a big gap in the available literature. Taking into account Jeremy Gilbert's argument that the most basic and necessary forms of resistance to neoliberalism are the creation of social forums and instances of litigation (2014), the next chapter will seek to provide insight into the forums and instances of litigation within which the chance to speak and to be listened to when discussing the life in common, gets installed or disbarred from social and political placements.

Chapter 2

The people and their eviction from public space: Media and communicative practices building up the commons

The system of public spaces should allow public expressions, civic expressions and the visibility of different social groups on a neighbourhood scale and on an urban centre level. The public space as a place of rights is a means towards citizenship for all those who suffer some kind of marginality or relegation (Borja, 2004: 133).

Understood as distinct from public as well as from private spaces, 'common spaces' emerge in the contemporary metropolis as sites open to public use in which, however, rulers and forms of use do not depend upon and are not controlled by a prevailing authority (Stavrides, 2016: 2).

The problem posed in the previous chapter is that the range of actions afforded to social movements, and to others in general, and the opportunities to deploy voice, becomes highly curtailed within neoliberal democracies. The literature on democracy and social movements reviewed in the previous chapter signalled the way in which voice appears as an expropriated commons in neoliberal democracies, a condition that, in Chile, becomes even more entrenched due to Latin America's politico-cultural matrix and the subsequent quests for voice, as well as the installation of neoliberalism during a dictatorship that was later continued and deepened by democratic administrations. This leaves the question of how to overcome the lack of voice and counterbalance hegemonic narratives when voice has been expropriated as a political commons.

In this chapter, I will explore the places within which voice negotiates its social and political existence, with special attention paid to Latin America and Chile. The first part of this chapter is devoted to the discussion of public space. Without undue attention to areas which have been intensively studied, this chapter underlines the notion that public spaces have not excluded dominant powers defining who can

talk and intervene in public, thus modelling the type of voice allowed and the type of participation expected. Progressing into media and mainstream media, I will observe how the idea of public space has been further reduced in contemporary times due to the increasing power of privatized media. Observing the almost entirely private and ideologically biased Chilean media landscape, I conclude the first part of this chapter arguing that public spaces have been locked down by a hegemonic rationale, deepening the expropriation of voice due to the enclosure of those able to appear and have voice in the public in a way that is oppositional to the ethos and inherent logics in the idea of the commons.

From this position, I analyse four ways in which media and communication approaches react when confronted with this closure as well as the ways they propose to 'voice out' and discuss the life in common. These perspectives are anchored in four areas: media systems; civil society organizations; the uses of the internet; and grassroots activism. Observing these four areas, I assert that, without voice and places to deploy that voice, the entitlement of being considered an active participant in the discussion and decision making process about the life in common as an individual and as a collective, is withdrawn. Thus, any political attempt to be a political actor will have to rebuild this entitlement individually and collectively, more so from a Latin American position, considering its particular politico-cultural matrix. After this revision, the chapter points to the need to investigate communicative and media practices as the means through which contemporary movements are trying to reconstitute voice in order to render a political commons, thereby overcoming the closures of contemporary neoliberal democracies.

Public space and the dispossession of institutional mediation: three models

As Nick Couldry (2010) points out, voice involves having a language but also a status granted by actors, ideologies, and cultures holding the power to provide legitimacy. The quest for voice is consequently a quest for power in the sense of being recognised or, in another perspective, to make a narrative and a discourse

(Foucault, 1980) legitimate enough to take part in the discussion of the life in common in a political way. Placed in real landscapes, the quest for voice will also be a matter of power in three ways: through being able to tackle hegemonic discourses validating domination as normal situations and natural life conditions; by including the social movement's points in the agendas of media; and in taking part in decision making processes (Lukes, 2005). In other words: the quest for voice is a quest for power regarding recognition and redistribution (Fraser and Honneth, 2003), although in contexts of cancellation of the political – as described in chapter 1 – that quest has to start with the recognition of people as legitimate actors to have voice.

In this sense, the power of granting legitimacy and the entitlement to have voice implies a privileged position in the spaces in which people get together to discuss the issues of life in common. These spaces have been public realms where people arrive to have a say, to listen to each other, to discuss issues of the city, state, and about those inhabiting a space in common (Borja, 2004; Habermas, 1992). However, a review of the literature on public space raises its exclusive, rather than inclusive, character: on the one hand condemning people and narratives into silence; on the other, lauding certain people and their narratives' entitlement to discuss the matters of the people. Three paradigmatic models of public space demonstrate this point.

A first paradigmatic example of the latter is constituted by the Greek city-states (Habermas, 1992; Rabinovitch, 1997). Here, the public space was that of the polis where issues relating to the state were discussed in the agora amongst citizens entitled to take part in the polity through the verbal expression of their thoughts (Arendt, 1998). Citizens were those holding rights and sharing duties (Faulks, 2000) in the creation and administration of the legal and governmental institutions (Balibar, 2015) in a certain territory. In this sense, the status of citizenship marked very clearly who was entitled to take part in the discussion of the life in common, and who was excluded. The status of citizen was exclusively for wealthy adult men (Balot, 2006). Only they had full and active membership and entitlement to

participate using their voice and argumentation (*logos*) to elaborate laws for the public good. The rest of the people were not considered to be truly human, 'but only as a specimen of the animal species man-kind' (Arendt, 1998: 46). Unlike the agora, here there was no need to be an equal and there were no *logos*, only *doxa*²⁶. In other words, what came out of the mouths of non-citizens was sound but not truth; it was mere opinion, noise, poetic language, but not truth or knowledge (Arancibia, 2006; Jaeger, 1986). In this sense, there was a clear difference between citizens and non-citizens as well as difference between public issues and the private realm: the private space – that of necessity or domesticity – was not considered in the public discussion.

The so-called bourgeois public sphere represents a second paradigmatic case in this account. In opposition to the reductionist citizenship of the Greek public space and the clear separation between the public and the private realm, this sphere finds its place in European modernity²⁷ with an expansionist and inclusive ethos (Faulks, 2000). In considering all individuals as free and equal (Hoffman and Graham, 2015), modernity afforded more people the status of citizen (Faulks, 2000) as well as including topics, formerly condemned to domestic issues as matters of public discussion (Arendt, 1998). In this modern and enlightened world, Jurgen Habermas observed the rise of an intermediate realm connecting people and the state. He labelled these spaces as bourgeois public spheres where people could discuss, debate, and influence the state on matters related to their interests (Rabotnikof, 1997). The bourgeois public sphere thus merged the formerly distinct public and private spheres within it and expressed that every action regarding the life in common should be publicly known and discussed.

By 'the public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave

²⁶ *Doxa* is a Greek word that in ancient Greece did not express knowledge or truth, and was only regarded as meant opinion and the faculty of giving opinion (Jaeger, 1986).

²⁷ The idea of the bourgeois public sphere is based on 'the historical context of British, French, and German developments in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' (Habermas, 1996: 423).

neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion—that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions—about matters of general interest. In a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974: 49).

However, and as the paragraph above states, the bourgeois public sphere was faced with the challenge of providing space and channelling peoples' voice through a realm wherein thinking, argument, and discussion moved on a rational and dialogic process where the formation of a political will took place (Dahlgren, 2000). Due to the egalitarian nature of modern citizenship and the increasing number of people achieving the status of citizen, there was also the need to mediate debates, discussions, and voice. Faced with this problem, the press appeared as the means by which the communicative and political problem could be resolved: the mediation between the state and the private individual (Crossley and Roberts, 2004). Consequently, the press became the preeminent institution of rational-critical debate (Habermas, 1992) and a feasible way in which society could be emancipated from the attachment and dependence of an outer power (Rabotnikof, 1997). The bourgeois public sphere presented a contrast with the Greek case, as it was not a governmental realm but a sphere of informed discussion, criticism, and opinion on matters of the state, in front of which the state was expected to publicize its acts and be open to scrutiny (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974). In the Habermasian model of public sphere, the press mediated an opinion put forward as 'public' in front of a power compelled to be accountable for its acts by the power of the press.

The modern bourgeois public sphere has been profusely criticized for various reasons²⁸, but for the purposes of this chapter and the overall thesis I would like to

²⁸ Amongst the criticism towards Habermasian public sphere, Nancy Fraser provided a notable analysis of the elements not considered in his idealization of the modern Western European society. In *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, Fraser points out that elements such as social inequality and gender issues are not regarded as relevant in Habermas' account. She also underlines the

make two observations. The first observation is about the progressive absence of citizens' involvement in public affairs by giving the press the prerogative of deliberation and participation in public issues. The public sphere – as Habermas would observe years after the publication of his original work on the topic – became a realm not only built by institutions which were not accountable to the people, but also 'simultaneously pre-structured and dominated by the mass media' (Habermas, 1992b: 437). The second observation is of the consequent proliferation of market logics in the creation, growing, and distribution of the press. This tendency made the public sphere more 'an arena for advertising than a setting for rational-critical debate' (Calhoun, 1996: 26). The consequence of the latter carried with it the difficulty of incorporating critical contents into the public sphere (Kluge and Negt, 1993), thus contributing to shape a more passive (Kellner, 2000) and less political sphere with the consequent displacement of the citizen from the public realm.

This trend towards a media-centred understanding of public space is represented by a third paradigmatic case in which the media becomes almost the exclusive actor of it to the detriment of the citizens. Elaborated by French theorist Jean Marc Ferry in the late 1980's, the so-called 'new public space' expressed the need to leave behind ways to understand the public that no longer matched Greek or the bourgeois ideas of publicity, and face the prevalence of media at the end of the 20th century. For Ferry, 'the public space is the media frame, is the institutional and technological dispositive where multiple issues of social life are presented to a public' (1998: 19). In this approach, television, video, radio, and newspapers hold the power of being the only place where social life affairs can be presented to audiences, bringing to life information, discourse, and images.

In this perspective, urban gatherings or café conversations cannot be considered

inadequacy of recognizing one public sphere instead of several spheres intermingling in the public/private axis, and the weakness of an alleged public sphere that in the end does not hold any power in decision-making processes (1990).

public space because, although these meetings might contribute to the discussion and the making of a public opinion, they do not hold the basic condition of contemporary public spaces. This condition is the almost unlimited chance to publicize images, words, and 'elements of discourse, commentary, discussion, for more "rational" elucidation' (Ferry, 1989: 21) and with the capacity to reach a vast number of people and be the topic of conversations in cafés and urban gatherings. From this viewpoint, the citizenry does not have the chance to intervene directly in the public space unless the media gives them a space. Aware of this situation, French theorist Dominique Wolton complemented Ferry's theory with a communicative logic that could address the lack of voice and, as Wolton expresses, deal with the problems of representative democracy (1998). Wolton's solution focused on the interplay of three actors: politicians, journalists, and the people. However, the people had a peculiar representation in this 'new public space'. For Wolton, politicians represented the party system; journalists represented media; and surveys represented public opinion. 'These three actors represent three democratic legitimacies: politics, information and communication' (Wolton, 1998: 30).

Contrary to their explicit will – which was a solution for democratic debate in a society of the masses (Ferry, 1989) – Ferry and Wolton's 'new public space' took the narrowness of the bourgeois public sphere several steps further with two consequences that are relevant to the Latin and Chilean case. The first was the ratification of the prevalent role of mainstream media in the new public space by understanding that what makes something public is its presence in media and, moreover, in mainstream media. In their account, expressions in the streets – such as the several flashmobs and marches that students conveyed in different cities of Chile during 2011 – are not public. However, any kind of information relayed by private and market-driven media outlets is considered public. The second consequence relates to the legitimacy of people to take part in the public. People are presented in this new public space as a form of number aggregation through surveys and polls. So, while journalists could have a say through media

organizations (although we will see in the next pages that this assumption is inaccurate in the case of the Latin American press) and politicians have a place to appear in this 'new' public space through their exposure in the media, people cannot speak by themselves. And the latter situation is not only because the media holds the power to accept or reject people's issues – as reviewed in the previous chapter when I addressed the political process approach in the study of social movements – but because people's voice can only be channelled through polling organizations. There is no commons in the public space because people, from this perspective, need the mediation of a third party – usually a private polling company – to reach the media, which in the case of Chile is almost entirely private (Cordero, 2009). In the end, the 'new public space' gets close to what a definition of neoliberal public space could be in current democracies: the suppression of people and of their voice as constituent elements for discussing the life in common.

Chile's media landscape: private and ideologically biased

Considering the three paradigmatic cases reviewed, it is possible to concur with the idea that the public space has 'never existed outside of small, usually exclusive and exclusionary collectives' (Davis, 2010: 115), thus perpetuating oligarchic hegemonies (Curran, 2005; Couldry, 2003, 2012; Gitlin, 1980) rather than opening egalitarian and democratic arenas for participation and deliberation. In this sense, the idea of public space as 'the space where people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society' (Castells, 2008: 78) appears not to have been achieved and has been replaced by a media-centric space praising the benefits of the economic system (Rosanvallon, 2008).

From a Latin American perspective, this reduction of the public into commercial logics ultimately affecting the presence of the people in matters of common discussion, is a relevant fact considering the installation of European modernity in

Latin America and the way in which neoliberalism placed its logics in the region²⁹. As reviewed in the previous chapter, oligarchic forces ruling Latin American countries regarded the vast proportion of the population as subalterns (Dussel, 1985, 1994). Public discussion was a matter for the elites, and newspapers worked mostly for those elites (Janik, 2000). As Chilean researchers on public space have expressed, at the end of the 19th century Chile was a society in which the economy, the state, and the political regime regarded the vast majority of the population only in the role of a 'labour force from an economic point of view and mass without political participation from a political perspective' (Santa Cruz and Ossandón, 2001: 25). This oligarchic and colonial regime was expressed in the rise of the Latin American press. Besides some important cases of working-class endeavours (Arias, 1970; Santa Cruz, 2003), the profile of the Latin American media was predominantly liberal, private, and focused on achieving benefits and profits (Zeta de Pozo, 2004) while at the same time defending a capitalist model of development. In this sense, the media's alleged diversity and public character is questionable. Deeper insight into the Chilean media landscape reveals more elements to assess the paradox of the idea of the publicness of mainstream media.

In general, Chile presents a problematic media landscape in terms of ownership, homogeneity, and content. In ownership terms, the country has a serious imbalance where only a few actors own the large media corporations (González-Rodríguez, 2008). Newspapers and TV channels are in the hands of a few companies and 'even radio, traditionally considered diverse and plural, today shows symptoms of concentration in big chains' (Monckeberg, 2009: 3). To illustrate the point, 95% of the print titles (magazines and newspapers) belong to the multimedia corporations El Mercurio S.A. and COPESA (Reporters Without Borders, 2013). Both share a right-wing and pro-neoliberal profile (Jiménez and

²⁹ Reflecting on this point, Néstor García Canclini expressed that in 1980s Latin America, 'men and women perceive that many questions proper of citizens – where do I belong and what rights do I have, how can I get information, who represents my interests – are answered more in the private consumption of goods and mass media than in the abstract rules of democracy or in the collective participation in public spaces' (1995: 13).

Muñoz, 2008; Monckeberg, 2009) and, according to the National Press Association, during the first semester of 2009, they received 99% of the readership of the country's national media. The case of radio and television portrays a similar situation³⁰.

With reference to the internet, two companies – VTR and Movistar – provide 76.1% of broadband connections, while three companies – Movistar, Claro, and Entel – provide mobile connection for 95.4% of internet users and 3G+4G mobile technology³¹. These are private companies with presence in several countries and with a prevalent position of power in Latin America³². These are corporations mainly of Spanish, Mexican, and US capitals, such as Telefónica, Claro, and VTR, the latter owned by Liberty Corporation 'the world's largest international TV and broadband company'³³. In the case of the local company Entel, it has presence in Chile and Peru and is controlled by stakeholders with strong political connections as well as stakes in finance and energy businesses³⁴. In sum, just as in other media, both markets, broadband and mobile internet markets, are a matter of few actors. This concentration on the few privileged³⁵ actors has raised criticism and

³⁰ In radio, just a few groups control ownership of commercial frequencies: the Spanish holding Prisa Radio (11 radio stations), the Luksic Group (4), the Bezanilla Group (3) and the Dial Group (6). These four groups own 70% of the radio companies; Prisa Radio alone receives 50% of total advertising revenue. On the other hand, community radio in Chile suffers from restrictive legislation 'establishing arbitrary limitations to the technical and administrative features to broadcast' (Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias, 2009: 18). On TV, there are six national free-to-air TV stations, two regional, and nine local stations (Mayorga, del Valle and Nitrihual, 2010). TVN (formerly Canal 7) is the national TV station, but works as a public-private company with a board including members of political parties with representation in the National Congress. Press, television, and radio now exist in a fiercely competitive market with cable TV and the internet. In terms of advertising revenues, free-to-air television gets 49% of the total, the daily press 29.5%, radio 8.3%, magazines 3.5%, cable TV 1.7%, online media 1.1%, movies 0.3% and the rest goes to street and highway ads (González-Rodríguez, 2008).

³¹ <http://www.subtel.gob.cl/penetracion-de-internet-en-chile-alcanza-los-642-accesos-por-cada-100-habitantes/>.

³² <http://gestion.pe/empresas/america-movil-y-movistar-lideran-9-mercados-al-2160223>

³³ <http://www.libertyglobal.com/about-us.html>

³⁴ <http://www.theclinic.cl/2015/11/06/entel-el-negocio-que-ha-vinculado-por-10-anos-a-eliodoro-matte-con-la-esposa-de-carlos-larrain/>

³⁵ <http://cipchile.cl/2016/02/25/las-presiones-de-lagos-para-favorecer-a-empresas-espanolas/>

legal penalties due to the collusion of these companies in acting together to prevent the entry of new competitors in the market³⁶.

Chile's media system therefore has problems of diversity, not only because of concentrated ownership but also because of a uniformity of media groups that, it is argued by several scholars, largely support the economic system from an ideological standpoint (Sunkel and Geoffroy, 2001; Gómez, 2010). Consequently, one of the features of Chilean media is the reluctance to broadcast or publish any article or investigation that could affect a friend, an ally, a business contact, a supporter, or the neoliberal economic system (Gómez, 2010). Consequently, journalists see their professional freedom restrained. Analysing the Chilean case, scholars Rafael Otano and Guillermo Sunkel suggest a concept to depict journalists' refusal to even propose certain issues for further investigation: 'journalism correctness'. This implies that journalists refrain from suggesting certain topics in the newsroom because of the potential strain and harm it might cause to the owners, advertisers, or allies of the specific media company. In the long run, according to the Chilean case, 'journalism correctness' becomes a natural behaviour in news companies (Otano and Sunkel, 2003). On the other hand, new media and independent journalism endeavours which afford space to dissident actors have had difficulties finding advertising to survive in the long term (Ulloa, 2014).

In sum, the Chilean media system is ideologically biased and the state has not intervened through policies aiming to weaken the power of corporate media (Monckeberg, 2009). Moreover, the Chilean government has supported this tendency, funding private television, press, and radio that belong to a few pro-neoliberal owners through permanent advertising³⁷. It is this media landscape the

³⁶ <http://www.lanacion.cl/entel-claro-y-movistar-pagaran-mas-de-4-mil-millones-por-impedir-competencia/noticias/2011-12-23/203245.html>

³⁷ <http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2012/03/15/medios-de-luksic-saieh-y-edwards-son-los-mas-beneficiados-con-publicidad-del-gobierno>

one that the Chilean movement of 2011 – as will be explored in chapter 6 – confronted through a strategy based, first and foremost, in the acknowledgment that media is an ideological adversary defending the market-driven model of education through varied means.

However, to understand the tendency to narrow the diversity of Chilean media, one needs to consider a more contemporary trend: the ‘spectacularization’ of news (Arancibia, 2006). In general, but especially in press and television, Chile has moved from a format based upon news, soap operas, movies, and talk shows, to one based upon reality shows, and satellite gossip and scandal programs (Santander, 2007). The realm of ephemeral local celebrities and public exposure of private lives has permeated the media spectrum (Sunkel, 2005; Monckeberg, 2009). For media companies, the latter works well because it attracts money without much effort, but for its critics this is bad news. The reasons are the low importance given to the social role of media (Norambuena, 2006), the treatment of news as merchandise, and the closure of debate in favour of spectacle and celebrity gossip (Monckeberg, 2009). Indeed, in 2011 activists’ tried to disassociate themselves from gossip-related coverage by the media, to avoid – as will be explained in chapter 6 – being considered lightly or occupy the front cover of newspapers for reasons related to scandals or their personal life.

After observing three paradigmatic cases of public space and having given an overview of the Chilean media system, it is possible to observe a paradox in the idea of public space: it does not consider people’s voice besides a slight representation in the hands of a media system running under market logics, and it is not open to public participation in any democratic way. In this sense, contemporary and media-centric public spaces exert three actions that run in absolute contradiction with commons principles: they undermine the chance to speak and be listened to; they own the space in which to speak and be listened to; and they install a hegemonic and exclusionary narrative in which the citizen does

not have a place. So what are the odds for speaking and being listened to in this quasi-totalitarian space of a neoliberal democracy such as the one faced by students in Chile? Four contributions from media and communications studies give some hints about overcoming this closure and lack of public space. I will review and analyse these contributions, which range from a media-centred position, to a more grassroots-type of mediation, with a special focus on Latin America.

Media systems, media policies and media reforms

In times gone by, Latin American research and theoretical development was embracing what Luis Ramiro Beltrán (2005) called the alternative communication for democratic development. Defined as ‘the expansion and balance in people’s access to communication process and their participation in it using media – interpersonal, mass and mixed – to ensure, besides technological progress and material well-being, social justice, freedom, and the rule of the majority’ (2005), it carried the idea of communication as a horizontal and participatory dialogical exchange. Influenced by Paulo Freire’s work (Beltrán, 2005), the alternative communication for democratic development theory escaped from functionalist communication theories based on the diffusion of technological innovations (Beltrán, 1982; Catalán and Sunkel, 1993; Moreno, 1997), and was also distanced from Marxist criticism of cultural imperialism and class struggle (Dorfman and Mattelart, 1971; Mattelart, 1970, 1980).

Freire’s call to transform objective reality (1996) through tangible measures to achieve liberation for oppressors and the oppressed found resonance in overarching instances, such as the San José Conference (1976), and the McBride Report (1980). The Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in San José (Costa Rica) in 1976, produced an array of recommendations towards national media regulation broadly in line with what was happening in terms of ‘alternative and participatory communication experiences, that were often contrary to cultural expressions of the elite exercising power’ (Barranquero, 2011: 156). However, its critical approach was strongly

resisted by private media corporations in Latin America, who reacted through press campaigns and counter-meetings (Quiros and Segovia, 1996). Amongst other things, the San José Conference expressed that the media was a resource of society and that ‘all members of society are responsible for ensuring the peaceful and beneficial use of the media community’ (1996: 76). Therefore, ‘to establish plans and programs for the extensive and positive use of the media in development policies should be the joint responsibility of the state and members of society’ (Quiros and Segovia, 1996: 75–6).

The will for a new communication system failed in Latin American countries during the 1960’s, 1970’s, and 1980’s. As reviewed in the previous chapter, these were decades when democratically elected governments in the region were violently replaced by military coups, deepening censorship, journalist persecution, and disappearances, as in the Chilean, Brazilian, and Argentine cases. Thus, the regulatory desires of the San José Conference and the McBride Report were forgotten because of military oppression and later because of the mercantilist rationale of the Washington Consensus. As a consequence, media went in the opposite direction of a participative and even classic liberal framework.

The already prevailing commercial media structures in Latin America – both in the press and in broadcasting – were given a boost by new liberal reforms, which eventually favoured not those market conditions necessary to promote pluralism but a broader expansion of predominant corporate groups (Guerrero, 2014: 45).

As I have signalled in the paragraphs above, in the long run, from the rupture of democracy until the end of authoritarian regimes, Chile and Latin America built a media system with low capacity to promote participation, voice and emancipation, for two reasons. Firstly, because it tended to, in Curran’s words, conceal conflict ‘through the media’s “dissolution” of social classes, which are then re-presented as non-antagonistic entities (the “public” or “nation”), brought together around an imaginary point of unity (the “public” or “national” interest)’ (2002: 138). Secondly, because the media in liberal democracies – and even more so in neoliberal democracies – are not good at representing diversity (Curran, 2005) or allowing

popular participation that could lead to an emancipation process (Carpentier, 2011).

In this context, since 2004, Latin America began to change media regulation (Becerra, 2014). Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina and, most recently, Mexico, have endeavoured to address issues of access inequality, ownership concentration (Trejo, 2010; Torres, 2011), market share, advertising (Hughes, 2008: 131) and, in general, media democratization (Gómez García, 2013). On the other hand, these changes in media policies have not been a lively topic in Colombia, Perú, Paraguay, Brazil and Central American countries, 'where there are no political debates about monopoly ownership of the media, nor on the quality of information, and new media laws have been developed only seeking to legitimize and increase the power of media groups' (Rincón, 2013: 5–6).

Because of their infancy, it is not clear whether media policies will foster more citizen participation in the long term, although it is possible to identify the will to modify issues of ownership, distribution of broadcasting space, censorship, state control, and advertising. The Argentine case is helpful to depict this change, with the introduction in 2013 of the Audiovisual Communication Services Law (ACSL) that modified the radio and TV landscape by splitting the broadcast spectrum into three parts: One for public (governmental) media; one for commercial private media; and the third for non-commercial private media (such as NGOs and neighbour committees). So far, this policy has received some support (Mastrini, Becerra and Marino, 2014), but criticism has also been made of the political use that populist administrations might give to the new media spectrum (Liotti, 2014). For these reasons it is too soon to know whether these reforms will merely shift oppression from one side to another, whether they will keep close to the San José and McBride spirit, whether they will confer legitimacy on those regarded as subalterns, and how the media will relate with economic and cultural developments – elements that have been somewhat left aside in the recent discussion on media policies (Araya, 2014; Matos, 2014; Benítez, 2014). Nevertheless, and in spite of the policy's newness, it is possible to make two observations on media reforms as

ways to overcome the expropriation of placements to talk and discuss the life in common.

The first observation comes from the fact that Latin America is still that place constituted by the politico-cultural matrix described in the previous chapter and where mainstream media and communication practices have not helped specifically to change that situation. Some contributions to the field by Luis Ramiro Beltrán (1985), Paulo Freire (1996) and Mario Kaplún (1998) have signalled the way in which the practice of journalism as well as media and communication studies have followed a positivist path inherited from US and European modernity. This positivist approach has tended to install models of communication mostly centred on media (Prieto, 2007) that act by giving manuals to follow (Beltrán, 1985) without considering subjects' interests and people's subjectivity. Indeed, what the Argentine scholar Mario Kaplún has called the 'caricature of participation' (1985: 56) depicts this point. Kaplún, whose research and work was oriented against banking education and communication, conceived communication 'as a process that culminates with the ability to auto generate messages and participation, in a process leading to the actual capacity to intervene in decision-making process' (1985: 56). In his perspective, 'many times the act of making the other a mere receptor receives the name of communication, as well as participation referring to the simple fact of doing things that an educator or promoter had previously decided. And we say "people have participated" because they attended and made certain things previously determined and following instructions' (1985: 56). Faced with Kaplún's worries, there are no certain answers from Latin American reform. What could be said, so far, is that current media reforms tend to be more concerned with media ownership, advertising, and content regulation than about the emancipatory potential of media and communications (Araya, 2014). People's agency, understood as 'some degree of control over the social relations in which one is intruded, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some extent' (Sewell, 1992, taken from Fuentes Navarro, 1999: 21), has not yet come to the fore of media reform.

However, and interestingly, this branch of communication coming from Latin America has some guidelines regarding the generation of alternative media. A good example of the latter is depicted by Clemencia Rodríguez's insight into the Chilean radio 'Estrella del Mar' [Star of the Sea) (Rodríguez, 2003). What she highlights about this radio station based on the southern island of Chiloé – and run by the local diocese of the Catholic Church – is the understanding of media as a means to promote participation allowing people to narrate their lives, to talk about their issues and ultimately to construct meaning in their own way. 'Estrella del Mar' is an iconic case of a radio station that is partially open to the people – the inhabitants of the island make an important part of radio station's programmes; that provides permanent training to local communicators spread through the island and beyond, thereby contributing to the democratizing of media.

In this way, the radio does achieve some of Rodríguez's main goals of alternative media – value the voice and worldview of those regarded as subalterns; make people participants of their own destiny; do not follow the guidelines of commercial media (Rodríguez, 2001) and 'counterbalance the unequal distribution of communication resources that came with the growth of big media corporations' (2001: 3) – and to claim a citizenship exceeding the liberal frameworks in terms of people being able to narrate their lives. In spite of being run in a hierarchical way and by an institution as traditional as the Catholic Church, 'Estrella del Mar' is a remarkable case of participatory media that, sadly, is quite unique in Chile. Local community radios in Chile live in conditions that are marginal – receiving a minimal space compared to commercial radio – and do not have the funds to be sustained in the long run³⁸. Indeed, as Rosalind Brasnahan states on the Chilean case, 'public policy in Chile has impeded the development of community radio as a vehicle for social activism' (2007:228). The question, and a key issue in this theoretical approach, is how liberal and neoliberal politics can move on participatory endeavours and to what extent a mediated citizenry is possible in such contexts.

³⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/chile>

A second observation is about the surrounding landscapes of media reform, such as the regional and local cultural industries, cultural consumption and cultural policies on one hand, and the invitation to see beyond the limits, on the other. Media systems and press companies are just two units of broader cultural landscapes where identity and expressive elements are part of processes and contexts of creation, consumption, access, community life, human rights, citizenship, and life in community (Miller, 2007). Therefore, failure to consider these other areas when assessing the development of media reforms might restrict the scope of any analysis. From this last point comes an element to consider when researching the idea of the commons of voice: going beyond media.

Taking Curran's invitation (1997), discussions about democracy, cultural hegemony and social movements should avoid the temptation of only focusing on the media, especially considering the Latin American politico-cultural matrix, recent remarkable experience and research on cultural policies and cultural industries (García Canclini, 1987; Miller and Yúdice, 2002; Mejía Arango, 2009). Jesús Martín Barbero (1993) gives a remarkable insight. If in the previous chapter authors like Hopenhayn (2004) and Reguillo (2000) underlined the value of people conveying political actions on a micro level and their will to instil a democratic culture in everyday actions out of parties and political institutions, Martín-Barbero (1993, 2004) adds a call to pay attention to the mediations that make the latter possible and to recognise in those mediations a political value, not the degradation of politics.

Martín-Barbero (1993, 2004) insists upon going from the study of media, to the mediations of culture and power in the daily life of popular subjects. In this way, he draws a connection with the idea sustained by the notion of the commons of going beyond dichotomies of state and the public (Dardot and Laval, 2014) and – as following chapters will show – that democratic life is not limited to a relationship between citizen-state, as well as people's voice is not univocally directed to the media expecting to give voice to the people. Martín-Barbero (1993, 2004) ultimately invites one to understand democracy from a collective and conflictual

dimension (Mouffe, 2005) – but based upon the way in which people understand and mediate their world. This is because it is within that process where hegemonies are experienced and contested.

The liberal model of civic media agencies

Following the previous advice about observing beyond the mainstream media, I will take a small step further to analyse a particular contribution by Silvio Waisbord, who addressed the lack of voice by focusing on the relationship between civil society and mainstream media. Following the idea that ‘democracy suffers when the linkages between the press and civic society are weak’ (2009: 105), the Argentine researcher studies citizenship participation as a possible aggregation and collaboration of civil society organizations with media agendas. He expresses a positive view of this type of linkage as effective, because, in spite of politico-economic structures, populist administrations, and the absence of state in some regions in Latin America (2009), there is still hope for a closer bond between the media and civil society.

Waisbord calls his idea Civic Media Advocacy (CMA) and, in general, it represents the way that Latin American liberals and mainstream media corporations (Inter American Press Association, 2009) want to improve the connection between civil society and the media. CMA’s aim is to promote the ‘actions of civic groups to influence news coverage of social issues in the mainstream press’ (2009: 107), including among these group organizations defending children’s, environmental, and women’s rights. Waisbord tries to provide a means of getting people closer to the media as something achievable and as a way to channel people’s concerns into bigger marquees. In his analysis, what separates civil society from media coverage is a technical problem derived from the scarce resources of media companies to cover a wide array of fields, and from the scarce resources and lack of training by organizations to supply the media with permanent and consistent information. In this economy of collaboration, Waisbord locates the perfect

equation to solve the problem: If NGOs, neighbourhood committees, and social movements counted with campaigners, public relations officers or journalists in charge of media and communications, then it would be possible to supply the media with permanent and reliable information that would be appreciated by media professionals who, in turn, would cover more social issues. Based upon data backing his position, Waisbord says that the professionalisation of media work in non-mainstream organizations has proven to be successful in terms of coverage, so there is no need to 'demonize the media' (2009: 112) or directly criticize media avoidance of civic issues due to ideological or partisanship reasons. While interesting, in terms of finding a way to improve the labour of social organizations to reach a broader public, Waisbord's proposal reveals some flaws.

The first thing to say about Waisbord's approach is to highlight its lack of historical and political perspective regarding Latin American media, since it disregards the problems neoliberalism has posed in the relation between media and civil society (Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014), something that seems inappropriate to leave aside in terms of ownership and media practice. Regarding ownership, as we have seen in the Chilean case, the problem set by neoliberalism in Latin America deepens a historical pattern: 'a few media sources in each country boast a majority of viewers or listeners, and these outlets are typically controlled by wealthy families or individuals with conservative political leanings' (Boas, 2012). The media today is mainly in the hands of big corporations and economic groups, highly concentrated and embracing a 'market ideology guided by advertisement' (Magrini and Rincón, 2010: 317). In terms of media practice, the concentrated market of radio, television, and newspapers is directly linked to the type of news that the media will choose to cover. Indeed, in a text published in 2000, Waisbord was aware of the link between media agendas and the market that made 'impossible the existence of media relatively autonomous from market considerations' (2000: 59), contributing to 'wide disparities in access to the means of public expressions' (60). It seems unlikely that, a few years after these assertions were made, the Latin American media landscape had changed enough to think that market and ideological issues do not

determine the media's agenda. Recent research on media discourse in Chile has, indeed, ratified the trend of newspapers to undermine environmental conflicts or struggles of indigenous people, by 'emphasizing concern for social order and representing movements as permanent conflicts for the nation-state' (Cabalín, 2014: 486).

A second issue with Waisbord's argument is that, from his perspective, the reason why the media do not give enough coverage to civil society stories is because of the excessive number of duties, tasks and responsibilities of media workers. Working conditions mean there is less time to properly investigate civic concerns and, accordingly, undermine the social role of media. This point has partial validity, due to the precarious labour conditions in which Latin American media workers do their jobs, including 'a clear imbalance in wages, a major staff reduction as a product of centralization and economic reorganization; a doubling or tripling of the duties for the same salary; an over-use of practitioners who tend to cheapen labour' (Mellado, 2010: 11, 12). Moreover, recent studies have observed that 'low salaries in the media industry have persisted' in the region (UNESCO, 2014), along with lack of job security and the increase in informal jobs. Therefore, Waisbord attributes the lack of a more citizen-focused journalism to the precarious labour conditions of media workers due to technical problems, thus missing two points. One is that these conditions come from an economic system protected by media owners with their own agenda. The Colombian scholar Omar Rincón puts this case in a better way: 'In Latin America media chose to defend business and that is why they are political actors with a market agenda. Journalists and quality information do not matter' (2010: 7). The second point is the fact that university student unions in Chile – as I will explain in chapter 6 – not only have a person in charge of media and communications for a particular mobilization, they also have people and a manner of relating on a permanent basis and in a very similar way than those used by NGOs. In this sense, the lack of media coverage on some issues is not technical, but rather it is ideological.

The third issue with Waisbord's argument comes as a consequence of failing to consider neoliberalism as a relevant factor. In his opinion, the problem within newsrooms is that the coverage of political and criminal issues overshadow any chance of leaving space for news about civil society issues like malnutrition and hunger, water supplies, and access to healthcare. This assertion has three flaws to consider. First, it supports liberal notions of democracy where politics is a realm of professional politics, not conceiving of the idea that political items are intertwined with civil society or can be found beyond the walls of government, parliament, and local councils. A second problem is that Waisbord dismisses the fact that in Latin America the mainstream media agenda will not compromise the interests of media owners, media advertisers, and media ideology, so the media will not cover – or will cover only from their own point of view – children's, women's, indigenous people's, peasants' or workers' issues that might confront the interests of the media's owners, advertisers, or allies (Lugo Ocando, 2008; Hughes, 2008; Sandoval-García, 2008; González-Rodríguez, 2008). A third flaw can be found in the real-life exercise of journalism in the region, where journalists have little independence from editorial staff and owners (Guanipa, 2007; León-Dermota, 2003), with this being the major concern for media professionals working in the region (Restrepo, 1999)³⁹.

In the end, Waisbord's CMA appears as an outdated defence of a liberal model of media that did not accomplish its goals as a consequence of 'the predominance of private commercial media organizations and to the conditions that hurdle state's regulatory capacities that afflict the watchdog of journalism by economic and political interests' (Guerrero, 2014: 43). But ultimately, it is precisely this unaccomplished mission of mainstream media which was one of the reasons why it was meaningful for the movement in 2011: it was an ideological adversary. As I will

³⁹ The latest report by UNESCO (2014) on freedom of expression and media development also included as an important concern in the region the threats, killings, and harassment that journalists in Latin America and the Caribbean suffer as a result of organized crime and some governments. However, conversely to what happens with precarious labour in the region, the killing of journalists is a tendency focused mostly in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Honduras and not in the whole region.

explain in Chapter 6, students during 2011 did not refrain from forging a relationship with mainstream media. They acknowledged the power of media and its legitimacy within the Chilean population to frame reality, so they tried to exploit that relationship in terms of coverage of their positions. However, for the students mainstream media represented a political adversary. As the activist Cristian Inostroza – interviewed for this research – expressed, ‘all mainstream media is neoliberal, all of them, there is not a single media outlet opposing the neoliberal model’. As such, the liberal narrative of the media (Curran and Seaton, 2005) does not seem enough to answer the quest for voice from grassroots positions. Quite the opposite, it reflects the way in which voice has been enclosed, running against the ethos of the commons and of democratic dialogue.

The internet: autonomy, horizontalism and technological determinism

One of the flaws of Waisbord’s position – the way in which media ownership tackles media autonomy – demonstrates how the rise of the internet has represented hope. This has been the case both for those embracing a liberal perspective on the media and for others embracing more libertarian goals. In relation to the power of media technologies and their political function from a liberal perspective, Jean Marc Ferry – one of the authors behind the idea of the ‘new public space’ – held high expectations of the ‘revolutionary potential’ (1989: 26) of new information technologies, specifically in the development of inter-individual communications that one day could even discharge the need for a representative political system. The autonomy of the internet has also been praised by radical and libertarian groups (Platon and Deuze, 2003), who have regarded the internet as a way to break the chains of big corporations’ influence on media production and to move towards a global civic agency (Dahlgren, 2013)⁴⁰ and to foster peer enabled endeavours in a way that resembles the notion of the commons as resource and relationship. Resource as in the case of free software initiatives challenging the

⁴⁰ Indeed, in the context of the World Social Forum of 2002 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Dafne Sabanes Plou from the Latin American Agency of Information (ALAI) stated, ‘without the internet, the World Social Forum would not be possible’.

idea of property⁴¹, and relationship by enabling collaborative platforms open for everyone to participate in and to modify⁴².

In general, high expectations have been placed on the internet from various ideological positions. However, in the assessment of the internet as a more autonomous and horizontal way to overcome the closure of narrow public spaces, one must take a clear view and avoid being beguiled by the technology and avoid attributing too much power *per se* to the internet (Fenton, 2012). Indeed, important contributions have helped to move away from fascination of the wonders of technology to focus on the civic and political aspects related to the use of new communication technologies. This avoidance of technological determinisms⁴³ (Curran, 2002) has been a valuable position to assess the contribution and

⁴¹ The notion of the commons applies partially to the internet in terms of the availability, use and control of resources. Some uses of the Internet have implied the production of resources, platforms and initiatives that not only does not belong 'to one particular person who has the authority to decide how the resource will be used' (Benkler, 2006: 60), but are available for anyone and meant to be available and modifiable for its improvement without lessening its use for others. An example of the latter is the Creative Commons endeavour, initiative that 'provides free, easy-to-use copyright licenses to make a simple and standardized way to give the public permission to share and use' (www.creativecommons.org). As Lessig states, Creative Commons makes it 'easy for people to build upon other people's work, by making it simple for creators to express the freedom for others to take and build upon their work' (Lessig, 2004: 282). In this sense, the networked information economy commonizes resources going against exclusion mechanisms like patents and copyrights (Benkler, 2006).

⁴² Conceptually, the commons also applies to the internet as relationship. It does so, for instance, in the way free software is created and modified through a model of organization that is 'radically decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial commands' (Benkler, 2006: 60). What Benkler calls "commons-based peer production" appears as a rarity in neoliberal contexts. It goes against centralized and vertical logics as long as its life depends on the openness and architectural chance of intervention on the codes in a way that subverts state and market power. However, in the Chilean case this development has been almost entirely absent in the agenda or action of social movements. Just recently it has started to have more presence, with the creation of the NGO Software Libre Chile (<http://www.softwarelibrechile.cl>) created in 2012. The only political sector that in Chile has taken free software and direct democracy through the internet with more attention has been the Chilean branch of the Pirate Party (<http://www.partidopirata.cl>). Among their aims are the 'promoting the use of platforms for direct democracy' and to 'discourage centralism and promote self-governance' (<http://www.partidopirata.cl/objetivos>). However, the Pirate Party is not yet a formal party in Chile, it has no parliamentary or municipality presence and has no major impact in local politics.

⁴³ I use James Curran's (2002) definition of technological determinism which is based on ideas that consider new communications technologies as society changers by contracting space and time and by changing how we experience sensation and perception, thus affecting our interpersonal relations and giving us the power to surpass mediating institutions by our control of new technologies.

potential of the internet to enable placements for speaking and being listened to. In the following pages I will review the key debates on the matter.

Revolution from the mobile

Recently, Mexican actress Salma Hayek celebrated the fact that people today are living a 'peaceful revolution'. Reproducing her words, the British newspaper *The Guardian*⁴⁴ expressed that Hayek cheered the rise of social media because it has given consumers voice, enabling women, for example, to 'tackle problems such as age and body image stereotyping in advertising'. Besides the understanding of people as consumers – Hayek's speech was given in the context of a Facebook event held in a London hotel – this is part of a discourse considering technology as the engine of social change. A recent piece of text, this time from a Mexican scholar, has asserted that 'e-mail and web pages made it possible to generate a space for global mobilization against the repression of the Zapatista indigenous rebels' (Rovira Sancho, 2014: 387). In other words, what this perspective proffers is a determinism in which current political change is explained by the alleged power of new information technologies. Take the case of Manuel Castells, who, after his experience in recent social uprisings in North Africa, Spain, and New York, stated that the internet is 'the precondition for the revolt' (2012: 27), with the role not only of spreading but also of coordinating the revolt (2012). This optimism on the wonders of the internet as a tool and means for social change and counter-power has received sceptical responses. Lance Bennett reflects this trend by warning that the rise of global activism 'should not be attributed solely to reduced communication cost of the internet' (Bennett, 2003: 25). Here Bennett criticizes a trend of technological determinism where the internet is depicted as being capable of changing the world, as it is possible to read from academic contributions (Curran, Fenton and Freedman, 2016), and calls for caution over the fascination with technology. As Jeffrey Alexander warns regarding the Arab Spring and the direct attribution of the uprising to the use of mobile phones: 'many protesters in

⁴⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/mar/23/salma-hayek-facebook-twitter-selfie>

places like Tahrir Square did not have internet access and were mobilized as much through face-to-face networks as through social media' (2011: 260). Research focused on Chile's students' movement of 2011 reflects similar stance, expressing that 'new information technologies are fundamental to the development of the current youth movements, but cannot be considered exclusively as the factors that enable the success and scope of these movements' (Cabalín, 2014b: 31).

Not democratic, not democratizing

Another area of controversy is the question of whether the internet and its technologies are democratic, foster democratic engagement and promote democratic outcomes. Regarding the first point, it should be noted that the most common social media platforms used by the students in the Chilean case – such as Facebook in the Chilean case – to be informed, to inform, to organise and for dialogue, are private companies whose ultimate end is making profits from the self exposure of people. The latter implies that while Facebook's alleged desire is to develop 'the social infrastructure for community—for supporting us, for keeping us safe, for informing us, for civic engagement, and for inclusion of all' as its CEO Mark Zuckerberg has stated⁴⁵, it is a private 'infrastructure' made by and for profit, and it is not the result of a grassroots democratic endeavour. Indeed, Facebook's algorithms shape the social world that users see on the platform and shape the social world they interact with, while tracking people's use of the platform – and the web in general – and improving their knowledge of users for their own commercial gain (Skeggs and Yuill, 2016). The latter is a paradox for anti-neoliberal movements like the students in Chile, because as Kavada points out - and indeed as I observe in chapter 7 – platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have intentions that 'clash with the intentions of the activists using them' (2015: 884).

In terms of fostering democratic engagement and promoting democratic outcomes, the available data expresses ambivalent approaches. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) highlight how the web enables different people to get together without

⁴⁵ <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/06/tech-shareholders/531765/>

renouncing their subjectivity and breaking top-to-bottom logics of aggregation. In their account, the internet is a tool to share and distribute information but also a way for grassroots groups to organize. In this praise for the connective feature of the internet there is a gap which has been revealed from recent research on social media such as Twitter and Facebook, indicating that the type of engagement entailed by contemporary uses of the internet may or may not foster co-productive and co-distributive logics of action. According to Jeffrey Juris' study of the Occupy movement, in the US city of Boston, 'rather than mobilizing "networks of networks" the use of Twitter and Facebook within social movements tends to generate "crowds of individuals"' (2012: 267). In other words, connective action could still recreate individualistic and aggregative logic of actions. The latter means that, although it is possible to observe the contribution of the internet affecting the social fabric, affording spaces for people to talk, read, communicate with each other, share videos, hold online discussions, and spread information, the type of engagement that it carries cannot be taken for granted. In direct contradiction to Bennett and Segerberg's approach to the connective character of social movements, Juris raises a warning flag:

Although social networking tools allow activists to rapidly circulate information and to coordinate physical movements across space, they are perhaps most effective at getting large numbers of individuals to converge in protest at particular physical locations. Rather than generating organizational networks, these tools primarily link and help to stitch together interpersonal networks, facilitating the mass aggregation of individuals within concrete locales through viral communication flows. In this sense, rather than mobilizing 'networks of networks' the use of Twitter and Facebook within social movements tends to generate 'crowds of individuals' (Juris, 2012: 267).

In a similar way to Juris' caution in considering the internet as a booster for connective action, Natalie Fenton (2012) gets away from a determinist vision of the internet's democratic potential. In her vision, the internet should not be considered a democratic arena by itself, as it can sustain non-democratic as well as democratic formations. In the specific case of social media, the internet can contribute to diminishing the social relations of members, by not sustaining dialogues or debates (Fenton and Barassi, 2011) or generating violent

environments for those unwilling to be exposed to that kind of participation. So, if the internet enables democratic engagement as well as disengagement (Castells, 2012) or social disenchantment (Wellman, Haase, Witte and Hampton, 2001), it could be said that although it might create spaces for people to intervene, these are not democratic arenas *per se* (Fenton, 2012), and they are not determined to enhance democracy (Papacharissi, 2010). In the end, the internet is situated in conditions that may enable electronic grassroots (Castells, 2010) and polyadic communication dynamics (Diani, 2001) but may also enable non-democratic and anti-democratic behaviours (Mosca, 2010; Downey and Fenton, 2007; Fenton, 2008).

Power to conquer the world

There is a third strand of criticism directed at technological determinism in relation to social movements and radical politics, from analysis of the internet as part of cultural industries. From this perspective, there is enough data (Miller, 2011; Freedman, 2016) to affirm that the internet is part of a profit-making culture industry overtly promoting individual power (Fenton, 2008) but covertly hiding poor labour conditions, pollution, and abusive trade agreements with Third World nations. So, whilst on the one hand the internet is being depicted as the enhancer of democracies and peaceful revolutions, on the other hand it is part of a cultural industry reinforcing corporate power (Charles, 2013) 'and the discourses of capitalism and neoliberalism' (Fenton and Barassi, 2011: 192–193), which – as we have seen – are at the core of Latin American subalternism.

Moreover, there is a strong relationship between corporate power, states, the internet, and cultural industries through policies that reach continental and global dimensions. An ongoing example is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement led by the United States that tries to 'create a platform for economic integration across the Asia Pacific region'⁴⁶, including Mexico, Peru, and Chile,

⁴⁶ http://www.sice.oas.org/TPD/TPP/TPP_e.ASP

amongst other countries. The agreement has raised major concern amongst civil rights advocates who have called it the 'biggest threat to the open web'⁴⁷. According to Daniel Alvarez, a Chilean expert on digital rights, amongst the consequences of TPP are the 'censorship of web sites because of eventual infringement of copyrights, the arbitrary criminalization of network users, and the extension on the protection of copyright'⁴⁸. In a world with a functioning TPP, the unauthorised use of material under copyright, such as pictures or audio, would be considered a crime.

In this context, it is interesting to return to the attributed democratic and liberating power entailed by the internet within what are usually regarded as democratic countries such as the US, Australia, Chile, and Mexico, which are all part of the TPP. In the specific case of the US, Calingaert (2012) praises state policies on the internet because they protect people's privacy (2012) with the only exception of surveillance on anything that might be a criminal or terrorist threat. For Calingaert, this regulation makes the difference between democratic countries and nations – he uses the cases of China and Iran – who 'have become highly adept at controlling the internet' (2012: 158). What Calingaert misses in his account is that the TPP not only 'may affect the free access to content on the internet, which would be a clear setback in terms of democratization of knowledge and culture' (Furche, 2013: 4), but also that it might redefine the legality of what today are legal and usual practices on YouTube and Facebook. What emerges as a paradox of the TPP case for this discussion is that, in the case of it being finally signed by all parties, Western democracies and authoritarian regimes would share the same feature on its policies towards the internet: control and punishment over digital media. But while some countries will do this to maintain their authorities out of scrutiny, others will do it to keep profits on the rise while defending democracy and free speech.

⁴⁷ <http://www.theverge.com/2013/5/14/4330212/tpp-threat-to-the-global-web>

⁴⁸ According to the Chilean lawyer of the Digital Rights NGO Daniel Alvarez: <https://derechosdigitales.org/2368/tpp-cucharadas-de-sopa/>

The three revised technological determinisms of the internet contribute to the perspective that the internet, in itself, does not create grassroots revolutions; nor does it enhance democracy networks from above, trigger democratization processes, or function outside of capital fluxes, corporation influence, and state regulation. However, once the analysis has dodged causal explanations, it is possible to highlight two contributions that the internet has made in the quest for speaking and being listened to and overcoming expropriated public spaces.

The first contribution is the increased opportunities to communicate from grassroots levels to global and local scales. As a tool to gain power 'in the realm of symbolic politics and in the development of issue-oriented mobilizations' (Castells, 2010: 417), the internet has also been a relevant means of spreading information (Della Porta and Mosca, 2009), allowing alternative, international, interpersonal, and broadcast communication (Klein, 2000; Kavada, 2005) that has been crucial in contexts where protest activities and alternative media 'were severely constrained or silenced' (Norris, 2002: 208). The Chilean experience of 2011 will show – in chapter 7 of this research – the way in which the uses of the internet contributed to the diffusion of information without depending exclusively on mainstream media – as in Waisbord's CMA model. As a student said, expressing this aspect of internet, within a focus group for this research: 'We uploaded things that were not going to appear in the media. They [media] represent the interests of economic groups, so social media became alternative media, the place where people could discover what was really happening'.

A second contribution is on the new paths for networked sociability (Papacharissi, 2011; Castells, 2012; Bennett and Segerberg, 2013) and specifically on three items: the autonomy for 'communications within professional and campaigning groups' (Couldry, 2010b: 149); the decentralized character of communicative exchanges (Kavada, 2010); and the chance for faster processes of insurgence (Castells, 2009). These three elements are particularly relevant in the Chilean case because they provide an entrance to observe communicative relationships that –

based on the web but linked with an offline world – could go from using the internet for passing on information; to enact communicative ecologies of participation that could possibly contribute to a type of political relationship closer to a commons than to neoliberal democracies.

At the end of this revision of the internet it seems clearer that new information technologies offer opportunities for sharing information and coordination, with a sense of autonomy that might – in specific cases – open up opportunities for a new mediated activism. The latter means that new technologies bring the means to overcome narrow public spaces, but they do not do this on their own. In this sense, Freedman's advice to observe media practices 'in the light of the social system from which they emerged and which they continue to shape' (Freedman, 2014: 92) becomes crucial. In other words, the internet – as well as movements' relationship with mainstream media and use of alternative media – should not be considered in isolation or in a deterministic way. They are part of communicative ecologies in which media and communicative practices are situated in evolving contexts, and people can therefore experience the mobilisation through different means of expression and relationship (Mercea, Iannelli and Loader, 2016). In this sense, Treré and Mattoni rightly affirm that 'the repertoires of communication of contemporary protest movements are constituted by a plethora of several communication technologies that include older and newer media, online and offline modes of communication, as well as a continuum ranging from independent and radical platforms to consolidated and still powerful mainstream media' (2016: 300). As such, both authors invite us to escape media-centric insights on social movements; to acknowledge (media) multiplicity such as offline and online practices; to observe social movements and their practices as part of a fluid and dynamic story unravelled in time and; finally, to understand media and communicative practices within 'actual power relations and political conflicts' (Treré and Mattoni, 2016: 301). To do the opposite would be to get stuck in the wonders of technology and not observe the changes in the way people and social movements are challenging notions such as citizenship and participation. To move in that direction, I will take a fourth and final approach to communicative practices

that, from grassroots positions, offer an opportunity to contest the closure of public spaces.

Grassroots mediations: Voicing from below

'The idea is to avoid an agreement out of the only pitch where we can play: public debate and social mobilization. There resides our strength, just then our arguments begin to count' (Figueroa, 2013: 35). This quote is an excerpt from the book *We Arrived to Stay: Articles About the Students' Revolt* by Francisco Figueroa, vice-president of Universidad de Chile Students Union during 2011. His assertion helps to grasp the attitude of Chilean students in a mainstream political landscape that allows me to obtain three elements for analysing communicative and media practices from grassroots positions: a) that in the Chilean context the students needed to create a place to talk on their own terms and avoid being subsumed by mainstream institutions in order to play on 'the only pitch where we can play'; b) the acknowledgement that the way to build that space was partially through their own efforts for mobilization; and c) that for the activists there was no other way to exert voice than by mobilizing and rejecting the institutional methods by which to conduct their claims.

Acknowledging the power of media companies and the diminishing context of media labour, on one hand, and the contributions of the internet as well as social media on the other, Figueroa's memories seem to be directed to a deeper and critical point that is at the core of the political. How are people – whose citizenship condition has been reduced to voting in representative democracy – able to recover a position for voicing from grassroots positions? Broadly, there are two ways to observe this question from the available literature.

One is an approach clearly represented by 'political process' theories on social movements and, lately, by Manuel Castells' assessment on Occupy, the Arab

Spring, and the Indignados movement⁴⁹. Whilst Figueroa acknowledges the need to gain a position to face the state and its institutions outside of the current arena, Castells sustains that 'at the end of the day, the dreams of social change will have to be watered down and channelled through the political institutions' (2012: 234). Castells' approach has two distinctive aspects that are problematic. One is that his assessment observes the resolution of social movement issues as a task mainly based in the institutions of the state and thus as a job of mainstream political actors. The second is, accordingly, that for Castells successful mobilizations are those that get to 'pre-set agendas of political actors' (2012: 235). Faced with the latter the questions from a Chilean perspective are: how can logics of consultation and participation be conducted in realms that reject these mechanisms, and how could those who have contributed to and are part of the closure of public spaces grant their openness?

A different approach is present in David Graeber's account of the Occupy Wall Street protests (2013). Graeber emphasizes the way in which people gathered, took decisions, and lived the experience of discussing, arguing, and reaching consensus in public assemblies located in New York. The settlers used open assemblies and direct democracy mechanisms to live their mobilization. The principle guiding these public meetings was communicative: 'everyone affected by a project of action should have a say in how it is conducted' (2013: 230). This position relates to the way in which Couldry (2010) and Freire (1996) understand voice and reject the liberal idea that political participation comprises the acts of private citizens 'aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel

⁴⁹ Occupy, the Arab Spring, and the Indignados movement were expressions of dissent manifested in large mobilizations located in different cities and countries during 2011. Occupy was born in the US; its main aim was to stop the advance of social inequality and move on a new and more horizontal democracy. One of its most distinctive features was the occupation of urban spaces by installing camps close to state or financial institutions (Castells, 2012). This feature was also present in the 15-M (because it began on 15 May) or Indignados movement in Spain. The mobilization in Spain was triggered by deteriorating living conditions and also by what the protesters considered a failed democracy (Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014). The Arab Spring refers to the mobilization wave that took place in countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The reason behind mobilizations in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Libya was broadly to end dictatorial governments and claim democratization and justice (Moghadam, 2013). The mobilization led to the collapse of authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt.

and/or the actions they take' (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978: 46).

When Graeber poses the ideal of communicative spaces in which 'everyone affected by a project of action should have a say in how it is conducted' (2013: 230), there are two problems. One is what Fenton calls the institutionalization of hope: the materialization and definition of those communicative practices 'around a particular set of institutional arrangements and a particular spatial form' (2008: 244) in order to give them 'a meaningful referent in the material world' (2008: 244). The problem posed by Fenton relates to seriously projecting in time instances of debate, participation, and litigation allowing people to take part in the political as a permanent position. Fenton's problem is a key concern for hopes about grassroots endeavours contesting narrowed public spaces.

But Graeber's ideal communicative space presents another problem that enables me to seal this chapter and project this research. When Graeber states that in assemblies during Occupy 'everyone affected by a project of action should have a say in how it is conducted' (2013: 230), and he poses that type of participation as an ideal for the larger human collective, he is leaving aside one matter raised by Couldry (2010): 'people need first to be visible before they can be recognized as having voice; they must first be regarded as part of the landscape in which struggles for voice go on' (130). The problem is, in sum, that, according to what we have reviewed in these two chapters, 'everyone' seems to mostly comprise those excluded from the political by neoliberalism; those merely integrated as consumers – as long as they can afford it – rather than as citizens. In this context, Graeber's wish that 'everyone should have a say' appears as a political problem instead of a technical issue with capacity to be solved by the media work of civic agencies or web-based platforms like reality TV show voting. The problem, in this sense, is that 'everyone' is close to what the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano (1993) called the nobodies: 'owners of nothing. The nobodies: the no ones, the nobodied, running like rabbits, dying through life, screwed every which way' (52). In sum, these people are dispossessed from voice, from real participatory instances and,

even more importantly, from the entitlement to be regarded politically as a visible somebody.

It is this human exclusion from the public realm and, accordingly, from the political that a third and final expropriation tackles the chance to speak and to be listened to for discussing the life in common: First it was voice; then it was the place for doing so (the public space); and finally it is the actor (the individual and the people). After this sum of dispossessions, the question that needs to be addressed is how individuals and groups move on from the demise of the notions of citizen participation, nation-state identity and even consumer rights to build up a new collective subject able to reconstitute the chance to debate and discuss the life in common.

There are some insights into finding ways to reconstitute this human commons from grassroots positions. John Holloway (2002) points in that direction with what he calls 'the scream': an initial liberation claim that needs to be moved in the quest to find others, to dialogue, to enhance participation and, in that task, transform relationships of power and thus become truly political (Fenton, 2016). This initial scream appears as a permanent becoming, not fixed or static, but constantly transforming (Hardt and Negri, 2009: 173) that implies the ability to mediate and communicate, to fill the lack of a narrative of voice, place, and entitlement to take part in the political in order to pass from owning nothing to owning self-determination as a first step to break the padlocks of neoliberal democracies. In other words, the creation of a human commons as a social and political collective, challenging the culture of individualism and the oppression of not having a say through varied means.

Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I concluded that voice is an expropriated commons, and at the beginning of this chapter I stated that voice needs a socially grounded place

and a space of recognition to exist. From the account made in this chapter, it is possible to say that neither of these two conditions – space and recognition – are granted by what seems to be the contemporary public space. Indeed, what appears to be present nowadays is, paradoxically, the absence of a public space as a consequence of the weakness of state when faced with global fluxes; this is also a consequence of the neoliberal influence on democracies, and the overarching presence of the market as a shaper of postmodern notions of citizenship and the public.

The purpose of the present chapter was to observe what the available literature says about the quest to deploy voice in neoliberal democracies and to place counter-hegemonic narratives in the quest for broader degrees of participation. With this purpose, I first faced the nature of the place where voice is disallowed by analysing theories on public spaces whose pattern is the restrictive selection of its participants on behalf of certain elites. From the Greeks to the modern bourgeois ideal, there has always been a closure. Whether because of literacy, money, or cultural power, the public space has had delimitations on who was entitled to have voice. It was never a commons as a resource where everyone had a part to take, and today the trend does not look any different. Quite conversely, once modernity placed the media – and more precisely the press – as the main actor of public space, there has been a narrowness of pluralism. With the eruption of neoliberalism, the privatization of the media landscape, and the settlement of a neoliberal rationale based on profit-making, rather than in deliberative or representational aims, the common access of the public space has been expropriated, tackling the opportunities to speak and to be listened to for discussing the life in common.

With this contemporary shape of the public space, the question of how to deploy voice becomes more complex, as it would not be possible to be displayed in neoliberal democracies and privatized media landscapes, as in the case of Chile and Latin America. However, as Freedman points out, power is not absolute and

media systems present cracks (2014). Indeed, in this chapter I have analysed perspectives on media and communication studies that shed light on ways to speak and be listened to in mainstream media landscapes as well as ways to enable alternative and more autonomous opportunities to voice out beyond traditional media.

However, the most relevant element of this chapter is the discovery that – in the context of dispossession and expropriation of basic rights and the celebration of individualistic life – the analysis to overcome neoliberal democracies and restrictive public spaces has to look at how the people build up their entitlement as individual and collective subjects to be part of the political: not as consumers, not as nationals, just as people who are part of a human commons. Because, as Jesús Martín-Barbero poses, ‘seen from the perspective of the daily life of the popular classes, democracy is not merely a question of majority rule but an articulation of a diversity of sociocultural interests, a question not of quantity but of complexity and pluralism. This is occurring, in part, because the popular world is so diverse and so full of diversity’ (1993, 199). On this sense, the invitation of Martín-Barbero is to observe new social movements and their multiple practices and comprehension of democracy to see how the ‘nobodies’ can go from a primal scream (Holloway, 2002) to resonate in others, achieving a common space for everyone to speak out and, consequently, changing the logics of neoliberal democracy. The Chilean case provides the chance to do so and the next chapter invites and urges the need to observe the wide spectrum and placements of communicative and media practices in which voice is knitted, in spite of neoliberal democracies.

Chapter 3

Observing, designing, collecting, interpreting and questioning: Fieldwork and the finding of the commons

In the 21 years that passed since the end of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, up to 2011, several demonstrations, marches, and protests – mostly conducted by students – have hit the country with varying degrees of resonance. Most of these were unable to engage the whole population; none of them was so present in daily life and so compelling for the working classes and the media consumer, as the mobilisation of 2011. The 2011 mobilization was pervasive, and communicative and media practices were entrenched. This was the landscape that caught my attention and became the catalyst for my initial questions, first as a witness to these events, and later as a researcher.

My initial exploratory questions were led by my surprise at the duration and scale of the movement in a place like Chile, 'one of the most privatized countries in the world' (Mayol, 2012: 92) where people seemed to have adapted to neoliberalism and were not disposed to confront it collectively (Mayol, 2012). Other initial questions were about the communication strategies used by the movement, about the way mainstream media portrayed them, and on the cultural patterns they helped to change as time passed by and more people supported the students' claims. All of these questions, present in the literature of social movements, media and cultural studies, were my first attempts to approach the topic and could have proven interesting to address, but there was something else in this particular context that led me to pose other questions and finally define the scope of this research.

Using a qualitative approach, I confronted this 'something else' from considering

media and communicative practices as forms of resistance, to understanding them as means of construction. Located within a social constructionist paradigm that 'views research as an emergent product of particular times, social conditions, and interactional situations' (Charmaz, 2008) and following the spirit of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), I made a journey from a general overview to a narrow and more defined observation. The latter involved going from enquiring into the role of communicative and media practices in the Chilean student movement of 2011, to the study of how media and communicative practices built a commons with capacity for the political to exist in the Chilean neoliberal democracy. In this chapter I explain this process, the overall rationale of the research, and the specific methods used; the way fieldwork narrowed my research question, and how I managed and analysed my data.

First, I start by describing the 'something else' that shaped the uniqueness of 2011's mobilization in the Chilean context, and then I signal how I crafted a general question and a momentary explanation that served as the initial path and guide for this research. In this first part, I explain my decision for working with a qualitative approach as a means of gaining access into the field with the opportunity to retract, correct, and innovate (Morin, 2002). Identifying the subjects of study, I also acknowledge my position as a researcher and how this research was developed with a sense of pertinence and possibility.

In the second part of this chapter I explore the methodological tools devised to collect data: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, archives, and the rationale underpinning their use. I also explain the criteria for selecting interviewees, focus group participants, and the range of archive material collected and retrieved. This chapter presents an account of the first fieldwork experience and the reflexive process that involved undertaking interviews, conducting focus groups, and gaining access to archives. After describing the ways I collected data, I explain the plan I crafted to manage and analyse material coming from the first fieldwork exercise in Chile. Using elements of thematic analysis and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006),

I describe the process of familiarising myself with the data to then code it and test emergent understanding. At the end of this section, I explain how the first patterns observed in the collected material during my first fieldwork were expressing the need to redefine the research question and the need to move the research into narrower spaces.

Thus, the fourth part of this chapter reassesses the main question. Challenged by the analysis undertaken after the first fieldwork, my main research question and my first explanations⁵⁰ were corrected as part of a reflexive and ongoing process. Thus, in this final part I explain why and how I narrowed my main question to explore the way communicative and media practices of the Chilean students' movement built a commons with capacity for the political to exist. Along with the latter, I describe the sub-questions that pinned down the revised focus, and then narrate the search for alternative explanations to question and consolidate the interpretations that allowed me to find answers for the research questions posed.

The something else: questions and qualitative approach



Different actions and objects used by the students during 2011: Flashmobs, dances, banners, posters, and runs.

⁵⁰ I prefer to talk about 'first explanations' rather than 'hypothesis', because of the quantitative burden of the word, which is potentially misleading in the case of the approach adopted in this research.

At the beginning of this chapter, I talked about a 'something else' that triggered this research. This 'something else' of media and communicative practices was partly visible when observing activists running around the house of government for days, weeks, and months, as demonstrated in the images above. It was visible through people marching 800 kilometres from the south and north to the centre of the country, dancing in the main streets of Santiago in native costumes, composing and uploading songs to YouTube, tweeting and retweeting assemblies' resolutions, taking part in a zombie flashmob, or mobilizing those not involved in activism to gather in streets, corners and squares at midnight to bang pots and pans. These were practices moving through the political, social, media and art, all embedded and occurring daily, raising questions such as why these repertoires were taking place staking their claims to free education and the end of profit-driven high schools and universities in Chile.

Certainly there is a history of research that has focused on symbolic elements and communication practices, from mainstream to daily life politics, giving them different attributes, characteristics and roles. Tilly and Wood (2009) have considered processions, demonstrations, and statements in public media to be constituents of social movements' repertoire. For Koopmans and Olzak (2004), such practices are part of a scheme of opportunities used by social movements to put their claims in a public sphere 'characterized by a high level of competition' (202). And for Alberto Melucci (1985, 1995), they are part of symbolic struggles that are not a subsidiary of any other attempt and, furthermore, are today's most important political activity. As mentioned in chapter 1, this research finds interesting explanations in Melucci's approach as part of the New Social Movements theories, whose insights find some commonality with points of view such as one posed by Gilbert, for whom media and communicative practices are today the 'most basic and necessary form of resistance' (2014: 177).

Most contemporary insights into social movements have also pointed to the relevance and prevalence of the internet first, and social media, later, in social

movement organization, diffusion campaigns, relations with mainstream media (Rucht, 2004), and movements' connective capacity (Bennett, 2003; Bennett and Segerberg, 2012). The use of the internet by social movements (Stein, 2009), the analysis of social movement organizations' websites (Della Porta and Mosca, 2009), the contributions of information and communications technology (ICT) to social movements' repertoires (Loader, 2008), group networking (Peña-López, Congosto and Aragón, 2013), and the use of mobile technologies (Monterde and Postill, 2013) have caught the attention of scholars in social movements, media, sociology, politics, cultural studies, and art departments. The Global Justice Movement (Della Porta, 2007), the Arab Spring (Mason, 2013), the Spanish Indignados (Castells, 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014), the Occupy movement (Juris, 2012; Graeber, 2013), groups such as Femen (Reestorf, 2014) and initiatives such as Anonymous (Coleman, 2014) have been among the cases studied by contemporary approaches.

Many of these theoretical perspectives have directed their focus on the reach, practices, and processes derived from the internet, the possibilities of new technologies, or how the contribution of a digital platform can overthrow a dictator. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, these insights partially address the complex bundle of mediated practices that are struggling to deploy voice (Couldry, 2010) in exclusive public spheres (Kluge and Negt, 1993; Fraser, 2000) that no longer resist the ideal of publicity (Habermas, 1992), and in democracies with severe crises of representativeness (Tilly, 2007), legitimacy (Rosanvallon, 2011), foundations (Bobbio, 1989), and inequality (Crouch, 2004).

In this context, the initial question of this research needed to exceed the particular contribution of a means, and broaden the scope to enable a general and basic question to be posed: What was the role of communication practices in the students' movement of 2011 in Chile?

In the case of Chile, this question was particularly relevant, as it is a country with two distinctive features. Firstly, it has a mainstream media and political landscape responding to corporate and private interests granting and taking political legitimacy in the form of cultural hegemonies (De la Torre, 2008; Porto, 2000; Arancibia, 2006; Da Silva and Johnson, 2011; Saavedra Utman, 2014). And secondly, by 2011, Chile had experienced five continuous democratic administrations that, whilst receiving compliments for their successful macroeconomic performance, also received criticism for continuing with a neoliberal model that increased the inequality gap between the wealthy and the poor (Silva, 2009)⁵¹.

Here, in this very particular physical and theoretical place and time, I planned a methodological design with a general leading question as the way to operationalize the research problem with enough 'flexibility and freedom to explore a phenomenon in depth' (Corbin and Strauss, 1998: 40), and also as a means by which to find the most appropriate methods for data collection (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, the general question asked: *what was the role of media and communicative practices of the students' movement for the actors involved in the social movement in Chile during 2011, in the context of a mainstream public sphere characterized by the dominance of a two-coalition political class, concentrated media ownership, and absence of legitimate alternatives to neoliberalism?*

To guide the main question, I defined threads of inquiry which, within the interest of this research – media and communicative practices – were broad enough to allow the research to grasp more specific lines of inquiry from the ground. Thus I formed questions addressing the place that activists considered they occupied in relation to mainstream media and politics; the sources, characteristics, and purposes of their communication practices; the place they assigned to these practices and the

⁵¹ As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, economic and social inequality derived from neoliberalism has received harsh criticism from workers, students, activists, and others in general. In spite of the image of a successful country that government administrations have promoted based on macroeconomic figures, people do not perceive that image in their own daily life (PNUD, 2015).

consequences of those practices. These threads were placed in four sub-questions: a) how did the actors involved in the Chilean student movement understand the Chilean public sphere and their place in it? b) What were the sources, characteristics, purposes, and restraints of the student movement communication practices? c) How and why were their communication practices considered significant for the movement? And d) what were the perceived consequences of their communicational practices for the Chilean mainstream public sphere?

These were momentary questions, necessary and appropriate to launch my research, but modifiable if the fieldwork and the permanent revision of data collection so determined it (Charmaz, 2006). As mentioned above, this research followed guidelines from grounded theory, which meant that while I was not a researcher emptied of meaning and intentions, I was progressively constructing codes and categories from data collection and from its analysis. This process involved an awareness of comparing and contrasting my field notes, observations and initial analysis throughout the whole process, evaluating the validity and depth of categories emerging from the field and nurturing developing hypotheses (Charmaz, 2008). In this way, theories were rising and falling due to a back and forth process – explication and emergence, says Charmaz (2008b) – of contrasting literature with data and initial theorisations. In this sense, I did not follow grounded theory to the letter, for instance by having a sample entirely pointing towards theory construction and dismissing representation; and my literature review was not entirely constructed once I finished the analysis. In the first case - as I will stress later - I considered certain degrees of representation as necessary for reliability issues. In the second case, I had reviewed literature prior to fieldwork that allowed me to have certain impressions of the broad area I thought the phenomena related to, but the final shape of that literature review – in chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis - is defined by the dialogue between fieldwork, data coming from the analysis from my research methods, and past and current literature on the matter.

Along with questions, the research was launched with an initial explanation for the main question. This explanation stated that media and communicative practices were the way social movements gained political agency, as long as communication practices permitted social movements to create counter public spheres, resist the threats of totalitarian atmospheres, increase civic engagement, and overcome the breakdown of public spheres that have constricted the chances of having voice, participation, and legitimacy to non-hegemonic expressions. This was also a temporary explanation that 'cannot be established once and for all, but must be capable of development and modification as the inquiry develops, and in turn modify the course of the inquiry and even the techniques of investigation' (Morin, 2002: 154).

Acknowledging Morin's statement, the research was conducted with a sense of pertinence, flexibility, and possibility, understanding that methods exist to support the research and that research is always a reflexive process (Gray, 2003: 22) that can suffer modifications, as happened in this case. By 'pertinence', I mean designing an appropriate methodology for the case study, considering its goals and the subjects involved. To these ends, my option was to use a qualitative approach as a means of accessing the movement through the stories, experiences, feelings, and disagreements of the activists which formed part of the events of 2011. In other words, I wanted to focus on their construction of social reality and social order (Berger and Luckmann, 1991) and on the way they understood themselves and their purpose (Bray, 2008; Costa, Pérez and Tropea, 1996).

This consideration of subjectivity concerned not only the research subjects but also my own subjectivity. After all, the researcher within a social constructionist paradigm is the primary research instrument (Charmaz, 2008b), accessing the field, establishing field relations, and conducting and structuring observations and interviews (Walsh, 2004). In this regard, my own background was relevant since I had proximity to the topic. I lived my college days in the late 1990's – a time when the first democratic administrations after the military dictatorship showed no major

change from the neoliberal economic program installed by the military regimes. As a student, just like many students around the country, I was engaged in mobilizations against the state's withdrawal from public education that left its control to the market. This interest, amongst other contextual elements, moved my academic focus into the ways political expressions were emerging in global and neoliberal times. That was the focus of my BA thesis on the way urban tribes understood politics, nation, and state; later, my MA thesis examined the way the Chilean mainstream media represented the image of the leader of subcontracted copper miners.

This experience, plus my job as a journalist and social activist in Chile, has made me observe social, cultural, and political landscapes from different perspectives: from elite groups to grassroots activists, from local to national identities, and from particular to broader conflicts. It has also placed me in environments where I have had the chance to identify different uses of language and group interactions, to perceive different notions of life, and also to acknowledge that the presence of the researcher in the field can cause differing degrees of disruption. In this thesis – and in spite of the perils derived from excessive influence of the researcher – I consider that being the primary research instrument is the more feasible means to find 'a whole web of cultural structures, knowledge and meanings which are knotted and superimposed on to one another and which constitute a densely layered cultural script' (Walsh, 227: 2004).

Along with a sense of pertinence, this methodology was designed with a view to keeping a sense of possibility. By 'possibility' I mean that the research needed to be researchable, i.e. within the frames of an honest and achievable range of action. A good way to craft feasible research was to define a sample in line with the purpose of the main question (Bryman, 2008) by the possibilities of a research team composed of one person and in accordance with the fact that it was impossible to carry out fieldwork in more than 20 cities or with a large number of people. That is how I defined an actor sample of people involved in the

mobilization that allowed me to ‘answer the research question’ (Marshall, 1996: 523) and bring validity to the research (Seale, 2004).

This actor sample meant that questions and inquiry focused on those who were involved in the mobilization. In this case, I used a non-random sample, also referred to as judgemental or purposive sampling (Deacon et al., 2007), since this research was based on one large group of people – activists in the social movement – who were considered relevant to the research. Three groups of activists, all of them taking part in 2011’s events, comprised this sample: 1) university and high-school leaders of the student movement; 2) those in charge of media and communicative practices; and 3) grassroots supporters. These three groups – whose specificity will be explained in more detail below – were comprised of people whose participation was mainly concentrated in the events from May to November of 2011, since this was the period of time over which the mobilization experienced its rise and decline, from the first public demonstrations, to the last expressions of unrest and decay. Even when there was relevant information supplied by the activists about elements before and after the mobilization that contributed to – or were the consequence of – 2011’s events, the motive of interest was in the aforementioned period of time: May to November of 2011.

Once the general approach to the case was configured and the sample was defined, I explored the most appropriate ways to get into the field in order to explore the roots, shapes, and places occupied by the movements’ media and communicative practices. With these ideas in mind, my decision was to conduct data collection through interviews, focus groups, and archives. In the next pages I explain this decision and the way the fieldwork was conducted.

Fieldwork: interviews, focus groups and archives

Data was collected through three methods that involved two periods in Chile, mainly in Santiago, but also in the cities of Valparaíso at the central coast of Chile,

and in the city of Concepción, at the south-central location of the country. The selection of these three cities was based on representative criteria: These are the three most populated cities in the country; they have the largest number of universities and high schools compared to other Chilean cities (CNED⁵²); and they are the most important industrial hubs in the country. Consequently, the three cities attract students from all over the country and have the highest numbers of students nationwide. The first period of fieldwork was held between March and May of 2014, and the second from December 2014 to January 2015. In total I conducted 43 interviews, held seven focus groups, and collected a large number of archives retrieved from the internet and provided by activists. In the next paragraphs I explain the rationale in selecting these methods and the parameters considered for the selection of interviewees and participants of focus groups.

Interviewing activists

The one-to-one interview was the main methodological tool for this research. As stated above, this research pursued perceptions, opinions, arguments, experiences, life stories, doubts, feelings, and memories. In this scenario, interviews enabled me to grasp the 'meanings that people ascribe to phenomena' (Gray, 2004: 214), first-hand data, the chance to collect relevant information, to explore deeper, and through interviews, to open 'a window into the everyday world of activists' (Blee and Taylor, 2002: 96). Amongst the different types of interviews, this research worked with semi-structured interviews to have a conversation on general topics where the researcher was 'able to follow up particularly interesting avenues that emerge in the interview and the respondent is able to give a fuller picture' (Smith, 1995: 9). This decision sought to minimize misunderstandings, decrease the excessive influence of the interviewer (Wengraf, 2001), and promote the flow of conversation to elicit 'accounts of people's experience and perspectives' (Hammersley, 2013: 54).

⁵² Data retrieved from the National Council of Education website:
http://www.cned.cl/public/secciones/SeccionIndicesEstadisticas/indices_estadisticas_presencia_provincias.aspx

With reference to the hazards of excessive influence of the interviewer, I did not pretend to be invisible or assume that my presence was not relevant. It was relevant, firstly because the encounter between myself and a former stranger was solely for the purpose of academic research. In other words, I did not intend to place myself as an acquaintance or an activist, thus trying to erase the main reason for seeking the encounter. And secondly because the interview was a dialogue, not an interrogation. Acknowledging the presence of the interviewer, and recognizing the interpretative frame that I put onto the conversation, this dialogue attempted to follow the spirit of ethnography, much like a moment when 'two reflexivities encounter each other and a new reflexivity is produced' (Guber, 2001: 76) and not like a questionnaire where the other is just an object for questions (Blee and Taylor, 2002). In this sense, I designed a question plan covering three areas (participation and involvement; media and communication; and consequences) with open-ended questions, intermediate questions, and closing questions (Charmaz, 2006).

To minimize misunderstandings, prior to beginning the interviews on my first visit to Chile, I took some precautions. Firstly, I conducted a pilot interview during the first days of March 2014. The pilot allowed me to test and reveal problems such as question wording, conversation comprehension, and interview timing (Phellas, Bloch and Seale, 2012). As a second measure, I set up the places where interviews occurred. As Rosana Guber mentions in her studies on ethnography, it is recommended that interviews are conducted in an environment familiar to the interviewee, 'because only from their real and daily life situations is it possible to discover the sense to its practices and verbalizations' (2001: 98). Following Guber's advice, all the interviewees were asked to choose a place for the interview to take place, one that was close or easily accessible for them and where they felt comfortable. That is why interviews took place at their homes, faculties, public squares, and cafés, even if that meant I had to travel more than 400 kilometres, as was the case with two activists living in the city of Concepción.

I carried out 43 interviews in total, including university and high-school leaders of the student movement; people in charge of media and communicative practices; and grassroots supporters – all of whom were directly involved in the mobilization of 2011 and in the aftermath of the events that took place that year. This list was the result of a previous analysis I made reading different sources of information, such as mainstream media, students' websites and independent media, and according to the needs that the main question implied. However, the original list was modified – removing some people and adding others – for three reasons. Firstly, because I could not make contact with some activists, due to problems arranging a suitable time for the appointment, or because – for reasons I do not know of – they showed no interest in responding to my requests. Secondly, because snowball sampling (Davis, 2007) allowed me to get in touch with relevant informants not listed in the original plan. In this regard, snowball sampling was a helpful way to get into 'informal social groupings, where the social knowledge and personal recommendations of the initial contacts are invaluable in opening up and mapping tight social networks' (Deacon et al., 2007: 55). The third reason was because after the first fieldwork, I noticed the need to get more access to grassroots supporters and people involved in practices linked to the use of the internet (specifically social media) and the organization of flashmobs. Thus, on my second trip to Chile, I focused on meeting activists responding to the aforementioned requirements. That way I gave shape to a body of interviewees responding to the requirements of the research, whose specification is as follows:

There was a first group of university and high-school leaders of the student movement from the capital of Chile, Santiago, and from the other two main cities of the country: Concepción and Valparaíso. This selection was made based upon two reasons. Firstly, according to their presence as national leaders of the movement: this is the case with university and high-school representatives such as Giorgio Jackson, Francisco Figueroa, Rodrigo Rivera, and Alfredo Vielma. Then, selecting university and high-school representatives from the three main cities of Chile, for example, Camilo Ballesteros and José Soto (Santiago), Guillermo Petersen and

Roberto Toledo (Concepción), and Sebastián Farfán and Angel Salvo (Valparaíso)⁵³.

Those whose main role was to take part in the mobilization through media and communicative practices comprised the second group. For this selection, I first considered communication secretaries of university students' unions: one from Concepción, Quenne Aitken, and one from Valparaíso, Rocío Venegas. Secondly, people in charge of social media, for example Gonzalo Flores, community manager of @movilizatechile, one of the most followed Twitter accounts during that year, and Alonso Matus, administrator of the Facebook page Toma PUCV (PUCV Occupation)⁵⁴, settled in the city of Valparaíso. Thirdly, I included in this group two art students who belonged to the Art Students Assembly⁵⁵ (AEEA): Paula Urizar and Cristian Inostroza. Finally, I had within this group activists engaged in the creation, diffusion and organization of flashmobs, like Omar Astorga and Luis Sanhueza, who were behind the flashmob Genkidama⁵⁶ for Chilean Education.

⁵³ Before start recording the interviews, all participants were informed about the type of interview and the context of the project – this had already been informed before when contacting them via mail or telephone nonetheless it was explicated again. They were also informed about the approximate time of the interview and told that they were free to leave the interview at any point if they did not feel comfortable with it. Ultimately, they were asked to decide whether their names could be included in the text of this research or if they preferred anonymity. This last question was made with the idea of protecting interviewees from any harm or problem towards their wellbeing (Byrne, 2006). All of them agreed in using their names for this research.

⁵⁴ The Facebook page TOMA PUCV was an informative site created by grassroots students of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso). The word Toma, as it will be explained in chapter 4, means occupation or occupy, so the name makes explicit that the site is the ones engaged in the mobilization in that particular university.

⁵⁵ The AEEA (Asamblea de Estudiantes de Arte [Art Students Assembly]) was an organization of Art Students created in 2010. Gathering students from different disciplines, like drama, filmmaking, visual arts and music, the AEEA was mainly based in Santiago but included students from other regions. Their aim was to 'construct a public, high quality, integral and free access education at every level and to defend art and culture from market and elites aiming thus preventing its systematic privatization' (<http://asambleadeestudiantesdearte.blogspot.co.uk>). Some actions of the AEEA will be covered and analysed in chapter 5.

⁵⁶ The *Genkidama* for Chilean Education was a flashmob held in July 2011 including a march and a final act in some of the main cities of Chile. Based on the characters and story of the Japanese cartoon *Dragon Ball Z* – highly popular since the 1990s – the idea of the flashmob was to symbolically gather energy from Chilean people to send it in the form of a ball – the *Genkidama* – to the government to make clear the will of Chilean people to reform the education system. In chapter 5, the features and aims of this flashmob will be explained and put in context within similar actions.

The third group of interviewees included grassroots supporters who participated on differing scales during the period of mobilization, without being members of representative bodies at high schools, universities, or any other organization. These interviewees consisted of a wide spectrum of people involved in the movement, including high school and university students from different regions of the country, adults engaged in the support of occupations and those who mainly took part in marches and flashmobs. Three of the interviewees from this group were selected from focus groups since they revealed some interesting backgrounds at the sessions that led me to enquire deeper into their stories and testimonies.

Table of interviewees

Type of interviewees	Name	Institution	Role and participation in 2011 mobilization
University and high-school leaders			
On a national scale	Giorgio Jackson	FEUC	President
	Francisco Figueroa	FECH	Vice-President
	Rodrigo Rivera	CONES	Spokesperson
	Alfredo Vielma	ACES	Spokesperson
	Noam Titelman	FEUC AND CONFECH	President
	Freddy Fuentes	CONES	Spokesperson
	Gabriel Boric	FECH	President

	Diego Vela	FEUC	President
	Camilo Ballesteros	FEUSACH	President
	Camila Donato	FEUMCE	President
	Guillermo Petersen	FEC	President
	Sebastián Farfán	FEUV	President
	Recaredo Gálvez	FEC	Career President
	Angel Salvo	Eduardo de la Barra High School	President
	José Soto	National Institute High School	President
	Roberto Toledo	Enrique Molina High School	President
On a regional and local scale	Pablo Flores	FEUAH	President
	Moisés Paredes	Alessandri High School	Spokesperson
	Diego Vela	PUC	President of the students' centre of management and economy, in 2013 president of FEUC
	Mauricio Carrasco	FEUCEN	President
	Takuri Tapia	USACH	Public administration student, in 2013 president of FEUACH

People in charge of media and communications			
Secretaries of university students' union	Quenne Aitken	FEUBB	Media and communications secretary
	Rocío Venegas	FEUV	Media and communications secretary
	Javier Parada	Izquierda Autónoma	Media and communications secretary
People in charge of social media	Gonzalo Flores	@movilizatechile	Administrator
	Jose Miguel Sanhueza	Izquierda Autónoma (Autonomist Left)	Media and communications secretary
	Sebastián Vicencio	TOMA PUCV (Facebook page)	Administrator, in 2012 president of FEPUCV
	Alonso Matus	TOMA PUCV (Facebook page)	Administrator
People in charge of professional media and communications consultancy	Nicolás Rebolledo	DOD Agency	Designer
Art Students Assembly	Cristian Inostroza	AEEA	Founding member
	Paula Urizar	AEEA	Founding member
Flashmob organizers	Omar Astorga	Flashmob: Genkidama for Chilean Education	Organizer
	Luis Sanhueza	Flashmob: Genkidama for Chilean Education	Organizer

Grassroots supporters		
Miguel Ángel Miranda	1800 Hours for Education	Participant
Patricia Moscoso	Marches, rallies	Participant
Matías Lucero	Liceo de Aplicación High School	Student
Javiera Vallejo	Marches, rallies	Participant
Francisca Villablanca	San Vittorio School	Student and activist
Isabel Castillo		Student and activist
Edison Cajas	<i>The Waltz of the Useless</i> , documentary movie	Director
Dafne Concha	CORPADE	President
Wilson Carrasco	Local Assembly	Participant
Bastián Alarcón	Valparaíso University	Student and activist

Focus groups

Semi-structured interviews with a solo activist proved to be a rich data source but did not offer the opportunity to observe the live interaction of groups of activists regarding their thoughts, feelings, and expectations of the events and processes lived before, during and after the students' movement of 2011. Considering that 'focus group sessions allow researchers to observe interactions on a discussion topic which can illuminate the way social movements activists collectively frame issues and construct group solidarity' (Blee and Taylor, 2002: 109), I decided it was

necessary to undertake focus groups with the actors involved in the movement. The reason was to observe the form and content of patterns and commonalities between them and those upon which they disagreed, to identify elements ratifying or contrasting the testimonies collected on interviews (Tonkiss, 2004)

Accordingly, focus groups were included in the research methods to get an experience of the collective endeavour of 2011 in terms of perspectives, arguments, feelings, and impressions held by the activists. It was important for the research to know in a place in which participants were treated as equals in dialogical situation how they identified with the movement, how the movement was growing, what their role was, and how this was influenced by their personal and social aims and their personal and social placements. Certainly, holding focus groups in 2014 and 2015 did not provide the same experience as having witnessed debates in 2011 at the places where they were actually held. Nonetheless, that does not diminish the validity in conducting focus groups in this case. Firstly, for reasons of timing (the inability to go back in time); secondly, because the aim of the focus groups was to observe opinions, interactions, agreement, and discussions in a space that while not entirely democratic, was close to a communicative commons; and thirdly, due to the selection criteria for the focus groups' participants.

In total, I conducted seven focus groups, over two periods. The first included two sessions conducted in May 2014, at the end of my first trip to Chile after gaining a better knowledge of the activists' profiles due to the experience gained from the first interviews and having a better insight into how to get in contact with potential participants. In general, the call to participate in focus groups was made in two ways: from my personal accounts on Facebook and Twitter which were shared and re-tweeted by friends - some of whom were teaching at universities or linked with activists; and through direct messages to student unions' email addresses and Facebook accounts. In these messages I issued (briefly, in the case of Twitter) an invitation for them to participate in a focus group to talk about the student movement in general, and offered an amount of money for their participation (7000

pesos, equivalent to GBP£7). At the end of my messages I gave my Goldsmiths university email address (j.saavedra@gold.ac.uk) for them to contact.

I received many messages from individuals willing to participate. Some of them told stories of their memories of that year, that although narrating how they contributed to the movement or how the movement impacted upon their lives were not used in this research for ethical reasons⁵⁷. Messages from respondents that revealed little information received a follow-up email asking them to express if and how they took part in 2011's mobilization. Thus I had the chance to access a diverse array of activists, allowing my first two focus groups – attended by 5 people respectively – to be varied in gender, family income, type of university (public and private) and the means by which they paid for college (directly, through scholarships, state loans, bank credit, etc.). This diversity was more purposefully sought the second time I was in Chile, as a consequence of finding too much agreement after transcribing the recordings of the first two sessions and a desire to test whether this was a consequence of my sample.

In the second round of focus groups, between December 2014 and January 2015, I followed a similar pattern to call for participants, but in this case I replied to the emails with three questions: a) how they took part in 2011's events; b) if they were the first, second, or third person in their family to enter college; c) and how they paid their fees. That information allowed me to get closer to a socio-economic distribution of the potential participants and an insight into how socio-economically diverse each focus group could be. Adding the gender component, I managed to obtain varied backgrounds and profiles in the second focus group sessions⁵⁸. There were people who actively took part in 2011's events; others whose involvement was moderate; activists from high, middle, and low-income families; and students from private and public universities – some with scholarships, others

⁵⁷ It would have been unethical to use those emails, because they were never meant to be used for the research; because they were part of an initial dialogue and not the interview; and because students were not giving their consent to use them just by the fact of being messaging me.

⁵⁸ In the five sessions during my second fieldwork the number of participants per focus group were 5, 7, 8, 8 and 4 people respectively.

with university or bank loans, and a few whose parents or relatives paid the whole tuition fee. This diversity allowed me to observe strong commonalities in some points and less strong agreements in others, expressing the diversity of the movement itself and regarding the events of 2011. In the sessions I realized that some of the participants knew other members of the same group, something that happened in three cases. This was an element that I did not consider disrupting the sessions or the will of the students to take an active part in the meetings.

The sessions were conducted in three places. The first two took place in a private flat in downtown Santiago, three in a meeting room at the Santiago campus of Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, and two in a meeting room of the National Council of Culture and Arts Library, in Valparaíso. The three spaces were chosen to allow privacy, a comfortable environment for the participants, and easy access. However, I made the decision to move the sessions from the flat where the two initial sessions were held, into more academic places to give interviewees more confidence about the type of meeting they were invited to and also for reasons of space.

During sessions, focus groups followed the same order of general-specific individual interviews, opening conversations with broad topics, and then moving to specific questions in cases where particular information was needed. In all sessions there were strong agreements and few disagreements – something that could have been related to the fact that all participants were grassroots supporters or people in middle-range degrees of representativeness, like course or career delegates. However, I estimated it was a good decision not to include activists' leaders, as this could have introduced disruptive dynamics into the group. In the end I collected a knitted fabric of dialogues and discussions showing paths, asserting trends, and opening gates to further inquiry. Focus group sessions lasted an average of one hour each and everyone involved in them was told that they were free to leave the room if they felt uncomfortable. None of the 42 participants in the seven focus groups did so. In fact, everyone stayed and signed a form declaring their free will to take part in the focus group, and their agreement for me

to use the transcript of the session for academic purposes. Several of them asked if it was possible to read this thesis once submitted.

Archives

The third source of data was archives and documents including written, graphic, audio, and audio-visual material produced by activists, such as magazines, objects, posters, videos, flyers, and songs. Through these sources, the research had access to a richer picture of the cultural frame and discourse of the constituents (Koopmans and Statham, 1994), and also complemented 'the individual sources' weaknesses' (Bosi, 2012: 352) by corroborating data and information. However, not every piece of data retrieved served the purpose of a detailed analysis. Whilst most archive material served as a means to obtain a progressive immersion into the mobilization's shape, reasons, claims, and aesthetics, just one piece of that material was further analysed.

Two sources were fruitful providers of archives: Interviewees and the internet. Regarding the interviewees, there were two who provided me with material that, in one case, I was not aware existed and, in the other case, granted me access to a useful collection of varied data. The first of them, Nicolás Rebolledo, shared the publicity dossier designed to support the first era of the mobilization. This file was a 42-page report produced by an advertising company hired by student unions – this is explained in depth in chapter 7 - at the beginning of 2011 identifying elements of the national situation and recommending students follow certain paths to launch a national mobilization. The observation of what actually happened, in the light of this report, contributed to move this research to further and deeper questions. Another interviewee, Gonzalo Flores, who took part in the mobilization as the community manager of @movilizatechile (a Twitter account with 44,389 followers⁵⁹), shared his collection of official documents, students' analysis on education, students' resolutions, public statements, as well as pictures and posters. In both cases, it

⁵⁹ Information checked on 23 February 2015.

would have been impossible to access that material if it had not been for my interviewees.

The internet was another source of archive materials. From all the available data, I focused my interest in two areas: Student unions' websites, and Facebook pages. My interest in the first was to collect documents such as public statements and students' agreements, but I did not find consistent and well-archived information on the institutional websites. Indeed, some of these websites held scarce information about the events of 2011. Assuming that this could have been a matter of data expiration, I used the internet archive (<https://archive.org>) to retrieve old material from those websites, but in the end this search was only mildly effective. In general, I checked five websites of the major students' federation and of CONFECH and although I obtained some of their public statements, these were later supplied by one of my interviewees, Gonzalo Flores. Interestingly, the act of tracing data on institutional websites and finding scarce material gave me an idea that was later corroborated, about the preference of students for what is known as Internet 2.0 rather than 1.0. More important in the aim of getting material supplementing data retrieved from interviews and focus groups, was Facebook. Specifically interesting were the events pages that students created on Facebook calling for flashmobs. Still accessible in 2014 and 2015, they held relevant testimonies and dialogues in the threads calling for flashmobs. Expressing hope, anger, joy, ideas, and their will to take part or the rejection of some aspects of the call, these threads showed a general mood towards mobilization that contributed to the later analysis.

Beyond its use as a way of gaining familiarity with the movement and understanding better their media and communicative practices, I resolved to make a deep analysis of these Facebook pages, specifically the events page of the four most notorious flashmobs and events – as expressed by the interviewees and participants of focus groups – held during 2011. These were the flashmobs Thriller for Chilean Education (24 June); Genkidama for Chilean Education (19 July); the Kissathon for Chilean Education (1 September); and the relay run called 1800

hours for Chilean Education (June, July, August). Due to being able to observe the comments posted from the open call to the event, the Facebook event pages opened the door to observe how activists understood the movement they were immersed in, their will, the elements they rejected, the agreements, and the disagreements as they happened. In this regard, I reviewed and analysed these events from the day of their creation on Facebook until a month after they had finished, as a significant period to observe the reactions regarding the activity and the students' willingness to move in the same direction again.

Data management and first analysis

Interviews and focus groups were fully transcribed and analysed with an approach that used elements of thematic analysis and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), both qualitative approaches involving data immersion, data coding, and data interpretation, as well as a permanent testing of emergent understanding in the search for feasible explanations of data and consistent answers for my research questions (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Rivas, 2012; Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). Qualitative analysis based on these steps put the researcher in a progressive spiral of analysis from broadness to narrowness in a permanent back-and-forth process of finding patterns, challenging questions, questioning patterns, and finding new questions until reaching satisfactory and well-founded answers to all my research questions. In a case study like the Chilean students' movement of 2011, I considered such an approach necessary as it allowed me to deal with large amounts of data and it also placed me within the process of observing patterns and threads, challenging and deepening my initial questions. This inductive journey, as Charmaz depicts it, provides the opportunity to move into what she calls abductive reasoning, which in this case is the observation of emergent findings (2008) that might challenge the initial questions of the research and reorient it in the direction considered necessary for further enquiry.

The first step of this method is referred to by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) as 'familiarization'. It consists of listening to tape recordings, transcribing interviews,

and reading notes and transcribed material as a way to enhance sensitivity to the meanings of the subjects of study (Rivas, 2012: 368). This progressive immersion in data was crucial since it placed me in a better position to understand the shape, limits, expectations, and events of the movement, and to test the accuracy of my initial questions. The second step is summary, or initial, coding. It consists in labelling data collected 'in manageable "bites" for subsequent retrieval and exploration' (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994: 180). The bites, in this case, were pieces, sentences, paragraphs of transcribed information, plus field notes and first impressions that were organized (Charmaz, 2006) using codes and sub-codes derived from the four sub-questions of research:

- A. How did the actors involved in the Chilean student movement understand the Chilean public sphere and their place in it?
- B. What were the sources, characteristics, purposes and restraints of the student movement communication practices?
- C. How and why were their communication practices significant for the mobilization process and success/failure of it?
- D. What were the perceived consequences of their communicational practices for the actors of the Chilean mainstream public sphere?

These four sub-questions were operationalized into four conceptual categories: A. Self-consciousness; B. Practices; C. Significance and, D. Consequence.

Each of these categories had sub-categories, as expressed here:

A. Self-consciousness

A.1 Membership. This sub-category observed the reasons why a person joined the movement.

A.2 Adversary. This sub-category observed the existence and characteristics of adversaries.

A.3 Context: This sub-category observed the context of the landscape in which the movement developed.

A.4 Limitations/Possibilities. This sub-category observed limitations/possibilities attributed for voice and participation in social and political terms in contemporary Chile.

B. Practices

B.1 Actions, or what did they do? This sub-category observed what they considered were their communicational activities, like public demonstrations, meetings, artistic encounters; media production, like press releases, press conferences; the use of the internet (social networks, viral spreading, hacking, podcasts, mail lists, etc.).

B.2 Reasons, or why they did they do what they did? This sub-category collected information on the reasons for deploying, using, and developing certain communicational practices instead of others and the rationale behind them.

B.3 Purposes, or what were they looking to achieve with their communicational practices? This sub-category observed the link between the actual order and the tools and actions used to pursue change in the situation that bothered them.

C. Significance

C.1 How. This sub-category enquired into the attributions given to communication practices on the success/failure of the movement.

C.2 Why. This sub-category explored the reasons given for the success/failure of the communication practices.

D. Consequences

D.1 Movement: This sub-category observed the consequences that communicational practices had for the movement.

D.2 Participation: This sub-category observed the consequences that communicational practices had for the movement in terms of participation.

D.3 Voice: This sub-category observed the consequences that communicational practices had for the movement in terms of voice.

D.4 Recognition: This sub-category observed the consequences that communicational practices had for the movement in terms of recognition.

Data coded with the help of NVivo software allowed me to make the large amount of data more manageable by sorting and organizing it with codes that also acknowledged the source where they were coming from: interviews, focus groups and archives. The latter was relevant to keep on track the context in which something was said (in the case of interviews and archive material) and the agreements and disagreement of something expressed in focus groups and in Facebook threads of flashmobs, for instance. With the data sorted per code and sub-codes, and aware of where they came from (interviews, focus groups or archive material) I was in a position to move onto the third step: pattern coding. This third stage implied an immersion in each code, reading and observing threads, patterns and aspects in common to get to the heart of 'what is going on in the data, or at least what is going on in terms of what the researcher is interested in, or what the researcher becomes interested in through the course of data collection and initial forms of analysis' (David and Sutton, 2011: 345). Interestingly, what came out from pattern coding was the need to narrow down my research question.

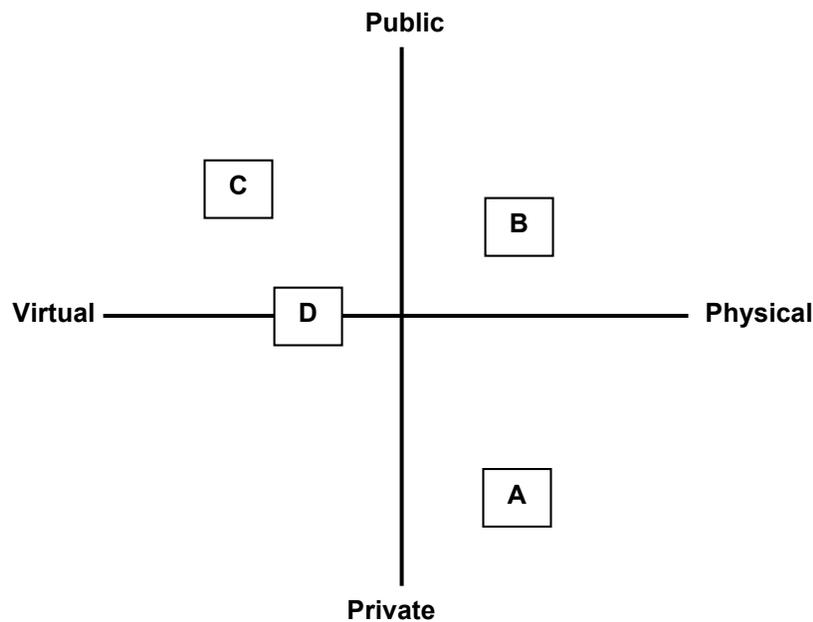
Retraction, correction and innovation

In the process of managing and analysing the data after my first visit to Chile, some patterns revealed the need to revise my research question since it was challenging my initial explanation. The latter came up as a consequence of 'making comparisons between data, codes and categories' (Charmaz, 2006: 178-179), questioning if gathered data offered new insights (Corbin and Strauss, 1998) and finding that consistently media and communicative practices were pointing to a more specific area that my initial broad question was not enough to satisfy. Far from being an unexpected outcome, this *impasse* was the call to modify the course of the inquiry (Morin, 2002) in the face of emerging and logical relations between data that as a researcher I was now able to see (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Consequently, I considered it necessary to see beyond my initial explanation and modify the research question, narrowing it down according to the new requirements emerging from the analysis.

This new scenario was based upon two characteristics of the initial analysis: Firstly, the place and nature of media and communicative practices; and, secondly, the significance and consequences of these practices. With reference to the first feature, in the 'practices' category and the 'actions' sub-category, there was a pattern signalling four zones where activists' practices were located: private, public, virtual, and physical spaces; and four identifiable practices related to each space that anchored the whole range of actions. While some practices were rooted at home and in classrooms, there were others located in squares and urban spaces; and while there were some involving public actions through virtual domains, there were others that were private and public actions, but in virtual realms. These practices covered different aspects of life, from daily life meetings at home for lunch or dinner, to marches and rallies in main city streets; from uploading a video to YouTube, to sending a press release to radio, newspaper, or TV channels. In sum, media and communicative practices of the movement were spread across the country in different layers, continuing and reshaping old repertoires and breaking familiar, social, class, and political patterns. These were practices that – as expressed by

conceptions of the commons (Bruun, 2015; Dardot and Laval, 2014; Harvey, 2011) – connecting their ordinary life with more extraordinary events seemed to be exceeding the borders of public/private and state/market dichotomies.

Placed graphically, I distributed these practices across two axes: one whose ends were – still – private and public practices; the other going from virtual to physical practices. Thus I defined four broad areas of media and communicative practice with reference to the spaces where practices were held and the kind of action that they implied. On the cross-chart below, letter A is a private physical activity and B is publicly physical. On the other hand, while C covers virtual and public practices, D gathers virtual practices that are both private and public.



The second aspect that modified the previous scenario was the pattern found in the categories ‘significance’ and ‘consequences’. Both showed a consistent thread revealing that through dialogue, debate, creative encounters of joy and of outrage, strategic media work, and grassroots networking, the movement was gaining

agency. This agency was present in the power to question, debate, and organize people to be manifest in the common with voice; to defy the government nationally and reach degrees of mainstream legitimacy; and to gain levels of organization, participation, and self-broadcasting beyond the boundaries of mainstream media or processes of institutional democracy as, in their opinion, no other social movement had achieved in Chile in the last 30 years.

Some of the testimonies gathered in the first fieldwork went in the aforementioned directions:

The status quo that ruled for 20 years was broken. We broke it in marches where from a visual perspective, were impressive... a huge amount of people marching for a demand and doing it in a different way, with balloons, puppets, it was a joy. Roberto Toledo.

There is a part of the Chilean people, the ones of my generation, over 40 years, who have our voices silenced. People that became leaders and led the country have interpreted us... we are in a state of drowsiness, of fear, and the job of speaking out has been taken by the new generations. Miguel Angel Miranda.

I believe that what happened in 2011 was to pass a feeling of empowerment, that people should stand and that if we want this thing to change, can change. Cristian Inostroza.

I think that cultural aspects played a big part installing this [the mobilization] among the students who took this discussions to their homes and from there they brought a lot of people joining this mobilization, which is what gave it a lot of strength to this movement. Moisés Paredes.

2011 was impressive, you took the bus, a taxi cab or wherever and people were arguing about education, it was super present and it was very common to listen to people talking in the underground passing the news about the marches, or talking about supporting the students. Paula Urizar.

We did not have too many networks to get to most of the people. And if those people were homogenized by mass media their opinion about us was going to be negative so we wondered what can we do to make those people support us and understand that our fight is fair. Sebastián Farfán.

I believe that interpersonal communication, the capacity to articulate a web, a social fabric, was the most important thing. Social networks like Facebook help you to know what is happening with the guy over there but if you do not get out of there and are not able to have a real contact with the other, changes are not going to happen. The way to make a movement emerge goes hand in hand with recognizing the other one as someone just like you that is also being abused. Mauricio Carrasco.

Considering the threads found in the initial assessment of the data, it was possible to obtain four findings that allowed a provisory answer. These findings were that:

- a) There was a group of activities held in a private realm and with physical presence, and that place was important to knit the fabric of mobilization and to beat the fear and distrust of the mobilization.
- b) There was a second set of practices rooted in urban spaces requiring the physical presence of activists that was considered essential for the students and whose significance was to interrupt the normal flux of the country, to exert a form of collective voice, and to appeal to people in dialogue, outrage, and joy.
- c) A third activity was focused towards media and the use of media strategies, acknowledging the status and structure of Chilean media, reaching larger audiences as well as placing their message as they wanted it to be placed.
- d) And, ultimately, there was a fourth group of actions mainly based on the internet, and in the middle of a private public division, on intimate, local,

national, and international dimensions thanks to the web networked scale of action.

In sum, these elements brought a provisory answer for my research question indicating that the students' media and communicative practices allowed the emergence, self-representation, confrontation, and co-creation of a different set of social relationships and the rendering of a new space, neither public nor private: a space likely to be understood as a commons in which the strangleholds of the public space and the fences of neoliberalism were surpassed and the recognition of subaltern voices demanding participation was possible.

This temporary answer was partially in line with my first explanation⁶⁰ in the role of media and communicative practices as a means by which to gain voice and political agency for the people, but exceeded it. Not considering the latter a problem or a flaw, this was the opportunity to modify the scope of the research by locating the main question in a more situated and significant way from a grounded theory perspective. It was also the opportunity to direct this research following the challenge that Martín-Barbero made to media and communication studies: 'to change the point of view from which questions are raised' (1993: 3) to avoid – in this case – being blackmailed by deterministic scholarship inevitably narrowing emerging process into those of public spheres or institutional democratic processes. Thus I had the opportunity – and was in a position – to move my inquiry from a general discussion to the understanding on how the lack of voice could be reverted in neoliberal democracies (Couldry, 2010; Mouffe, 2005) and, specifically, how voice can be claimed by the people through the creation of the commons as a resource, as a place, and as a collective relationship.

⁶⁰ My first explanation stated that media and communicative practices were a way social movements gained political agency, as long as media and communicative practices permitted social movements to create counter public spheres, resist the threats of totalitarian atmospheres, increase civic engagement, and overcome the breakdown of public spheres that have constricted voice, participation, and legitimacy to non-hegemonic expressions.

In this location, I redesigned my research question to understand how the communicative and media practices of the Chilean students' movement built a commons as a possibility for the political to exist in Chile's neoliberal democracy. Guided by the scope of this question, I directed specific sub-questions to my data to redefine my new primary question: a) How did media and communicative practices contribute to the emergence of something approximating the commons in both public spaces and mainstream media? and b) What types and forms of organization were involved in media and communicative practices in the creation of the commons?

Aware of the amount of data collected and the forthcoming analysis, I had two tasks ahead of me: to make my second journey to Chile to collect more data in areas where my initial dataset was not sufficient; and to re-observe the whole set of data in a meaningful way according to the new aims of the research. The first task involved undertaking five more focus groups, twelve further interviews, and collecting more archive material in Chile. The focus groups and the interviews followed the same pattern as my first trip to Chile, but with different nuances according to the subjects. Thus, when I interviewed people in charge of social media or flashmobs, my questions were more focused upon understanding the nature, rationale, and features of those specific actions.

The second task was the management of data according to the new primary research question. This task entailed me familiarising myself with the new data gleaned from my second trip to Chile as well as re-observing previous records, transcriptions, and field notes. In the reassessment of data – new and old – there were emerging elements that needed to be considered (Glaser, 1978) under a new set of codes shaped in light of the new primary question and sub-questions.

Thus I tailored a new coding process more accurately placed in the circumstances of the new main question, defining four categories and nine sub-categories. Categories responded to the four identified media and communicative practices

observed in the field: a) publicly physical; b) private physical, c) virtual and public; and d) private and publicly virtual. The sub-categories emerged from fieldwork and from theoretical approaches on social movements that shed light on the phenomena I was observing. The sub-categories then became as follows: 1) actions, 2) organization, 3) scale, 4) autonomy, 5) axis, 6) way to appeal, 7) adversary, 8) consequences and 9) agency.

1) Actions: This sub-category observed what activists understood as their media and communicative practices, what they implied, how they were conveyed, and what their role was in the whole process. In this category I included conversations at home, debate at schools, marches, rallies, flashmobs, mainstream media work, and the varied uses of the internet.

2) Organization: This sub-category focused on the way different media and communicative practices were arranged, whether responding to a vertical hierarchy or more horizontal logics of action.

3) Scale: This sub-category was destined to address the reach of media and communicative actions as the diverse set of practices was settled in different areas: from a micro dimension within families or groups of friends, to a regional, national, and multi-sited level.

4) Autonomy: In this sub-category I observed how dependent media and communicative practices derived from the same logic of activists' action and from third parties.

5) Axis: This sub-category was devised to identify into which of the four spaces of the division – public, private, physical, virtual – media and communicative actions fall.

6) Way to appeal: Following the previous item, in this sub-category I gathered the specific elements that different media and communicative practices used in order

to relate to others, such as face to face conversations in the street, carnival chariots, the image of leaders, or viral videos.

7) Adversary: By adversary, this sub-category identified whom or what presented itself as a threat that impeded, or was a threat to, the display of media and communicative practices.

8) Consequences: This sub-category observed outputs in terms of problems and benefits derived from the movement's media and communicative actions towards the mobilization process and the construction of a commons.

9) Agency: This sub-category observed where and when media and communicative practices granted degrees of agency for the movement, and what was implied to achieve agency on those realms.

Once the data was recoded, summarized, and organised, I was in a position to identify patterns relating to each practice from the different sources used to collect data – from the 43 interviews; from the seven focus groups in which a total of 42 people took part, and from archive material. I identified the activities involved in each media and communicative practice. For instance, it was possible to observe that what I termed as private physical practices, were constituted by conversations at home, debates at schools, in local and national encounters, within walls of intimacy, autonomy, and involving spoken word as the way to appeal to others, amongst other core identity elements of those practices.

These patterns were systematically emerging from the revision of data, allowing me to describe the features of each practice, and to be aware of data that could challenge the patterns. In this sense, these patterns were flexible enough to work as channels of inquiry to understand processes that were emerging from the fieldwork, in order to fine tune the analysis through the shaping and contrast of codes, categories and subcategories. As mentioned before, this was a process of reading, contrasting and comparing data on the same categories and subcategories and between them, moving into continuous questions, initial

explanations and different emergences (Charmaz, 2008b). Reading, comparing and contrasting were methods of scrutiny towards, for instance, the different connotations of data labelled in the subcategory 'agency' when it was emerging in contexts of walled intimacy or in the streets of Santiago; or in the subcategory 'adversary', where activists changed adversaries when talking about television newscasts or the time they spent on the Internet. This process employed to scrutinize and consolidate patterns gave rise to a progressive narrowing of each category and sub-category into key concepts, allowing me to form a clear idea of these concepts and also to observe them in a structured and ordered way (Marshall and Rossman, 2009) by displaying them in a table.

The table below shows the method used to narrow down and distribute the information collected in each of the four practices. Although this table represents just one particular snapshot of the research, it is a good example of the reduction process to map data in an advanced stage of the research.

Communication and media practices									
Practices	Actions	Organization	Scale	Autonomy	Axis	Way to Appeal	Adversary	Consequences	Agency
Private physicality	Conversations at home, debates at schools, local and national encounter	Connective	Groups/ Unions	High	Private/P hysical	Spoken word	Hegemony/Fear	Problematic outputs: Mistrust on people as sources of information, practical difficulties and difficult standing instances of dialogue.	To question, debate and organise people for a cause.
Publicly physical	Marches, rallies, flashmobs, art interventions	Coll/Conn	Urban Spaces	High	Public/ Physical	Gatherings/ Ca rnivals	Individualism/ Routinization	Problematic outputs: The reception of the repertoire and its lack of impact, and its problems towards the meaning of participation.	To manifest in the urban space with voice
Public and virtual practices	Mainstream media work	Collective	Regional and National	Low	Virtual/P ublic	Word/ Leader body	Private companies/ Ideology	Problematic outputs: Slight change in the treatment of the movement, media agency but no media regulation and no civil society media.	To defy the government nationally, reaching degrees of mainstream legitimacy
Private and public virtuality	Use of web based social media	Coll/Conn	Networki ng	High/Low	Virtual/ Public- Private	Images/ videos	Old organizational hierarchies	Problematic outputs: Clicktivism, slacktivism, poor debates and "mumbling" exercise.	Organization, participation and self broadcasting

With the patterns clarified by category I had a thorough and comprehensive method that allowed me to review the whole map and also to observe the constitution of each category. In sum, I had a broad picture and a detailed account

of each part of the table above and I was ready to interpret these patterns and the connections between them. To do so I used two complementary approaches: one centred on collected data patterns and interpretations; the other involved observing my interpretations in relation to theoretical contributions. With reference to the first, I scrutinized data to move from descriptions to a deep understanding, trying to understand why some media and communicative practices went in one direction and not another. I went back and forth looking at data, finding feasible elements to give a more profound interpretation of their actions. The other method was to carefully examine the patterns found in my data in view of the theoretical approaches covered by the previous literature review chapters. By doing this I was able to observe relevant theories and perspectives in relation to the emerging theoretical findings coming from the ground (Berg, 2001). Once both methods were advanced, I had the opportunity to reach the point where no new properties were emerging from the data, and to consolidate interpretations from the perspective of the primary question and sub-questions posed.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have described the steps which define the methodological design of this research. The first step involved the observation of the Chilean students' movement uniqueness and the choice to study media and communicative practices using a qualitative approach, exploring the role of the communicative and media practices of the movement from the perspective of its members. The second involved the selection of appropriate methodological tools to gather data: interviews, focus groups, and archives. Along with detailing every single method of data collection, I have also shown the rationale behind these methods and the lively experience that comes with the presence of the researcher in the field.

The third part of this methodological design considered steps of familiarization, summary coding, and pattern coding until the point of redefining the research

question based upon what was emerging from the grounding of the study. The fourth part of this research explained this shift, the reasons why the enquiry was narrowed, the new emerging question and sub-questions, the codes used to organize and analyse data, and the ways in which descriptions and interpretations came to provide answers to research questions.

At the end of this chapter I have defined my approach to the area of study. In doing so, I have anchored this research in a particular point that sets both closeness and distance to other studies. First, closeness with studies that attempt to understand the political burden of media and communicative practices in contemporary contexts, from milieus that are outside of the realm of the polity and mainstream public spaces and that are more rooted in everyday life spaces. Thus I have also tried to manifest distance with research that, whilst valuable, provides deterministic answers focused on technology, and observing or understanding certain actions on the web as political *per se*, without assessing the new configurations of the political in contemporary landscapes of closeness and denial.

A second closeness embodied by this crafted methodological approach is with the understanding that 'methods serve the researcher, never is the researcher a slave to procedure and technique' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998: 10). In this sense, what I manifest is that my research is the product of a critical, permanent, and grounded process that provides insights based upon the rigour and flexibility of a qualitative methodological approach based on the territory, the theoretical maps, and the eye of the beholder. Therefore, I manifest a disagreement with perspectives expressing that methods are rules to follow and not guiding parameters to find and open a unique path (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

Connected to the previous point comes a third closeness. In this case the closeness is with a type of research that does not just want to explain certain phenomena but wants to transform a particular social order providing elements to do so (Fay, 2015). As such, this methodological design channels an effort of doing

critical research in order to subvert a social and political order observed as oppressive and in which new categories and insights are required to analyze the roots of oppression and the chances for emancipation (Fay, 2015). On this sense, this research expresses its distance with research not involved in relevant political and social issues relevant for the life in common or not aiming to change the state of inequality, oppression and unbalance of power in a given society (Harvey, 1990). Anchored in this methodological and theoretical milieu, in the following chapters I develop four insights on the way in which different media and communicative practices of Chile's 2011 student movement built a commons with capacity for the political to exist in the Chilean neoliberal democracy.

Chapter 4

Knitting the commons: Enabling trust in walled intimacy

There was the need in handling those situations, about decreasing the anxiousness of parents. My mother was scared, she was anxious about the chance that something bad could happen. It's just sad she thinks I could have been a disappeared. I think the communication labour begins at home, because there you have to build an environment of respect. Focus group 1, respondent 3.

As described in previous chapters, in 2011, using various actions countrywide, Chilean students led a mobilization that soon involved a broad section of society⁶¹ (Cortés, 2016; Segovia and Gamboa, 2012). Assemblies, marches, meetings, concerts, flashmobs⁶², media productions, and the occupation of government buildings, amongst other activities, were ways in which they expressed their voice and participated in the debate and demand for recognition of their claims. This array of actions involved old and new repertoires of contention (Della Porta and Diani, 2006), such as people running around the house of government for days, weeks and months, dancing in the main streets of Santiago in native costume, composing and uploading songs to YouTube, taking part in a zombie flashmob, and gathering in streets, street corners, and squares at midnight to create a noise with artefacts such as pots and pans (Figueroa, 2012; Jackson, 2013).

But beyond the most prominent actions to take place within the urban environment in the mobilization of 2011, my interviews and focus groups revealed there existed a cluster of communicative practices rooted in local realms of intimacy within the enclaves of homes, classrooms, and occupied buildings nesting local dialogues, conversations, and debates. In these enclosed locations of walled intimacy, the ill-

⁶¹ In December 27, 2011, the news website La Nación [The Nation] published a report of the mobilization of 2011. The article entitled *Movilización Estudiantil: El gran hito que marcó el 2011* [Student mobilization, the great event that marked 2011] reported: “marches and protests happened every time with more frequency gathering thousands of people. It was frequent to see complete families in the events”. (“Movilización”).

⁶² Muse (2010) describes flashmobs as short and momentary participative performances that take place in public spaces, organized by channels such as Twitter, Facebook, via email, or text message.

feeling about the state of Chilean education and the need to mobilize were shared piecemeal but in an environment of trust and mutual care. The consistent use of spoken word in daily meals, at occasional barbecues, assemblies, and life inside occupied buildings, was a crucial element of communicative practice recounted by all of my respondents, which spread from the living room at home to assemblies held on varying scales throughout the country.

Acknowledged by activists as a purposeful means by which to seize their own spaces to create influence prior to any attempt at larger mobilization, the practices referred to in this chapter as 'walled intimacy', enabled webs of trust in the intimacy of the so-called backyards of democracy (Lechner, 1988): nodes of familiarity, respect, and love located beyond the reach of the state, in which political issues were discussed. Those encounters involving conversations, debates, discussions, agreements, and disagreements signalled the foundations of a commoning process that, from the very beginning, confronted the fears and constraints of neoliberal culture and formed the crucial building blocks of the movement's development.

This chapter departs from the question posed at the end of the first two chapters of this research. After revising the expropriation of voice and the spaces for deploying voice in neoliberal democracies – in the first two chapters – I observed a third expropriation: the entitlement to have voice. The question at that point was how, from that position, could people actually become involved in the definition and discussion of the life in common? Suggestions in the available literature state that a basic task was to create a human commons as the first necessary resource of (political) life (Mattei, 2013). As mentioned in previous chapters, looking for literature depicting this reconstitution, I found Holloway's (2002) notion of the 'scream' as an expression made by the oppressed and dispossessed raising awareness of their suffering amongst others. The scream, for Holloway, expresses a pre verbal opposition to an oppressive reality. Holloway calls it a mumbling dissonance of rage coming from the experience in which those who scream are victims of violence, discrimination, victims ultimately of the social and political

conditions in which they exist. The scream, in its refusal to accept being erased from life kicks back and manifests the will of freedom, the hope that things can be better (2002).

My fieldwork and analysis revealed that, the build-up to this notion of a scream to the outer world, took place within the student movement from sheltered realms of care, affection and intimacy where the student-activists voices mattered. These communicative practices comprising conversations, dialogues at home, discussions in university buildings (which might seem simple or pedestrian and certainly not political from liberal perspectives), had a foundational role in a commoning process that was subversive in three subversive ways.

Primarily, activists, students, and those involved in the mobilization dealt with a culture of oppression, a legacy of fear, and a political system in which people felt isolated, unrepresented, and marginalised in the political sphere. In the conversations, debates, and discussions analysed in this chapter, there is an initial challenge to neoliberal democracy more resembling a swarm of whispers that surround, weave between and build towards Holloway's 'scream'. It was within these realms of walled intimacy that people felt protected and confident enough to hold conversations leading to an increased awareness of the issues of mobilization and, ultimately, the decision about how neoliberalism should be challenged in a concerted way.

This emergence of the commons presented a second subversion due to the way in which the revised practices contested neoliberal time and space through the occupation of schools and university buildings as conditions for sustaining proper dialogue and debates. These occupations revealed that it was impossible to have conversations, dialogues, and debates under a 24/7 lifestyle (Crary, 2013) and without the spaces and conditions to do so. From the perspective of the students, conversations and debates needed time and space. If neoliberalism's time and space was not able to cope with those expectations, then time and space had to be created.

A third subversive action of these practices comes from the two aforementioned points and relates to David Graeber's (2013: 230) ideal that in democracies 'everyone affected by a project of action should have a say in how it is conducted'. Aware that in neoliberal democracies 'everyone' refers mostly to those whose contribution was excluded from decision-making processes – rather than those who were included – the set of practices revised in this chapter seeks to challenge that logic. For students, there was no meaningful collective action without the local creation of dialogue, debate, and concerted attempts at reaching points of agreement. Assemblies, in this sense, appeared as the most basic and open way to convey discussions in which everyone was considered to partake in and to be a part of common resolutions.

In the following pages of this chapter, I will firstly describe where and how communicative practices of 'walled intimacy' were conveyed and the implications for activists and the movement. In this regard, I will cover three spaces of 'walled intimacy': home and neighbourhoods; occupied schools and university buildings; and local and national assemblies. In the second part of the chapter I analyse three elements that appear as key for this emergence. Firstly, the importance of closeness, trust networks, and participation in local circles as ways to deal with the fear of being politically engaged. Secondly, the way in which students broke the logics of neoliberal time and space to have dialogues and encounters to discuss the life in common. And finally, that there was no meaningful collective action in activists' perception without the local creation of dialogue, debate, and consensus.

Placed and purposive dialogical practices

Among the most defining features of social movements, Della Porta and Diani (2006) highlight their decentralised character; the way in which they promote participation, boost powerful internal solidarity, and enable a particular type of leadership. All these features are not automatic – they are modelled by political, social, and cultural contexts (Fine 2003) – so when the prospect of a new

revolutionary path opened by a particular social movement arises, caution and consideration are necessary. Caution to understand that every mobilization operates from varying and particular conditions, and consideration to weigh and measure those conditions.

With this caution and consideration in mind, available literature on social movements agrees on certain basic social and cultural conditions present in the first stages of most mobilization processes. Amongst these conditions are the need for time and space (Klandermans, 2004), motivations and reasons to confront an oppressive reality, and awareness that circumstances cannot be changed by purely individual efforts (Evans, 1979). Particularly interesting is Sara Evans' insight into a feminist perspective in the 1950's and 1960's in the US. Evans highlighted two elements that form part of my analysis of Chilean students. On the one hand, the relevance of micro realms where 'members of an oppressed group can develop an independent sense of worth in contrast to their received definitions as second class or inferior citizens' (1979: 219), and 'a communication or friendship network through which a new interpretation can spread, activating the insurgent consciousness into a social movement' (1979: 220).

Before occupying streets or the media, the intimacy of households and daily life served to drive a process where communicative practices were held in networks of confidence and trust (Britt and Heise, 2000). As stated earlier, this emergence has different shapes depending upon the context and history of social movements. Tarrow's (1988) idea that social movements are repositories of knowledge, indicates a learning process that allows movements to learn from past experiences to build in the most feasible way, the communicative bonds and collective identity needed to advance mobilization processes.

This embryonic moment that Goodwin, Jasper, and Polleta (2004) label as micro foundations of social movements, is shaped – as stated – by contexts, basic elements, and past histories that surround the birth of a movement. At this micro

level, emotional, ideological, and political dynamics have initial moments in which communicative practices are particularly relevant. These dynamics involve an exercise of translation of complex issues into more simple matters (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991), the development of a first consciousness and collective identity (Klandermans and de Weerd, 2000), and the step away from the feeling of shame or defeat (due to an oppressive situation) to other emotions (Britt and Heise, 2000). These dynamics and some others were present in Chilean homes and neighbourhoods, as well as in occupied schools and university buildings.

Home and neighbourhoods

For the activists involved in the 2011 movement, homes were important places for conversation, debate, discussion, conflict, and support for their cause. Parents, siblings, and relatives in general were the audience and discussants of conversations around the table, a place where Chilean families gather daily at lunch and/or at dinner; or around a barbecue at weekend family gatherings. There, in that micro space within the four walls of the closest family nucleus, it was possible to have intergenerational meetings between students and their relatives.

I remember one Sunday at a family lunch we were discussing the [education] issue. I was supporting the mobilization and I realized that my cousins also supported it, because they were also mobilized, and the discussion at the table was like all young guys convincing all old people until they finally had to give up because we were all already mobilized, so that was the micro work in the pores of the society. Sebastian Farfán.

Activists imparted first-hand sources of information to their families and friends about the ongoing events, to challenge their relatives' impressions about the movement – that were, according to the students, based on a mixture of their own history, rumours, and media reports – and also to debate the reasons, feasibility, and goals of their claims. Their daily perceptions of the weight, persuasiveness, and validity of their arguments at home served as an experiment to test the pertinence of these arguments in front of the whole society, to measure the state of mobilization and its support from the broader population, and to realize their parents' perception of a social mobilization conveyed by the younger generations

of Chilean families. Most of those actively engaged in the 2011 mobilization were direct heirs of an older generation involved, affected, or familiar with the times of General Augusto Pinochet's rule, and the physical and psychological violence attached to protest, street demonstrations, and mobilization in general.

In my case something similar happened. It is difficult that my mother or my brother sees the other side of news. They are really closed; it takes effort to make them believe my point of view or stop them believing what the TV says. I do not know if they listen to me or if afterwards they still think: 'this boy is talking nonsense again'. Focus Group 1, Respondent 2.

Students proved to be reliable sources for their relatives as they were not only family but also, in many cases, the first generation within their families to enter university. This status is something that in Chile is regarded as a high achievement and referred to with pride, putting these students in a complex position: the privileged, educated but inexperienced, young members of the family. In this sense, a prior mobilization (the so-called 'Penguin Revolution' of 2006⁶³) figured prominently in activists' memories demonstrating how relationships and dialogue within families were relevant in order to win over their sympathy to their claims and acts if they wanted to be granted majority support in the society at large. Due to Chile's social composition, family is the main personal nucleus and support group. Families were resolute in backing the students' decision to stay in the occupied buildings and take part in the whole mobilization process.

To stay in an occupied building meant to live almost entirely in the building. In the case of high-school students, there was an agreement between parents and their offspring that included a crucial dialogical flow of perspectives, opinions, and encounter between the two generations. As activists' expressed, if they failed to communicate the magnitude of the problem and the need to protest within their homes, they would not have obtained the support of their family for their cause and, indeed, would most likely not be well-received in society as a whole. In this

⁶³ The 'Penguin Revolution' was a mobilization held in 2006 by high-school students (often nicknamed 'penguins' because of their uniforms) that lasted from April to June. The main claim of the movement was to end the precariousness of public education and the general 'neo-liberalization of education in their country' (Chovanec and Benítez, 2008: 39).

process, the main obstacle was parents' fear of what physical punishment their children might receive, expressed to activists to inhibit them from any public exposure.

At home we are more left-wing, but my mother always fear that I will get involved in marches or something like that. It is the same now at college when I am more involved in these issues. But at the time [2011] I was not too into it. But anyhow, at home there was the comment from my family that is generally very conservative, right-wing, saying: 'Hey, do you have any idea about what was going on?' Sometimes I gave my opinion but they said, 'watch out, don't go there, it is dangerous'. So in the end you were restricted. Focus Group 1, Respondent 5.

I had a lot of problems. My mother always talked about politics but never leaned to any side. When they realized that I leaned to a side, they began to be scared. My mother told me not to get involved in politics because she was the only one who worked and, therefore, the only one who could talk about politics. That was very authoritarian. Anyway, I went to marches, hidden; she knew about it but she played the fool. Afterwards, when I was getting more involved, she looked at me as a disappeared, like if the police were going to torture me if they caught me. She told me, 'if they catch you they will torture you'. She now does not say anything but until today she does not accept it. Focus Group 5, Respondent 4.

Nonetheless, students remember this negotiation as a back-and-forth process that culminated in parents being more open about the need to mobilize, thus softening the fears of a shocking era (Klein, 2007). The outcomes of this process allowed the students to set the foundations for emotional support and confidence, also gaining more participants for the movement, although not without conflicts derived from their challenged identities as students and young activists with political and social interests, in the glare of the adult world.

According to the students, without seeking it, they encountered in the process of dialogue and debate at home, an increasing tremor from their older relatives' past. The ethical frame drawn by the movement agitated old desires for social change that had been left in the wardrobe of their relatives' youth, tightening bonds between relatives and gaining active members with their own personal motivations to be involved in the mobilization. This widespread connection at home between students and others contributed, in the end, to the reinforcement of the activists' decision to take part and to recruit more participants in the movement. Therefore, the leading actors of the mobilization were students and young people but also

relatives, friends, and acquaintances. And in this task, arguments explained around a table or a barbecue seemed reasonable and compelling for those who were not entirely involved but with a propensity to enter into action such as rallies and demonstrations, giving legal assistance in some cases or providing food and goods for the occupations.

This activity exceeded the confines of houses and reached other significant spaces that allowed meetings between activists based on dialogues and conversations. These spaces were trade unions, neighbourhood committees, and local cultural centres. Within these spaces, talks and presentations took place where activists publicly expressed the arguments for the mobilization. These encounters were sought out by students and those wanting more first-hand knowledge, due to the lack of information they were able to access in the mainstream media. The students found the atmosphere within those spaces invigorating due to the support from the less privileged members of Chilean society - those on the bottom level in the distribution of wealth. Thus, these meetings were rich in support and encouragement for the students, as they received the endorsement of those who had confidence in them.

Once, one of the leaders of the shantytowns where I worked some years before came to the students' union office. Obviously I was impressed that he remembered me. He came saying that he did not want to bother anyone and asking if it was possible to send someone to explain what was going on. And I said: 'Mister Juan, do not worry, I'll go'. When I went there the neighbourhood centre was crowded. Guillermo Petersen.

Occupied schools and university buildings

It is a long tradition in Chilean activism, especially amongst students, to occupy campuses and buildings of universities and schools as a display of strength and commitment, as a message directed at government, and also as a need for the purposes of the mobilization to afford time and space to students. Along with its symbolism – sometimes a violent act due the confrontation between police forces trying to evict the buildings and students stopping them – the occupation was

relevant in 2011 because it transformed buildings into headquarters under student rule. In these buildings they slept, cooked, and organized different tasks, such as cleaning the facilities, creating games, establishing offices, and holding concerts⁶⁴. All students were allowed to participate in these tasks and specific duties were distributed by creating *ad hoc* commissions in charge of particular matters. The occupied buildings were places where the students felt confident and able to embrace the space as their own property, instilling a sense of belonging.

In these spaces, activists had their own assemblies and meetings with other institutions, organizations, and unions, opening up the facilities from closed spaces to centres for relations under their command. This openness from the point of view of people coming from other schools and organizations was relevant within the occupations to hold inner assemblies, cultural meetings, or to invite experts on particular issues of the mobilization, such as lawyers and economists who gave lectures on the topics that students considered relevant. This was a common activity including conversation groups with the speakers after the presentation, some of them former activists and part of the old vanguards of the 1960's and 1980's who shared their experiences with the activists of 2011. This bond facilitated a link between generations and widened understanding of the problems of education in a historical and global thread – elements that in the end enabled the activists to assess their situation beyond the immediate experience of the movement itself.

Just as in the case of lecturers, occupied buildings were places where it was possible to meet people who were formerly just classmates; not only with students from the same institutions, but also from other institutions. By visiting them, talking to people from other areas, sharing their worries, presenting their opinions, but also playing, laughing, and cooking together, students broke the unidirectional behaviour of staying in the building where they belonged and mixed with other people, thus contributing to a feeling of unity.

⁶⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYY1wy1py84>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTOrBUlxlxE>

I went to many schools in other communes, like Puente Alto or La Florida. Sometimes I went with some classmates, other times I went by myself and told them: 'Hey people, I come from Liceo de Aplicación, I would like to talk a bit about how we want to offer you help, if you need something or need help to articulate the movement in your school'. So I went and spoke directly with people there, sometimes with their student union. Matías Lucero.

The occupied spaces were not only locations for dwelling, working, organizing, and meeting people from other institutions, but the activists also hosted on their premises, community radio broadcasts, theatre companies, and musicians. Plays, radio programmes, and concerts were important moments in the daily life of occupations, little moments of joy to celebrate their struggle and to court the affection of broadcasters, musicians, and artists in general who showed solidarity with students and thus strengthened ties between their own areas of influence, as well as portraying an image of popular support to their cause.

The occupations were a cultural and information focus. Beyond the mobilization, occupations became places to communicate many more things than just educational issues or the reform. Focus Group 2, Respondent 1.

The occupied buildings were also used as meeting rooms specifically to deal with those parents not entirely committed to the students' claims. Thus, when dialogue between students and families at home was not enough, the occupied buildings were used as conference centres for relatives with questions within which mobilized activists could not only express their points of view, but also demonstrate the level of organisation and clarity underpinning their demands. They also used these conclaves to express how the expropriations conveyed by neoliberalism and expressed in the Chilean education system impacted upon everyone.

I remember a meeting we had with a hundred parents. They did not come to end the occupation but just to ask, to make questions because they did not understand what was happening, why so many people were rallying in the streets, why after two months things were not resolved. We explained to them that once we graduate from high school they would have to pay, to go into debt. I remember asking them 'who of you studied for free?' And the vast majority raised their hands. So the question was why we have to do that. 'The problem is not we' we told them, 'the problem is about you, you are going to get in debt to get your child into university' I said. And somehow when you touch that, when the common is touched, it is possible to move on. Roberto Toledo.

At another stage of the mobilization, occupied buildings served as a place where confrontations with police forces took place, due to eviction orders signed by mayors of local municipalities, or directly by the national government. Battles between students and police forces went on for hours⁶⁵ in the outskirts of schools and in nearby streets. Stones, bricks, chairs and Molotov cocktails, were all used to defend the buildings from which the students were then evicted but were later occupied by them – and in some cases parents – in a back-and-forth display of power between government and activists⁶⁶.

It was not only university and school buildings that were occupied⁶⁷. Activists also took control of other types of spaces, such as the headquarters of political parties, government offices, international institution branches in Chile such as the UNICEF building, think-tanks of right-wing parties, radio stations and, on some occasions, TV channels⁶⁸. The rationale behind these occupations was to draw attention to specific elements of the students' claims, by controlling a building that represented some aspect of the claim they were making. For instance, the occupation of a political party headquarters was intended by the activists to denounce the behaviour of that party in support of the right to profit from education. Most of these occupations took place only for a short time, until activists vacated the space, or

⁶⁵ To watch some examples: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Aa8mOV_fkU
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MKQvuSz1YI>

⁶⁶ In 2011 police officers arrested 14.876 people as a direct consequence of national mobilisation (occupations and marches) (“Reporte”). The most violent clash between police forces and activists occurred on August 4th. That day, 874 people were arrested and 90 police officers were injured as a consequence of a national call to march that was denied by the government and hardly repressed (Protestas). Regarding evictions, in June 2011, students of ACES and UTEM presented a petition for constitutional relief in the Court of Appeals in Santiago in order to stop the violence of police officers while proceeding with evictions (“Estudiantes”), while teams of lawyers offered their free service to help students who suffered violence in marches and evictions (“Recomendaciones”). A typical story of evictions can be found in the following link:

<http://santiagotimes.cl/2011/10/11/special-forces-end-university-occupation-in-valparaiso-chile/>

⁶⁷ At the beginning of June 2011, media reported more than a hundred occupied high schools (“Colegios”) and sixteen occupied universities (“Las Claves”). At the end of that month that number increased considerably. By June 28, just in Greater Santiago there were 232 occupied high schools (“Conoce”).

⁶⁸ <http://www.biobiochile.cl/noticias/2011/06/29/diversos-organismos-de-santiago-son-tomados-en-el-marco-de-las-marchas-estudiantiles.shtml>

until the arrival of police forces that was usually met with a non-violent response from the activists.

However, not all schools and universities became occupied buildings; some of the activists simply suspended their academic life without living there on a daily basis. This implied that buildings were not in the control of students but instead of attending lectures they had free time to deliver assemblies, create different commissions to support the mobilization, or hold meetings to reflect on education issues. In Chilean activism culture this is called being 'on strike' and is usually regarded as the pre-cursor to occupation – if the mobilization process escalates. Given the fact that when 'on strike' academic life was suspended but teachers and the rest of school and university attended normally, there was a special connection between teachers, students, staff, and the whole academic community during that time. There were, of course, occasions where that relationship wasn't without strain, but on other occasions it was highly rewarding, boosting students' confidence in their demands and in the will to continue with the mobilization⁶⁹.

It was beautiful to see how the nuns also took part [in the mobilization]. We stayed outside the school with posters, whistles, shouting. And to see how the nuns were taking part in that was... like a revolution at the school. Teachers and the younger students were surprised at how they helped us to craft banners and posters to inform what was happening. Focus Group 4, Respondent 3

Local and national assemblies

In the more recent literature on social movements, assemblies or 'general assemblies' have been discussed as an important way in which people participate in deliberative decision-making processes within mobilisation processes. However, democracy in assemblies adopts different shapes and occurs in places that could be either more exclusive or more inclusive – in a way that is connected to the public space discussion of chapter 2. Exploring the way democracy was practiced

⁶⁹ The recently (September 2016) launched website <http://www.cartografiadelamovilizacion.cl> gives a complete map of school and university buildings occupied or 'on strike' in Chile's Metropolitan Region of Chile. Although the site is a beta version, still provides a graphic image of the places and types of occupations during 2011.

in the European Social Forum, Massimiliano Andretta and Donatella della Porta (2009) bring two dimensions that define the type of democratic participation that assemblies hold. One dimension relates to the status of assembly members. The two most distinctive statuses are, on the one hand, equal participation of every member with the prerogative of speaking out and being a part of decision-making processes and, on the other hand, participation through the delegation of power. The second dimension revolves around consensus and deliberation and it makes two emphases: on dialogue and discussion as part of a decision making process, on one hand; and on the final outcomes of those discussions processes on the other. The interplay of both provides an idea of the more or less equal participatory character of assemblies.

A second issue relating to democracy in assemblies is its open or closed character. During 2011, mobilization processes in the Middle East and Northern Africa, Spain, New York, and London, sustained open assemblies in open air spaces where people did not need any affiliation to be part of it, and where people were previously strangers to each other (Graeber, 2013; della Porta, 2015). The openness of assemblies is commonplace in Latin America, much like the Argentinian and Ecuadorian events in the early 2000's (Pasadena, 2011). In the Latin American cases, assemblies occurred in *barrios* [neighbourhoods] – and were opened to all inhabitants of the *barrio* – at a time in which both countries faced several economic problems and a lack of governmental authority (Argento, 2015). Along with open assemblies there were also assemblies within factories exclusively for the workers, something that was especially relevant in a context in which several factories were taken over and managed by its labourers (Lavaca, 2007).

In a broad sense and taking elements of several experiences into consideration, assemblies are instances of participation in which, through deliberation and argument people deal through different ways, with or without the use of mediators (Graeber, 2013), in a factory or in a big square, with the aim of constructing the life in common (Della Porta, 2015). Interestingly, after observing the cases of the Arab

Spring, Indignados, and Occupy, Donatella Della Porta (2015) claims that assemblies today show a tendency in contemporary movements that impact upon the redefinition of democracy. She asserts that the logic of assemblies in the aforementioned settings tend to include more 'common people' than activists, in a way that privileges those who are included but are not necessarily attached to, or associated with, a particular organisation.

However, this common component is relative and must be identified in each case. The Chilean case of 2011 brings to the fore the above idea that social movements are set in particular contexts that define their shape, attitudes, and behaviours. Assemblies, in the case of Chile, were only experienced in sheltered spaces. At schools and universities, whether the students were on strike, occupying, or attending regular classes, the way to take decisions or simply to talk, debate, and arrive at certain agreements in schools and universities, was through assemblies. Conceived as an agora for free talking and participation, assemblies implied the use of voice and argumentation and allowed the participation of every constituent of each educational institution at a student level. There were no cases of assemblies in open spaces where those with unknown affiliation were expected to attend.

This tradition of assemblies is rooted in Chile's activism and social life to such a degree that some high schools, as part of their internal regulation, give students the right to use some academic time to study and debate a particular issue of concern to them, besides the weekly academic time allocated to discuss their own issues. It is necessary to stress this culture of participation because of the relevance of assemblies in the way the movement was talking, discussing, and developing at different stages during the mobilization. For researchers of the students' movement in 2011 this feature of Chilean university life is remarkable because it opposed 'the non-participatory and heavily elitist nature of contemporary Chilean politics' (Somma, 2012: 303).

The assembly model for decision-making through the use of voice and vote was used in every school and university involved in the mobilization, and in organizations whose constituents came from different schools or universities, such as the Assembly of Art Students created in Santiago, but it also extended to other regions. This communicative element of decision-making was mainly viewed as satisfactory for the students as it allowed participation, voice, and vote. In this sense, the problem raised in chapter 2 (of every person having voice) was resolved, enabling everyone to be part of a democracy that established equal participation for everyone, deliberation of topics and voting – to arrive at agreements. But assemblies – as cognitive, affective, and relational realms (della Porta, 2015) – were also a place to inform and become informed, to confront ideas and observe insights from activists that allowed them to trigger, alter, or solidify assumptions in the face of compelling or non-compelling ideologies, postures, and perspectives.

The experience of the assembly was super particular because it passed from the information transfer, prior to mobilization, to a political exercise. Every single student who took part expressed their opinion and then instances of voting were generated. That was important. I study History and the president was right-wing, very conservative. But in spite of what I presumed, he always respected and abided by students' decisions. So our space was politically enriched, our discussions included new phrases and new concepts. So there was space for interaction, for contrast. Now it is routine but in that moment it was enriching.
Focus Group 5, Respondent 6.

Assemblies, as a place to discuss issues and reach agreement, were not only fostered, but were also defended by activists, as they perceived that mainstream media and institutional politics criticized assemblies and horizontal politics for restricting leaders' freedom in making decisions and, consequently, for setting a slow pace in negotiations with the government. The use of time for 'as long as they might take' assemblies, considered as a weakness by mainstream media, was regarded by students as one of the pillars of the Chilean students movement because, from the bottom (the grassroots supporters) to the top (representatives), everyone was involved through voice and vote. In other words, everyone was, in principle, considered a relevant actor, as subjects taking part in the process. Thus

they expressed that the representativeness and participation granted for the constituents should never be questioned in terms of its legitimacy.

There was an ideological confrontation. We, on our side, were applying a historical method of the Chilean working class, which is direct democracy. Maybe we did not consider that direct democracy was an organizational ideal on the national scale, and maybe it is not an actual way to organize the nation, but we did believe that this method was much more democratic than the indirect democracy we have today in this representative democracy. Alfredo Vielma.

At the level of coordination between representatives of universities and high schools, the two main institutions (CONFECH for university students, and CONES for high-school students) held periodic national meetings in 2011, in different cities from Iquique (north) to Punta Arenas (far south), a territory separated by 3,600 kilometres (greater than the distance between London and Tel Aviv). During the peak of the 2011 mobilization, these meetings were held once a week in assemblies usually lasting an average of eight hours. This case exemplifies how important face-to-face encounters were, and the value of sustaining a space that in its horizontality showed itself to the public – for their own supporters and for the public – as a democratic arena of and for deliberation.

One important element of legitimacy within assemblies was the way they were conducted. Instead of relying on new technologies to make things faster or conducting open assemblies in public spaces, they preferred to follow the traditional custom of people gathered in crowded rooms systematically discussing the current state of affairs and upcoming actions. There are three reasons for conveying assemblies in this way. The first is because it was already a validated practice in high schools, universities, careers, and courses for sharing and discussing information and for distributing tasks. Following Andretta and della Porta's (2009) contribution, it was an effective part of movement traditions. A second reason is – especially in contrast with the Argentinian and Ecuadorian *asambleas de barrio* [neighbourhood assemblies] (Ouviña, 2008; Argento, 2015) or with cases like Occupy Wall Street (Graeber, 2013) – because assemblies nurtured and protected the voice of those students who otherwise would not have dared to speak in spaces that would have been unfamiliar for them. In this sense,

the protection and care afforded to allowing people to speak out and be listened to, connects assemblies and conversations held at homes in a way that can be understood due to the conditions of fear and mistrust in Chilean society. A third reason is because assemblies were the most feasible way students had to resolve – as activist Pablo Flores expressed it – their ‘conflicts and positions’. When there were suggestions to use web-based platforms for decision-making at some point, those pretensions were dismissed to privilege the physical presence of all interested parties.

An essential character of the student movement was this sort of tight link of representatives with the base [grassroots supporters]. In this sense, base is the best connection to the ground, to really understand and define through assemblies what could be the most important issue to install in the agenda and collect every single opinion. Recaredo Gálvez.

Nonetheless, the structure and the real experience of assemblies did not guarantee the achievement of a fluid, respectful, harmonious, and satisfying situation for all. Assemblies witnessed some vicious behaviour related to the call for assemblies, the oppression of a majority trend over minority voices, violence, and bad language during the meetings, and lack of adherence to discussion threads which might end in a plausible outcome beyond dismay or anger among the participants. These problems were experienced in varied ways. In students’ accounts there was, on the one hand, a soft punishment for those who, due to shyness, did not raise their hands and voice to talk publicly, or did not feel comfortable doing so, or, in other cases, because they simply did not want to. On the other hand, there were some students who frequently spoke in public, taking the supposedly dialogical dimension of assemblies into the hands of a few speakers, and courting personal confrontation.

I identify a bad and a good thing in assemblies. The good side is that political bureaucracy, which has existed forever, was left aside because assemblies were much more expedite. You do not need to call a meeting, you just inform that an assembly will be held and that’s it. The other good thing is that discussion is expedited... although this same factor generates many clashes between students, with strong offensive words. I saw people crying and other guys were way too excited within the assemblies. There were other people scared to give their opinion because a bunch of guys with a lot of energy attacked anyone not willing

to take part in the mobilization. Indeed, after a while, we introduced some mechanisms in the assembly, such as secret voting. But the overall experience of the assembly was good. We gained political concepts and techniques that helped the movement, making students more conscious and managing a language that has allowed us to confront state institutions. Focus Group 5, Respondent 5.

At the level of students' unions and assemblies or in confederations such as CONFECH and CONES, shyness was not a problem. What students highlighted from those meetings was that assemblies were not always spaces of peaceful agreement: at some point they were rings to set positions and counter-positions, alliances and divisions, reflecting the varied ideological standpoints within the movement, although almost all of them with left-wing perspectives. These were also spaces with different political and cultural backgrounds, according to their regional location, the socio-economic origin of the students, and their cultural capital, amongst other variables. However, in light of their previous experience of mobilizations, the main organizations tended to resolve their differences within the assemblies and reconcile their differences before the press⁷⁰ as a means of showing the outside world their unified stance on their broad demands.

We built a story in which effectively there was a diverse range of opinions [inside the Confech], like in every democracy, like in every social movement there are diverse opinions but we acted as a block, in one way, you know? We were united as a student movement, that was beyond question, but obviously there was debate and discussion and it was good to have it. So in front of the press we played along, when the media tried to catch us out on something, we managed to succeed with our version. Sebastián Farfán.

However, the role of assemblies was not only restricted to decision-making processes and debates. It was also a vehicle through which students expressed the type of democracy they were seeking. As revised in Andretta and della Porta (2009) earlier, there is not one way of practicing democracy in assemblies. During 2011, especially in high schools, there were several cases in which students tried to be as horizontal as possible. So instead of having students' unions with a formal president and board of directors, some students preferred not to delegate power to any particular person, such as a president. They preferred to have only elected and

⁷⁰ Chapter 6 addresses more profoundly students' media work and the relationship between the students and the media.

temporary spokespersons with the prerogative of speaking in the name of the assembly until the assembly decided otherwise. Thus, organisms such as the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES) and Art Students Assembly (AEEA) declared themselves horizontal democratic entities since it was a type of democracy more compatible with their idea of political participation.

Despite vices, such as the influence of political groups, in the end we have never got to a better method. It was the instance that we had to organize, to inform and to distribute tasks. I come from a school that worked as an assembly, not with a students' centre. In university I have had the experience of students' centres and I feel the difference is huge: it is more enriching to work as an assembly, in spite of all the bad things that might happen. Focus Group 4, Respondent 4

Emergent commons

We can understand these practices within the intimacy of walled spaces, as part of a constant emerging moment of a commons through the settlement of different socio-political layers; a process that, in the reconstruction of the social fabric, initiated a (be)coming together and enabled webs of trust, knitting bonds of different intentions, times, spaces and communities, sharing similar fears, wishes, raising awareness, and kindling a collective desire. These first steps in the reconstruction of social fabric that later would allow the political to open up and reach beyond the strictures of neoliberal democracies (Mouffe, 2005; Dean, 2009; Brown, 2003, 2005) were held in sheltered conditions, forged in bubbles of space and time, in personal and familiar conversations. The question is, however, what are the distinctive features of these practices and where are the spaces they exist meaningfully in the emergence of the commons? Here I identify three features.

Closeness, trust networks and participation

The communicative practices identified in the three spaces they were hosted in entail an invitation to move from an individualistic and consumerist notion of democracy (Dean, 2009) by making an explicit demand to first listen, talk, and – as long as it was possible – trust in someone before trusting in something. Trust appears thus in two dimensions in very local realms.

The first dimension relates to realms where daily life permitted conversations about the education system with those for whom they had personal affection. These were realms where a rooted history of mistrust and despair was contested and knitted in the nodes and remains of trust located in families, among relatives, friends, neighbours, workmates, classmates; in the physical experience of local gatherings and close encounters; through the words of people they trusted and loved and they were close to in their daily lives. Reservations with politics in general existed in Chilean society, from the trauma of the 1970's and 1980's, the 1990's demobilization, and the ruined expectations of the 2000's (Jocelyn-Holt, 1998; Salazar, 2005; PNUD, 2015). So, the task of establishing a basis to support the mobilization lay in the physical experience of local gatherings and close encounters, in the words of people in close proximity to them whom they trusted and loved. This is a preferred and intimate circle of trust where activists courted attention.

The process of getting awareness and consciousness happened in the context of households, quietly, little by little. For instance, the TV was on and we were having dinner in the next room, but we were all quiet and listening. Then suddenly someone said something and we began to talk, but it was not like we said, 'ok, let's talk about this now'. It occurred spontaneously. And then it happens what I just told you. I live with my mom and grandmother. In 2011 my mother was 36 years old and she well understood what I was into. I had to convince her anyways, because she was scared that something could happen to me, but regarding if it was right or wrong to occupy the school, she said, 'you are the ones who make that call'. Now my grandmother was different, she said we were vandals and the police were going to take us to jail. Francisca Villablanca.

Trust reached a second dimension in the encounter between activists, students – not (yet) activists – and others in general, when in physical nodes of dialogue, debate and closeness, activists became reliable sources of information above and beyond that broadcast by the media. Activists assumed the task of ensuring they were informed of the situations they were immersed in, learning about issues such as education laws, neoliberalism, the education industry, and representative democracy and reforms. Thus they were able to argue, debate, and prepare themselves for any barriers which might impede discussions with those in senior

positions. This acquired knowledge and initial representation of themselves within private spaces enabling activists to become sources of information, and to gain self-confidence and self-worth – in a way similar to that described by Evans (1979) – placed them in a more favourable position of power and respectability within the wider local context. Within this task there was the display of an epic narrative of ‘good people’ versus ‘evil interests’ beyond the reform of the education system; a narrative that became relevant to the symbolic political placement (Touraine, 1985) of the emerging human commons as a valid and legitimate political subject, as will be seen in Chapter 6.

The trust gained from below and beyond the boundaries of the state could not be attributed solely to the communicative practices of the 2011 movement. This was part of a contemporary ‘bottom up’ political behaviour pattern, emanating from grassroots positions. In the Chilean case, this was logical due to its history as a country suffering permanent natural disasters such as the 2010 earthquake, when the country’s reconstruction was a collective social duty, carried out in a spontaneous but organized way, and taking into account the students’ perception that the state was not doing enough⁷¹. In that respect, no effort was made needlessly; every contribution was helpful and the widespread feeling was that every actor reconstructed the country, no matter if he or she contributed to the erection of one wall or an entire village. The ‘brick-after-brick’ morale resonated with what was happening within the movement: that every person mattered and that agency was embedded in every single actor, beginning with their immediate family and neighbours. Activists embraced a meta-agentic challenge of triggering empowerment through the whole society, brick by brick, by means of affection,

⁷¹ Amongst my respondents, 2010’s earthquake served to get a closer insight into the harsh reality of socio economic conditions in Chile and the need to do something without waiting for state intervention. “After 2010’s earthquake we wanted to help reconstructing the city of Lota and, of course, you saw how people lived in tents, in the middle of the winter, crude, they did not have a thing, people were sick, and the government was not doing much about it in a concrete way”, expressed Sebastián Vicencio. Roberto Toledo, reflected how the earthquake gave them an impulse to direct action: ‘There were crowded high schools, for instance the Andalién, a state high school. We had three gyms and two were closed because it was dangerous to use them or walk. There was just a wood fence between the gym and us so in any minute that could collapse and happen who knows what. In that sense we realised that yes, there were problems so we began to generate a coordination on a local level’.

trust, dialogue, and information, creating the chance for participation in the constitution of a commons.

Participation through communicative practices, therefore, lay in a level that cannot be understood by institutional politics, where these do not have a means of entering or appealing to the kind of social fabric that operates there. The state, at least in this case, did not seem to be concerned about these practices, as they dwelled more in daily life spaces where neoliberalism did not see them as a threat, and where only traditional-style totalitarianisms – through certain type of surveillance – long extinguished in the Chilean context, could get in.

Occupation of time and space

Along with its display of power, the occupation of schools and university faculties emerged as a relevant seizing of time and space for the creation of the conditions where communicative practices outside normal daily life could take place. In terms of time, without the occupations it would have been an insurmountable challenge for students to have achieved all steps of the mobilization process whilst also accomplishing their usual commitments as students. The creation of time gave them a break to hold talks, lectures, and conferences. To play, have fun, meet people, and embrace other tasks. Running against the definition of time crafted by the bio political power of capitalism – where time equals money, and where time not occupied in productive activity is time wasted or seen as nonsense barbarian behaviour (Brown, 2005; Sennet, 2013) – the mobilization was conducted in such a way as to express the lack of dialogue within the rush of capitalist or neoliberal times. This attitude resembles the initially incomprehensible conduct of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in its negotiations with the Mexican government in the 1990s. Against the rush of the Mexican government, the Zapatista army stated that dialogue was not possible without listening, and that every conversation – as long as it pretended to respect the parties involved in the dialogue – should take its own time (Rajchenberg and Héau-Lambert, 2004).

For the respondents of this research, time was a key factor. José Soto, reflecting on time, asked “how long were the occupations of the National Institute? Six months? Eight months? Well, for that actor that time was necessary to speak out, you know?” Without time it would have been difficult for the movement to have the human communication required to know what the other thought, to create collective endeavors: “The engine of our reflection is hours and hours of conversation with very diverse people...we gathered at 10am and discussed until lunch, then we had lunch together, then we discussed until evening”, expressed Cristian Inostroza, who was based in the city of Santiago. In the city of Valparaíso, the experience was similar for Bastián Alarcón: “In the evening we discussed internal affairs but in the night we had more collective activities, usually there were guests from other movements and unions, like seaport workers. I remember an assembly that started at 7pm and ended at 5am”. At the end of 2011, the new Education Minister, Harald Beyer, invited students to have a meeting. Students went to the Ministry of Education with a large envelope containing their petitions expressed throughout 2011 and refused to have a meeting. The reason was the same as that expressed throughout that year: “we decide things in a democratic way and it is not our prerogative to make decisions without asking our bases [students]”⁷².

However, there was an awareness in the mobilization, that students’ occupation of time did not simply arrest production – usually referred to by the media in terms of the loss of millions for the economy – but did contest the notion of the 24/7 lifestyle and the speed of technology and technological determinism. In this sense, the *occupation of time* seems a better term than ‘suspension’, as time was embraced as an ends to, and means of, empowerment. This is subtle but this type of power tackled one of the deepest hegemonic narratives of modernity, that of ‘deprecation of the weakness and inadequacy of human time’ (Crary, 2013: 29), where even sleep seems like a failure in the contemporary system of production. As Francisco Figueroa, one of the leaders during the 2011 revolt expressed, reflecting on Chile: ‘We live – even when we think we are in leisure time or resting – in a state of being

⁷² <http://www.latercera.com/noticia/nacional/2011/12/680-418756-9-confech-rechaza-primer-gesto-de-acercamiento-por-parte-del-nuevo-ministro-de.shtml>

productive, in a continuous state of alert' (Figueroa, 2013: 47). That is why, for the students, it was a chimera to sustain the mobilization without occupations.

... occupation facilitated the mobilization tremendously. The time and freedom we had to make a lot of things and the autonomy we gained with it allowed us to sustain our different actions. Angel Salvo.

Space worked in a similar way to time within occupied buildings. The seizure of autonomous spaces had a clear physical aspect recalling the idea – contested and not accurate, but useful for this case in terms of conjuring an image – of city-states where debate and confrontation were possible, and comprised central elements of citizenship (Rabotnikof, 1997). In the cases analysed in this chapter, the walled, protected, and formal environment redirects us to the question of a space for some communicative practices that could not be held in Chilean public urban spaces – not only because these spaces are monitored locations where the police immediately evict non-permitted congregations, but also because there are not many public spaces with the appropriate conditions for this kind of assemblies.

Therefore, the occupied buildings implied three things for communicative purposes.

Firstly, they implied a break between activist and institution that, in spite of how usual and routinized occupations can be, involved organized disagreement between students and authority, a challenge to political authority, to police, and in some cases, a challenge to the students' families.

Secondly, this was also an epistemological break. Activists shook off their role as mere students and embraced a social and political role, defying educational institutions as sources of power, discipline, and knowledge. In an occupied building, discipline was not in the hand of principals, inspectors, or professors. It was self-provided and self-regulated, and the useful knowledge and experience gained for the mobilization was co-produced rather than coming from a source of authority. It is interesting to note how many of the interviewees regarded life in the occupied buildings as the time 'when I learnt the most'.

2011 marks a turning point for many of us. It was the biggest learning school for many of us. It was the year of constant discussions, of political moment, of discussing projects or what education do we want, of fights with police in the streets, in the occupations, coordinating different activities. It was a school that marked many people for the rest of their lives, you could say. Focus Group 2, Respondent 1.

Thirdly, the occupation implied the suspension of usual routine, because the spaces that students inhabited were repurposed. The takeover of halls, rooms, and auditoriums allowed them to have, not only a secured location for conversations and debates, but also to provide other meaning to the spaces where their intimacy was displayed, allowing them to think, feel, and act as subjects inhabiting a space for social construction. The assigned identity of many of the activists was thus unleashed, amplified, and complemented by the expansion of their conditions as subjects with a local agency in the quest for social change. In this situation, the occupation of buildings was a means to locate, in space and time, daily shelters to discuss common experiences; it was expressive of the need to seize the spaces of life to discuss life in democracy. And it is at this point where a final element on the conquest of space became more vivid for the activists.

As occupations of buildings implied an interruption to the normal flux of life in neoliberal democracies, police forces besieged the occupied facilities. Through police cars, buses, and officers, these spaces depicted an identifiable imprint of combat and a symbolic display of resistance against a state waiting to convey the bio political attempt to reset the order of things. The activists considered this permanent physical presence a demonstration of the way in which the state wanted to resolve the conflict and its disposition to talk, as well as the agency and empowerment the movement was gaining. The stories about resistance holding defence when confronted with police evictions were especially encouraging for occupiers all over the country, giving the activists from schools and universities a sense of being cells within a larger body.

However, and towards the end of the mobilization, the bio political power of time in contemporary Chile exerted an influence that was insurmountable for families and

students. Some of them, considering that the mobilization had been extended for several months with no concrete goals being achieved, pushed to end the occupations and go back to classes. The will of students and families was expressed – that they did not want to risk their futures, whether that was due to delaying entrance to college if they failed the year, or, delaying a future income source for families after graduation from high school or college. Ultimately, there was a fear of lost chances in a competitive environment where people understood that beyond the mobilization period, they were on their own.

We made a movement to void that academic year so it would not look like the kids failed, but we were not strong enough precisely because parents were scared. The fear factor that their kids could lose the entire year was...maybe for us it was bearable, but there were kids from communes much more poor that had to graduate that year. They had to graduate and then work because they had little brothers who came after them who needed that, because they were the sons of a single mother with three children. Dafne Concha.

No collective without dialogical individuals

Along and within the conquest of time and space, and already immersed in a progressive wave of mobilization knitted in realms of closeness, trust, and participation, there is a third step in the emergence of a commons: the production of voice as resource, as something to say. Now, the question arising at this point is how a collective voice could be produced when representing so many constituent parts? The answer is through the assembly as a landmark that spread a culture of *doing*: a communicative behaviour that allowed the collective to have a strong political backup through nodes and networks throughout the country. In this sense, there was no meaningful collective action as a movement without the local creation of these collective instances of participation and dialogue.

The assembly appears here as a landmark of the spread of a culture of doing (Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016). Assemblies were the place and means within which to resolve the issues of mobilization, from particular to general aspects, allowing open participation but requiring verbal expression and bodily presence. Instead of using mechanisms employed in current democratic systems, like ballots or

electronic votes, activists mostly used assemblies as a way to legitimize procedures by respecting the word and the participation of every member of the assembly. Certainly, assemblies were spaces of deep and ferocious debates and whilst inside there were hot arguments, and at some points, verbal aggression, issues were resolved and decisions were made. This was their way of resolving their issues and granting legitimacy among peers, in front of the media and the rest of society.

Aware that one of the criticisms they were likely to receive was one about decision-making, slow resolutions, and the vices of direct democracy, activists argued that assemblies were the place where the people ruled, unlike more contemporary times in which democracies fall under the mandates of neoliberal guidelines. Activists understood the assembly mechanism of participation as the most basic and open way to convey discussions and reach resolutions – no matter if it took them longer than the timescale expectations of the media or the polity. This action was a contemporary recall in the 21st century towards the oblivion of the citizen as a sovereign subject with voice and vote, tackling, through their practice and defence of assemblies, one of the weaknesses of neoliberal democracy: its delegative character (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978; O'Donnell, 1994) and the suppression of the citizen (Garcés, 2012).

Nevertheless it is a fact that the permanent use of assemblies as a means of achieving resolution at any level, saw decreasing levels of participation by the end of the mobilization in 2011, raising questions about the sustainability of assemblies. However, this problem was posed based upon the practicality of the assembly and not upon its moral, ethical, and political foundations, and not in relation to the construction of the net of relations that was at the base of the mobilization. Indeed, the fact that every single relevant decision at a local, regional, and national level was taken to the local assemblies for discussion to then inform any decisive course of action, shows how threads of trust were strengthening the network of the movement.

But in this highly networked movement there is an ambiguous area lacking a clear structure of assemblies as in schools and universities, where the organized connections between representatives and grassroots supporters also lacked structure. This group comprised either no-students, or students who did not have an institutional place in which to take part. The world that existed during 2011 revealed two types of engagement: one more institutional, the other less institutional. One followed a classic anarchist model of politics through assemblies in a structure inherited after years of mobilizations, and the other related to the most intimate spaces of daily life whose networks are more difficult to discern. This less institutionalized world had no presence in urban assemblies in the way it happened in cases such as Occupy, the Indignados (Castells, 2012; Graeber 2013), or in the extended presence of neighbourhood assemblies in Argentina and Ecuador (Argento, 2015; Ouviaña, 2008; Pasadena, 2011). There were several reasons for the lack of urban assemblies that were not attached to a particular school or to particular students, and some of these reasons can be inferred from what has been discussed so far. Observing what had occurred, we can reasonably state that they did not happen because of a history of mobilization, because of a context of fear and uncertainty about other options, and ultimately because the social fabric required to mobilize needed to be knitted progressively in communicative ecologies of care and affection.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have reviewed practices related to the emergence of a commons made possible due to a communicative landscape based on conversation, dialogue, and resolution on equal footing (Euler, 2015; Helfrich, 2012). This commoning process (Euler, 2015; Murdock, 2012; Ostrom, 2011), in the context of a neoliberal democracy – with the features already exposed in the Chilean case – arises as a matter of careful elaboration. Indeed, it progressively unfolded through a process of coming together through knitted nodes of trust, familiarity, respect, and love, developed through the basic act of listening to others, and what others were able to hear.

This very simple act of disclosing common concerns in networks of love and affection created a sense of togetherness that found broader spaces in the opportunity of time and space created to break the locks of neoliberalism, as it is possible to perceive in the bio political conditioning of life where it seems difficult to subvert its order in a constructive way. What this chapter demonstrates is that there is no capacity for communicative practices in which common concerns can be discussed, without certain conditions existing that neoliberal democracy does not grant. The consequences of the latter are that, in contemporary democracies running under neoliberal guidelines, the communicative action for discussing the common life is an action of resistance and also a creative action of subversion that – paradoxically, according to a modern narrative – occurs in private.

The first resistance is the act of denying – with others – the cancellation of voice and having a say in the shaping of a world still perceived as a common place, a place for everyone. From that point onwards, there is a subversion that, though limited, enabled opportunities for spaces to be claimed where activists were able to discuss the present and future of Chilean society, and to propose new ideas. Therefore, it was not just about resistance; it was about generating voice and content, subverting the neoliberal understanding of citizenship as the mere act of passing claims to policy-makers (Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012). This subversion gained an increasing amount of space and more people in assemblies that – with all their problems observed – legitimized their constituents, their practices, and their decisions. In other words, assemblies proposed a meaningful democratic institution in which everyone had a space and a say.

As expressed earlier, all the assemblies and meetings were held in walled and sheltered spaces. In a way this is a paradox: only in protected and sheltered realms activists were able to address the public by recreating social bonds and political practices unacknowledged within the public space, not remotely animated by current democracies, and in a context where apparently individuals are not interested in any other individual. But in a more informed and situated observation,

the latter does not come as a paradox but more as a discovery that points to the places and means where in a real setting neoliberalism is counterbalanced to open up the political. It could be said that at this stage nothing was counterbalanced, but certainly there was a growing process of awareness and collective identity (Klandermans and de Weerd, 2000); and a step away from the perception of non-entitlement to a voice (Britt and Heise, 2000), to a position of being able to gather, talk, listen, and discuss the life in common.

Ultimately, these practices were allocated at a juncture where the political history of social movements and the daily life experience of people were not entirely submitted to the threats of neoliberalism, in a place where the most delicate fabric of the human commons seems to be. In these realms of trust, students were able to start breaking a hegemonic political and cultural landscape. In the words of Lukes (2005) the latter meant breaking the dominant power of a political culture (Lukes, 2005) that valued the Chilean education system as a good, technical and unquestionable system and defined non-mainstream political actors as illegitimate for taking part in these sort of discussions. To recognize these realms is to get away from old dichotomies such as the private versus the public (Harvey, 2011), and also to add caution to the claims that the internet is the original space of resistance, as Castells (2012) argued regarding the Egyptian uprising of 2011. In the end, the recognition of these realms allows us to observe the backyards of democracy (Lechner, 1988) as an area where we can not only find 'practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation' (Hardt and Negri, 2011: viii), but where it is possible to be politically significant due the emergence of a human and political commons.

Chapter 5

Embodying the commons: occupying the urban realm

Respirar un futuro esplendor, crea más sentido si lo creamos los dos. Liberarse de todo el pudor, tomar las riendas, no rendirse al opresor, caminar erguido sin temor, respirar y sacar la voz. [To breathe a future glory, makes more sense if it is made by the two of us. Release from all shame, take the reins, do not give up in front of the oppressor, walk upright without fear, breathe and speak out.] 'Sacar la voz' ['Speak out'], song by Ana Tijoux, Chilean hip-hop singer.

Chilean hip-hop singer, Ana Tijoux, released *Sacar la voz* ('Speak Out') a year after the events of 2011. The lyrics and video⁷³ of the song encapsulates part of what this chapter describes and explains – a journey from walled intimacy, to the outside world through activities conducted in urban spaces, requiring the presence of activists in contentious dialogue, outrage, and joy. Large-scale, inclusive, colourful, and delivering a message, these practices served to facilitate activists' inclusion in the process of speaking out in an increasing show of togetherness, whilst acknowledging the power of the 'we' in the process.

People protesting in the streets in front of public buildings, gathering in corners, or distributing leaflets, is not new in the history of social movements or in the most recent expressions of dissent. Protest, say Taylor and Van Dyke, 'is perhaps the fundamental feature that distinguishes social movements from routine political actors' (2004: 263). The reasons the available literature places such emphasis on protests and public displays of dissent is because these activities take mobilizations into the heart of social life (Castells, 2012), because they enable face-to-face networks (Melucci, 1996) between people, previously unknown to one another (della Porta, 2015). In this sense, the presence of people in the streets promotes an environment of mutual support (della Porta, 2015) helping to build

⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAayt5BsEWg>

collective identity (Gecas, 2000). Observed from a commons perspective these two last features – the performative element and the identity component – are highly relevant in the creation of a “we” (Gamson, 2000). However, and as asserted in the previous chapter, the social, political, emotional, cognitive, and relational contexts of social movements should be considered in order to understand any movement’s action: whether discussing the outcome of their actions or the means they use to fight for their targets.

A clear example of the latter can be seen in the difference between the Chilean case and contemporary mobilizations such as those in different cities of Spain, in Tahrir Square at El Cairo, Egypt, or in New York, USA. A central feature of all these cases was the permanent occupation of a central square or key urban centre which served as a symbol and as a headquarters where people, united by common problems, gathered in a transversal, emotional, and political stance (della Porta, 2015). In the Chilean mobilization of 2011 there were never protest camps. The reasons are illustrated and explained later in this chapter but for now it is worth being mindful of the idea that ‘activists adopt strategies and tactics not simply because they have been shown to be effective, but because they resonate with the beliefs, ideas, and cultural frames of meaning people use to make sense of their situation and to legitimate collective action’ (Taylor and Van Dyke, 2004: 276).

With this caution in mind, this chapter presents protests and urban displays of dissent – which I term ‘urban embodiment’ – as a key determining aspect in the case of the Chilean movement’s success. During interviews and focus groups, the respondents of this research labelled these actions as crucial methods in attracting a large and diverse number of people to become involved in the mobilization through creative, friendly, and compelling means, and making that a defining feature of the movement. Activists managed to coordinate their actions across different areas of the cities at different times, with actions aimed at appealing to others not involved in the mobilization, and also to bring disparate activists together. That was the rationale behind taking the protest to the street and holding

face-to-face conversations with random people, in spite of the individualistic 'it's your problem, not mine' culture of Chilean society (Gómez, 2007). It was also the rationale behind *en masse* street action as a way to encourage the country's mainstream institutions to listen to the voice of the people and their terms and conditions.

In avenues, squares, and corners, activists mobilised the intimate politics generated within personal spaces of homes, schools, and universities. Following the idea that 'people need first to be visible before they can be recognized as having voice' (Couldry, 2010: 130), activists fought to be visible using the most basic element they had available to them – their bodies – and in the most accessible common space they had – the streets, corners and squares. By placing their bodies in urban landscapes, activists displayed three types of action in their quest to overcome the lack of voice, space, and entitlement to discuss the life in common. The first of these was face-to-face informative encounters in street markets, buses, shopping malls, or squares. The second type of action involved art interventions, flashmobs, and recovered repertoires including the most joyful expressions of activists in the streets. A third type of practice involved marches and rallies, a core traditional element of mobilizations in Chile, which, in spite of their long history, were reshaped to have a more appealing and overt component.

After reviewing and highlighting the distinctive elements of each of these practices I will argue that they subverted market logics of urban spaces (Harvey, 2012; Stavrides, 2016) through a form of collaborative logic that emerged out of an engaging cohabitation (Euler, 2015), continuously supporting the awareness of being embedded in a political collective. In this sense, these actions carried a feeling of togetherness and a representation of the 'we'.

The creation of a sense of togetherness was advanced through the display of bodies outside of walled and protected spaces, reaching others in a common habitat – the city – through the display of dialogues, memories, emotions, and

celebrations. These actions were instrumental in breaking the logic of neoliberalism in which problems are individual and not collective – therefore resolved individually and not collectively – and in which logics of collaboration and dialogical encounters are scarce in the face of competition logics and the rush of 24/7 (Crary, 2013).

In terms of the representational features of the urban display of bodies, rallies, flashmobs, and marches, students witnessed, first hand, evidence of an aesthetic experience of what they aspired to and what they wanted to express towards political institutions and society as a whole. Increasing numbers of performers represented a ‘we’ in urban daily life landscapes at four levels: at the level of activists; of the people in general; in front of mainstream institutions; and, as an emergent political subject with a distinctive image of the collective ‘we’.

Based both on a sense of togetherness and the representational features of the urban practices, this chapter depicts how people reached out to talk to others, to find others in a realm that those involved in the movement defended as a common domain – the urban space. In these urban performances, the emergent process of commoning that had developed in intimate spaces, reached outwards and found others who, through public political acts of affection, seduction, joy, and presence, showed that in spite of neoliberal democracy it was impossible to deny the peoples’ omnipresence, and impossible to deny the validity of the peoples’ expression.

Face-to-face informative encounters

To trace the path of urban embodied practices, I will proceed from the testimonies of the respondents that made up the smaller groups, to the bigger mass expressions in 2011. In the first group it is possible to trace five activities: leaflet distribution; speeches on public transport (mainly buses); intervention in food courts at shopping malls; collection of food in street markets; and, daily informative stands.

Leaflet distribution is part of the classic repertoire of activism in Chile, and by 2011 it was one of the basic media methods used to distribute information. It was affordable – activists needed only a printer, a copier, and their imagination – and it allowed the rapid production of self-made content. Leaflet distribution was mostly relevant for two reasons: firstly, as a way of reducing the complexity of the message so that people could be presented with the essential facts; and secondly, as a way of ensuring physical presence on the streets and in the spaces of everyday life. Activists took the opportunity to escape the isolation that could occur when they spent their time in occupied schools or faculties. It was, therefore, a way of confirming their embodied existence in the urban space, making them visible and available for people to approach, question, support, to challenge, and (in some cases) to quarrel with.

We argued about how specific our occupations were. We explained to them the cost of educating their sons, in case of having children, versus a free and quality education. And we did that with strangers, with parents, with teachers. And it worked! What worked the most was to talk, get into the personal situation of each person, ask them about their cases, providing help or suggestions about how to deal with their problems. Focus Group 1, Respondent 1.

Public transportation, specifically urban buses, was another place where activists were able to engage in purposeful face-to-face interactions with people commuting to work or simply moving between different urban locations. They targeted those who were not particularly interested in or engaged with political or social affairs. The action consisted of boarding buses (with the permission of the driver) and giving a speech explaining their situation and demands in an intimate and simple way. This performance was only mildly disruptive in the sense that passengers were used to the presence of singers, clowns, and destitute people boarding buses and asking for money. The only difference in this case was that teenagers or young students were the ones occupying the space instead of comedians, salespeople, or beggars: the protesters asked for their attention and modest amounts of money in order to maintain their mobilization. Sometimes they even sold sweets to raise money for the mobilization and they deployed a simple strategy to achieve this: 'We sold candies in the buses and people gave us money in exchange of

'doblones' [low cost cookies popular in Chile]. We explained, we gave all the explanations, so while one was explaining the other passed the sweets on the bus. There were people giving us like a *luca* [thousand pesos]'.

Francisca Villablanca: We were in Baquedano [downtown of Santiago city] coming to an ACES assembly but we arrived too early, so we said 'let's board a bus to sing', to make some money because in the occupation we did not have any at that moment. Inside the bus a classmate that acted as a host said: 'Hi, we are from an occupied school, we are struggling for the education of your children and we need money to sustain the occupation, so if someone has a collaboration...'

Interviewer: *And what did the people say?*

Francisca Villablanca: Some of them said to 'go to study, fucking kids', other people gave us money, and other people did not care. There were mixed reactions, but the people who were against the movement were really closed to listen to any argument. Some of them changed with the conversation but others said 'no, I am not going to listen to you', like angry...but when you talked quietly they began to ease, especially when you began to talk from their reality. Then they began to give in.

A similar form of activity was the presence of activists in shopping malls, where they covertly entered the premises in order to give a speech and distribute leaflets before being evicted by security guards. Shopping malls are privately owned buildings, but today they occupy a central space in the main cities of Chile, blurring the boundaries between public and private spaces. Within shopping malls are large food courts, shops, even universities and, contrary to what happens in other countries, they are mostly located within city centres. In other words, these are spaces in constant flux, mixing workers and others enjoying leisure time. Due to the public affluence of malls, activists used different ways to utilise these spaces without attracting the attention of security guards. For that reason they entered shopping malls in the guise of normal patrons, then sat in the food court and at the sound of a whistle, stood and proceeded to deliver a speech as other members of their group distributed leaflets to the people.

In places like that we delivered information about the educational problem, so we tried to break the logics of routine and let people know we were here and everywhere. I lived that as a student, so the communication was to try to make

distance and then get in and say, 'hey, actually these problems are dragged from a long time ago'. Pablo Flores.

The collection of food from street markets and the collection of money at different points within Chilean cities, were not actions specifically focused on spreading the activists' point of view, but were nonetheless part of the dialogue between the protesters and the citizenry. The practical task of collecting food supplies needed to sustain the occupation of various buildings created a dialogue between local merchants and students. For the most part, the traders were supportive, as were working-class people and those from ordinary backgrounds. From the activists' viewpoint, this kind of contact was also a way of measuring the degree of support the mobilization could expect. It also represented an opportunity to supply first-hand information to local traders and shop owners who would then, spread the word to their friends, families, and customers.

We did a lot of actions, like going to local street markets to distribute leaflets with information and summaries about what the movement was about. We had people at the entrance and exit of the subway distributing information. Some people used symbolic costumes, like costumes of books or currency symbols as a way to create consciousness. Focus group 4, Respondent 2.

We did everything, meetings in street markets with open theatre plays. People got used to seeing weird things, like one of us shouting for something and in the end we conquered our target: they approached and we, somehow, passed the message. Because we did not have media at our service, we had to gain power in those little spaces that we are still able to use and thus get to the neighbour, friend, to the one that is next to you. To those that, even when not directly touched by the problem, is affected anyway. Focus group 3, Respondent 4.

Other activities also occupied the urban space in a dialogical way, for example one-day informative stands in the streets. Placing informative tents and gazebos in the streets, activists focused on occupying one place with music, entertainment, and also information in central points of the cities, using those places as collection points for money, to offer food, and to share comments and opinions with the activists. These day-long activities sought to inform and to break the routine of the urban spaces but also, as per the actions of the activists in charge of communications at Bio Bio University, to 'give testimony of our presence and show

we were everywhere'. The idea of staying for more than a day in the streets or camping in urban spaces, was dismissed due to some unsuccessful prior experiences. There was an attempt to permanently occupy a square in one of the central streets in Valparaíso – following the example of the Indignados movement in Spain – but it was unsuccessful for several reasons. Among these reasons is an historical element: camping has never been in the repertoire of mobilizations in Chile, except in the case of land occupation to build homes for the homeless (Cortés, 2014). Another element is mentioned by Castells in his reference to the 15M movement. 'The possibility for the movement to organize this new polity was materially dependent on the occupation of public space: on the existence of camps that, even if only a small minority would stay overnight...' (Castells, 2012: 134). In the Chilean case – as reviewed in the previous chapter – schools and university buildings served as decision-making points so there was no need, or no reason to suggest the use of a more open space. A third and fourth explanation was given by the students: the third was the fast action of police forces to evict any type of permanent and unauthorized occupation of urban spaces, while the fourth reason was the lack of non-activist support for this type of action. Sebastián Farfán recalled their sole attempt to occupy a square in the city of Valparaíso as being a categorical disaster. Unfortunately, he and his fellow activists realised too late. The Indignados-style occupation ended with violent clashes between police officers and students. Instead of winning people over to their cause, they observed that the direct opposite had occurred, as the citizens and students failed to understand the rationale behind the camp.

What we tried to do here in Valparaíso was... in Spain there was this movement of tents and the Indignados, but that did not work here and, even worse, it went in the complete opposite direction because we tried to camp in a square, you know? But the police were there and it went completely to the other side. We clashed violently with the police... with the police it really was a mess. People observing this did not understand a thing. It went out of control. We ended in a collision with the cops and no one understood the message that we were trying to give.
Sebastián Farfán.

Art interventions, flashmobs and recovered repertoires

According to the memories recalled by the respondents of this research there was a general agreement to exercise a more inclusive approach. It was also agreed that this inclusiveness should begin at the earliest opportunity when the activities were in the planning stages. The fundamental ethos was to get people involved in a more 'friendly' way, stressing participation and grassroots initiatives rather than imposing any particular approach upon their supporters. As José Soto reflected on this topic, students were aware that 'we can't keep calling the same people' – in reference to left wing activists or sympathizers – so they devised other means to gather a larger, more diverse body of people. This observation also implied there had been some reflection on the aesthetic methods used by previous mobilizations and the ways in which people reacted to the various symbols, discourses, and rhythms of protest already witnessed in past demonstrations. In this sense, students realized that '[1960's] aesthetic was making the average Chilean person scared and have a feeling of fear' (Cristian Inostroza). Consequently the outcome of this reflective process was an agreement to create a new set of public expressions, but not to refrain from the use of urban spaces as they believed these were the best places to convey public appeals and to challenge institutional power as a collective. Three types of action can be identified, which encapsulate this attitude towards the use of urban space.

Art interventions

Comprising of students mainly from Santiago and coming from various art careers, such as visual arts, drama, dance, and filmmaking, the Art Students Assembly (AEEA) developed several art interventions during 2011. United by their determination to take part in the protest events, they designed actions intended to disrupt the normal flux of the city. Their efforts were designed to challenge pedestrians using interventions which expressed dissatisfaction with political and economic power, but to avoid the aesthetic forms previously used by art activists

during Chilean mobilizations. The students were specifically wary of using colours and iconic imagery associated with 20th-century left-wing movements, since these might discourage people from approaching them and appreciating their performances.



'Enslaved by the media', art intervention

All of the actions of the AEEA took place in urban public spaces and were carefully designed from beginning to end. The creation process involved long meetings to decide upon the course of action, the purpose and reasons for the intervention, and its structure, involving different political and aesthetic points of view which reflected the congregation of varied disciplines within the group. One of the AEEA art interventions during 2011 was called 'Enslaved by the media'⁷⁴ and was directed at what they understood to be people's dependence on television owned by private companies as a source of entertainment and information. The act took place one morning in the middle of Ahumada Boulevard, the busiest boulevard in the centre of Santiago City:

When we did this thing of dragging TVs with our hoods, when it finished, we began to realise that we were doing art or something like that, because people came close and asked us 'what does this mean?' With some desperation of knowing what we had to say, and we had someone in charge of answering, because we were so immersed in our action. But the one in charge of responding said to them 'madam, you think what you want, look at the tellies we are

⁷⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DuWFIJZCVE>

dragging'. He tried to open their minds instead of closing their minds with an answer. We wanted the people to have a reflection. Cristian Inostroza.

The strategy and preparation of urban art interventions sought purposefully to address only some pieces of the puzzle, using an artistic language and the streets as a canvas. By the activists' own account, their actions were successful as long as they were aware – with the number of people attending the rallies and marches, in their daily exposure to urban spaces, in media reactions, and in surveys and polls – of the impact upon those people who bore the consequences of their actions in the way they would have anticipated: re-observing the problems of the Chilean economic model and its consequences. Although the activists acknowledged and welcomed the crowds of people who witnessed their interventions, they were also well aware of the limited quantitative impact that their actions could achieve. That is why for every action planned they called upon the mainstream media to cover the event and it was why, at the end of each intervention, footage was uploaded to YouTube and disseminated through Facebook accounts. The rationale behind these measures was to distribute their message across as many platforms as possible; not only to draw general attention to the deep penetration of neoliberalism into the lives of the Chilean people, but also to disseminate models of activity to other activists.

This action was conveyed by the same conveners of the activity and was observed by some students' representatives to be highly relevant because of its uniqueness and positive message that could support the movement's attempts at a mainstream media strategy (that will be explained in the next chapter). As Francisco Figueroa, vice-president of Universidad de Chile Students Federation, commented: 'There was a special focus on creative expressions within the mobilization no matter if these expressions did not come from the leaders of the movement. These expressions were super spontaneous and some of us had a high interest that these creative forms got media coverage.'

Flashmobs

Regarded by many activists as the most original, non-hierarchical and spontaneous form of expressive performance used during the 2011 mobilization, flashmobs and urban interventions took place in different cities around the country. The common element in these actions was the gathering of hundreds of people in urban public spaces, allowing anyone to take part in open performances. These were original, eye-catching, popular performances that provided entertainment for both observers and participants, coordinated by groups that issued open calls via Facebook and by word of mouth.

Five flashmobs illustrate this practice. In the 'Thriller for Chilean education' (held on 24 June 2011), hundreds of people danced to Michael Jackson's song 'Thriller' next to the government palace (known as La Moneda) in the city of Santiago. The intention was to portray how broken and dead national education provision had become through the bodies of those who had died trying to pay off the loans they had incurred to cover the cost of their tuition fees. The point of this choreography was to employ a theatrical approach to reach out to people who were not involved in the actual mobilization. The open call on the Facebook page of the event clearly expressed the motivations for creating that type of action.

The target of this event is to give a communicational hit and, at the same time, expose our demands in a different way towards citizenry (...). By choosing 'Thriller' we want to give the message that in spite of the dying Chilean education, and the fact that we are kept like zombies under an education and social system without the right to reply, we the zombies are not going to stay with our arms crossed and, if it is needed, we will revive and will get to La Moneda to be heard and rescue public education. Open call for 'Thriller for Chilean education'.⁷⁵

Another action, on July 6th was called 'Besatón'. It consisted of the gathering of people in the main public square of Santiago, kissing each other in a manner through which they could call attention to their claim through a message of love and care, thus confronting the violent image that part of the media was ascribing to

⁷⁵ <https://es-la.facebook.com/events/231077386917785>

them. A similar action was the 'Collective suicide for education'⁷⁶, on 28 June 2011 in the cities of Santiago and Valparaíso. The action consisted of activists committing fake suicides with a rope, a gun, or other tool in urban places with a poster on their chest, expressing the reason why they had committed suicide and remaining 'dead' for fifteen minutes. That length of time was agreed upon to allow sufficient time for people to walk amongst the dead bodies, read their posters, and get involved in the experience. According to the comments posted on the events threads on Facebook, the feeling among the students was of joy, of success in conveying their actions in a positive and peaceful way, and of pride and satisfaction for participating in a common quest for change.

There were spontaneous things on the bases that allowed turning the tables on an almost symbolic and emotional level in Chilean masses. I believe that a key issue was 'The Thriller for Education', a spontaneous initiative that allowed the guys to engage with people in the house that said 'hey, they are really creative, let's hear what they're saying... ah, free education', so that remained. And they began to replicate these efforts throughout Chile. Sometimes I was in the office of the union and listened: tomorrow there will be a 'Kissathon' and I thought: How is this going to work? But one day after, hundreds were kissing in the street. People who were passing by laughed at this... but, yes, these were ways to empathize socially every week. Sebastián Farfán.

Especially appealing to the large number of Japanese animation fans – very popular in Chile since the 1980's through to the present⁷⁷ – was a fourth gathering called 'Genkidama⁷⁸ for Chilean Education'. This was a march held in ten Chilean cities, all of them ending in main squares, where participative radio dramas began telling the story of 'Dragon Ball Z' warriors defending Chilean education. The dubbed voices of these popular characters (interpreted by the original Mexican actors who provided the Spanish voices for Latin America) emitting through the speakers, supporting the fight of Chilean students and demanding the strength and unity of Chileans to create a superpower ball against their enemies⁷⁹. Just as in the animated series, with a narrative of good and bad characters and with the excitement of people involved in the performance, a Genkidama – a huge ball, a

⁷⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi_nR7MHcJk

⁷⁷ <http://www.revistarevolver.cl/living/manga-style-craze-japanese-anime-chile>

⁷⁸ <http://thedaooofdragonball.com/blog/martial-arts/the-genki-dama-explained>

⁷⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AXDKDxInEU>

symbol of the strength and power of the good guys in *Dragon Ball Z*, made of wood and fabric in this case – appeared on top of the people gathered in the crowded square, anticipating the final triumph of the students.⁸⁰



'The Genkidama for Chilean education' in Santiago.

There was a fifth performance which was lengthier and different in nature to those mentioned earlier – '1800 hours for Chilean education'. This performance was created and named in relation to the amount of money the movement asserted the state should inject into the education system to provide good quality free education, according to studies the students utilised for the occasion. It consisted of a relay run around the house of government that lasted for 1800 hours. This meant that day and night young people and adults ran brandishing a flag, calling attention from people passing by, employees of the building, and the media. There was a tent next to the house of government where anyone who wanted to take part could book a turn to run⁸¹. The activity finished with a round of people holding hands around the house of government, dancing and singing⁸².

It is evident from the comments and testimonies of every single participant of this research, these actions signified to them the feeling of living in common: those

⁸⁰ Video available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5v9uqPlpwl>

⁸¹ The documentary "El Vals de los Inútiles" [The Waltz of the Useless] portrays this flashmob from the experience of two people in the context of 2011's events:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vWWN68Jfmo>

⁸² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fG2-55FH7k4>

suffering, mobilizing for change, and, to an important extent, people as the physical collective rising up to claim change in their lives and in the lives of those to come. These actions allowed face-to-face networks (Melucci, 1996), they were made by people previously strangers to each other (della Porta, 2015), and they enacted a performance of care and mutual support (della Porta 2015). In this sense, while these actions did not serve to prefigure a politics of the commons in a practical way – as in the case of assemblies – they figured an experience of the ‘we’, subverting physically what Gómez calls the ‘it’s your problem, not mine’ feature of neoliberalism in Chile (Gómez, 2007). Considering that – following Johnston and Klandermans (2003) – ‘social movements are not just shaped by culture; they also shape and reshape it’ (9) this subversion appears as a key element to break a foundation of neoliberal culture by experiencing the embodiment of a ‘we’ and, in the end, another way to conceive of life in common.

Recovered repertoires

During the 1970’s, right-wing opponents of left-wing Chilean president, Salvador Allende, rallied against his administration, taking to the streets pots and pans that they struck with wooden spoons or other kitchen implements, and claiming that food stores had insufficient products to feed their families. In the 1980’s, these devices were used again, but by General Augusto Pinochet’s adversaries, when thousands of families faced genuine starvation and poverty. In 2011, the old technique reappeared again. It began on the evening of 4 August 2011, after a clash between police and protesters across the main cities of Chile. This conflict was caused when the government attempted to prevent people marching, whilst the students were resolute in their determination to protest, despite the state’s edict. With the most prominent towns placed under a state of siege, people went to the streets, gathering in little squares, corners, and even on their balconies to bang pots and pans for several minutes in what became, that year, a forceful expression of citizen discontent⁸³.

⁸³ <https://vimeo.com/27327649>

The lived experience in the pot-banging gatherings was a mixture of surprise and joy for those meeting with people who were part of a daily landscape – acquaintances, neighbours – but whose daily life was not part of any particular bond. The perception of pot and pan banging in the street was of a sensitive disclosure, of awareness that neighbours from the same quarter had a common strain and were open to standing with others to share and publically show their discontent. Tired of being spectators of a perceived problem, pot-banging meetings spread all over the country in different quarters, squares, and streets where the activists who now emerged were new faces rather than the usual ones. It was time for families and workers to go out at the end of a working day, and to make a sound when the silence of the night fell, thus contributing to the collective expression of the people.

I live in Belloto [a zone in the commune of Quilpué, near the city of Valparaíso]. I was at home and began to hear around 9pm the noise of pots. And I thought that in my neighbourhood nothing was happening. So I got excited and went out to bang pots with my neighbours. That went on through a whole week and every time more people gathered. Once a band from a nearby school arrived, so we made a lot of noise and we went on walking the streets. Focus Group 3, Respondent 1.

...the pot and pan banging, the most gratifying moment of 2011. It was really nice when along the blocks neighbours were gathering. After that there were marches within the neighbourhoods. That triggered that on Sundays there were debates in the square next to where I live. There were also common pots for meals. My experience in the family and the neighbourhood was highly gratifying. At my home there was not resentment with any time of Chile's history but that phrase 'we do not talk about politics at the table' was broken. For the first time we were talking about politics thanks to the student movement. Student during focus group. Focus Group 4, Respondent 5

A final element – which never entirely left the urban landscape – was banners on walls. Emblems of the fight against dictatorship, these banners were painted rolls of paper with short sentences summarizing messages directed at the government, or even to the people. Sometimes funny, sometimes serious, sometimes bitter, these banners were strategically located in points of the city with a high flux of cars and buses, thus ensuring they were accessible to a large proportion of the

population. In this mobilization, these banners appeared again, enabling students to have their words displayed on the walls of the city by appealing to passers-by without the need for physical presence. In this way, while protesters were not physically located on the streets, the unavoidable material presence of posters and banners reemphasized the idea that the movement was everywhere.

Marches and rallies

Between the beginning and the end of the 2011 mobilizations, more than fifteen national marches took place in various Chilean cities. All of them took place in response to national calls and, after the first of these events on 12th May, it was noticeable that an increasing number of people were in attendance⁸⁴. Becoming the most common way for social movements in Chile to express their dissent, the 2011 marches revealed some distinctive features that demonstrated both continuity with, and departures from, past practices.

Firstly, in 2011, there were more national marches than in any other year since 1990; secondly, every single march had a clear design and intention, with titles that expressed the general message of the march. For example the march on 12th May, was given the motto 'There is no future without public and quality education'. Thirdly, marches changed from being funeral in style, to livelier festival-style expressions, including dance, performance, plays, floats, jugglers, and art interventions, making the march a place of joy and not fear. Fourthly, families took part in the marches, from grandparents with canes to children in pushchairs; and finally, these were the biggest marches since the return of democracy in 1990. The marches of 2011 were considered a key factor in the mobilization because of their structure, colours, and boldness, and also because they carried a unified voice as a social body.

⁸⁴ The news website El Mostrador described this march as a 'forceful student demonstration on the eve of May 21th', because of its high and heterogeneous attendance ("Contudente"). May 21th is the day of the annual State of the Nation ceremony hold at the National Congress, in the city of Valparaíso.



March during 2011 in Santiago

Marches were a constant activity during the mobilization period, held nationally and simultaneously in different cities. This hectic rhythm implied the application of a great deal of coordination and the use of specific skills on both a national and local level: coordination including decision-making at national level; information being distributed to each region; coordination of the conveners with local administrations and police officers to seek permission from and to establish which roads the crowds would use.

This coordination also included a general national brand design for advertisements, banners, posters, and all web and printed material that was distributed to regional universities, ready to be modified by local activists with the right information about the march in every city and town. This frenetic task included open calls for the marches through every possible media platform (from Facebook, to street banners, posters, to national press). The students in charge of media and communications played a role in printing, distributing, and pasting posters on walls, as well as painting banners for the same reasons. Other tasks included lifting stages, and security and sound systems, due to every march ending with a concert which included performances from musicians, dancers, and speeches. In general, the marches demonstrated that the activists were a cohesive, coordinated, and responsive group.

This cohesiveness was also reflected in terms of the message being delivered. In contrast to what had happened years before, and catalysed both by the number of rallies that took place between May and October and the activists' diagnosis of the media and political landscape, every march was deliberately structured to have a

particular tone and sustain a consistent general statement. As Sebastian Vicencio, president of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, expressed in one of the interviews, 'the march is absolutely planned. From the moment when you ask for the use of the public space and you say to the authorities 'the march will have these features, it is going to feature this amount of people, and we guarantee order from the start until the end.'

But this order was also a frame within which participants in the marches of 2011 introduced a joyful, colourful, and innovative dimension, transforming the marches into a spirit of popular carnival: painted bodies, music companies, jugglers, short plays, floats, and expressive banners appeared in a previously unprecedented style. The old style of marches, with a crowd of people slowly walking and voicing slogans with a heavy component of anger, sadness, and indignation, was transformed into long roads of cheering and other creative protest methods through which indignation, criticism, and commitment to the need for, and possibility of, changes was portrayed.

(The marches) gave a different tone to the mobilizations of 2011 that did not have the mobilizations of 2008 or 2006. The marches gave a different tone and flavour to people, taking away the stigma of outrage and Molotov cocktails, the stigma of the usual hooded guys who go to marches just to rip everything, by giving them a nice view of the march, and a socio-educative message in a practical way. Bastian Alarcón.

It was a party; it was not grey but colourful and plenty of everything. You walked along the march and see kids with posters, with their families. On the other side people in costumes, people dancing around. It was a catharsis, a release. It was very joyful to participate in the mobilization. See how it was unfolding, how it was going on. Focus Group 2, Respondent 1.

The march had floats, there was a huge flag passing by on top of the people, it had thousands of expressions saying 'we are alive'. For so long they tried to keep us sleeping, scared in this sort of freedom we live. But the main element of 2011 was the understanding that our freedom could be used not only for buying things but for the changes we really wanted. Dafne Concha.

The activists regarded the large-scale and transversal character of the marches as vitally important because it was the only time the movement could express – as

activist Francisco Figueroa put it in one of the interviews for his research – as a ‘collective voice’ showing the amount of support they had garnered. In terms of the message being directed at the state, the media, the general public, and also to the activists themselves, the scale of the marches assisted them in reinforcing their position. Students considered the popular support as a vivid expression of how alive the movement was. In the activists’ opinion, everything they protested for could be denied were it not for the number of people on the streets. Successive marches, called at short notice, held nationally, and with the highest number of people since the recovery of democracy, was a key factor since for them this implied that their voice was unified and loud.

It was transcendental [the march] because it was the space where you showed your strength. The amount of people you could put in the street was the strength that you had when sitting with the government to talk or to negotiate in a conversation. Having 150 or 200 thousand, or a million people like in O’Higgins Park...of course something like that marked an important hit that kicked the table not only to the government but also to members of the parliament, accustomed to their comfortable seats, forcing them – one way or another – to pronounce on the matter. So there we showed our strength, our force, the march was the most important moment of the mobilization, it was the biggest, the most visible. Moisés Paredes.

Performing the commons or the act of commoning: a genuine social and political media.

Until this social movement came into being the urban had been conceived as a place where the normal flux of the city should not be disrupted, conforming to neoliberal guidelines (Gómez, 2010; Harvey, 2012; Ornelas, 2000). But in the Chile of 2011 the urban space was vindicated as a collective arena for participation, encounter, and protest. Thus, the old streets, corners, squares, and avenues became spaces for mediation and mobilization for students, workers, their families, neighbours, and friends. The latter leads me to assert that in the mobilisation of 2011, the urban space and the mediations within it fostered by the citizenry were not only a genuine social media (contrary to digital social media) but a meaningful political media, as long as it was a place where the people embodied a collective

process of *politicisation* that was widespread, dialogical, symbolic and open (unlike the intimate shelters analyzed in the previous chapter).

The urban space nests different elements of social movement activity. Firstly, number and ubiquity. As Tilly and Wood (2009) state, numbers are relevant and in this case they were important. The marches of 2011 were the biggest since the recovery of democracy⁸⁵ and for this social movement, it was a key factor in their intention to disrupt the status quo. Secondly, they were different. They were appealing to a general population and they were urban parties rather than funeral marches of pain or anger – a screaming together emboldening a collective and hopeful power-to change the state of Chilean education, in Holloway's terms (2002). Thirdly, activists perceived they were being listened to through these activities; they observed the effect on the number of people involved on a daily basis in the mobilization (including a diverse range of people, so they saw this method as effective) and as having an effect on the way in which the government and the parliament reacted, inviting them to sustain conversations and acknowledging – to varying degrees – the points raised by the students. Finally, participation within urban spaces involved the old collective mobilization but also a form of networked participation that allowed an effective autonomy with an inherent sense of power.

This positive side of the picture also involves a less positive aspect. This relates to the peculiarity of the Chilean case. As discussed in the first two chapters of this thesis, in Chilean democracy, going to the streets in protest has historically been a last resort. History shows that the long-term misrecognition of the subaltern,

⁸⁵ National and international news reports highlighted the massiveness of movements' demonstrations. In June, marches were already considered the largest since the recovery of democracy in Chile: <http://diario.latercera.com/2011/06/17/01/contenido/pais/31-72979-9-marcha-de-80-mil-personas-se-vuelve-la-mas-masiva-en-21-anos.shtml>. International media like the BBC (http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2011/08/110809_chile_estudiantes_2_vs.shtml) also underlined the great support of rallies and marches, calling them 'the most massive since the return of democracy, three decades ago'.

combined with the consequences of neoliberalism, left no alternative other than to fight for acknowledgement of a common human territory through the presence of bodies, of appealing to the other in the performance of everyday life with its hopes, dreams, efforts, and sacrifices. As Urzúa states, referring to the student mobilization of 2011, in marches and flashmobs 'diverse voices emerged to physically denounce the marketization of their lives' (2015: 60)

But this space – not the materiality of the street, but its placement as a location for a growing commons – had to be created, and the type of relationships within it had to be pursued. Marches and interventions such as flashmobs and art performances were steered in this direction through two types of action: Firstly, making people aware of the rationale for the protest and encouraging them to join the cause; and secondly, as an undeniable expression of power, expressing a presence that was both embodied and representational with one simple claim – to be heard as a body, be visible as a body, and be part of something bigger than the individual, but without dismissing the individual.

Personally, before 2001, listening pot and pan banging made me imagine right-wing people of the 'Unidad Popular' times complaining for the shortages. But in 2011 the pot and pan banging was a symbol. Here there was a space for the people. This might not be useful for a thing but listening a hundred or a thousand pots changes the scene. I lived in 'La Reina' village, in front of the Army's hospital and people in front of the hospital banging their pots gave citizen's legitimacy to the movement. That people were not going to go to a march or take part in an assembly but they gave moral support, despite the hard repression during August. That was unseen since dictatorship times...Pot and pan banging allowed other sectors of the population to join the movement. Not everyone had the chance of going to marches in the daytime. So, during night, people that worked or studied in other times of the day joined by showing empathy towards the movement. Symbolically that had tremendous value. Focus Group 4, Respondent 3

Presence and the (re)creation of togetherness

We can observe that in the process of mobilization, a central element was the sense of living embedded in collectivity, in realms where everyone was affected by policies and structures that were impossible to contest singlehandedly. The

neoliberal response for personal problems, which were regarded as consumer issues, seemed unable to deal with problems exceeding the domestic troubles of national education and the range of solutions provided by customer services.

This deadlock was approached with a public display stating that the problem of Chilean education was impossible to resolve by individual isolated action or by the toolbox solutions of neoliberal democracy. Even when a wealthy family or people in a comfortable financial position could have actually paid the high fees for their children's education, the problem remained that it was affecting the whole of society, no matter if the individuals were in a position to provide a particular education for their children.

Once this situation was revealed as a problem for the activists and increasingly for their families, friends, and close circles, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the extension of awareness about the problem became real. But this awareness had a lack of publicity, using the word in Habermasian terms (Habermas, 1992) – referring to becoming public. With a particular consciousness about the media's biased coverage on aspects regarding criticism of neoliberalism and social movements, activists used the most elemental means to convey their message – their bodies – generating through their action, necessary frames of time and space (Barassi, 2015) for communicative practices expressing their discontent.

Located in, and moving around, the urban landscapes of daily life, the body worked as a non-functional artefact for the economy – since in the streets the body was not a worker, a consumer, a passenger, or a breadwinner – as long as it was not appealing to others in exchange for values or goods, producing anything for the economy, nor complying with the role of consumer. The body on the street was a performative expression of people's denial to obey the disciplinary power (Foucault, 1991) of consumption, credit and debt (Gómez, 2010). Unveiled of their value as an element within a chain production, bodies were also unveiled of an immediate individualistic interest, carrying instead a desire for the achievement of

something for everybody expressed in the embodied experience of being with others (Dardot and Laval, 2014).

There were different ways of displaying the body in the urban realm. One of them was through the presence of activists in different areas of Chilean cities at different times. Here, just as in the previous chapter, there were personal encounters, but with the peculiarity that these encounters were not held in the intimacy of the home, or with relatives or friends. Activists approached people they had not known beforehand, establishing conversations with others, complete strangers inhabiting a space and life that the respondents of this research underlined as collective, shared, concerning everyone, and impossible to refrain from. The supportive environment (della Porta, 2015) was made by men and women stopping other men and women in the street to talk about a situation posed as an issue applicable to everyone and being open to receive queries and responding to doubts from people passing by.

Thus, the impact of the break with or 'cut' from individualism was doubly felt. Firstly in terms of a general problem affecting everyone and unresolvable by one person, breaking individualism as a way to solve the trouble even if a family could pay for the education of their children. Secondly, challenging an individualistic way of living in cities where talking to an unknown person appeared to be something more discouraged than encouraged – specifically in the context of Latin America where fear is a basic component of people's perception towards their lives in urban centres (Reguillo, 2000, 2012).

This space of encounter between the privatized lives and bodies in the public arena, whether through personal meetings, flashmobs, marches, or demonstrations, highlights that the performative act – over the specific content that could be welcomed, rejected, or ignored – was meaningful and crucial for the expectations of the movement. It was meaningful because it was based on them. They were part of a commoning process from their subjectivity, not in spite of it, as it is possible to see in the different expressions in the street: from running around

the house of government to the use of Japanese animation for protest. In this sense, as Stavrides says, the expanding process of commoning 'involves specific and characteristic processes of subjectivication. It constantly invites 'newcomers' and thus transforms the community from which commoning radiates as well as those who are not simply attracted by and integrated into it but who essentially become co-producers of a modified common world' (2016: 50).

And it was crucial because through a common resource, their bodies, activists prefigured what could be the foundation of a political commons by clearly expressing what they care about and how they saw their place in the world (Jasper, 2007). For the activists, their placement in the street, the dialogue, the exchange of opinions, the perception of being in face-to-face networks (Melucci, 1996) displayed on a large scale an expression of a construction of the political that was meaningful, not alien to their lives. And it was going to be more meaningful because it had a representational component.

Representing the 'we': the power of commoning

In their long-term study of social movements, Tilly and Wood identified three components of the unity, public nature, and representational aspect of social movements. These components involved a) an 'organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities' (2009: 3); b) a classic repertoire comprising public gatherings, processions, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, and leaflet distribution, amongst others; and c) representations combining expressions of what they call 'WUNC' displays – worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.

Acknowledging Tilly and Wood's central elements of social movements, it is interesting to discover that in the Chilean case this set of practices contributed to the act of commoning – understood as 'commonly engaging in an activity' (Euler, 2015: 5) – involving performativity and representation amongst the ones engaged in the mobilization in relation to issues of power and representation of a possible

common 'we'.

Amongst the activists as mentioned above, every action was produced along with others, physically: hand in hand, sharing the space or singing the same songs. Activists were increasingly acknowledging the power that this performance – and the specific mood and aesthetics of it – was engendering amongst them and in their commitment to achieving their objectives. Reflecting on this issue, Camilo Ballesteros underlined that 'what this mobilization shows is that people preferred joy. Every time when joy was the main actor we succeeded in carnivals or in marches. So people, I think, like more the joyful side than the violent one. People preferred the flowers than the Tasmanian Devil'.

Those involved in the movement were also aware of the impact upon the public, implied by their actions. From their usual condition of life as students, workers, or pedestrians, they became citizens occupying streets, intervening in the normal order of life and their position in society, with a great amount of success. They experienced being listened to and being asked. They went from a personal and private malaise to a public and shared display of their turmoil. They found satisfaction in this life in common, in the shared emotions, and felt happiness that these were meaningful acts in their communes, cities, and regions and throughout the country. In these practices there was a shift from previous mobilizations. In this case there was not a person or a party held as ultimately responsible for the situation of Chilean education as there had been during Pinochet's dictatorship. The enemy posed by the movement was the neoliberal economy and the politicians – from left, to right-wing – whose actions had led to the state of Chilean education by 2011, including Chile's president at that moment - ministers as well as former presidents. An example of the latter is 'Genkidama for Chilean Education', where the story told by the characters of 'Dragon Ball Z' was focused on defeating profit-driven education and giving the same quality education for every Chilean citizen, no matter what their family income.

In broadening the appeal from a reduced group of people – one comprising activists and some of their families and close circles – to a larger number of people, there was always a non-violent approach. There was generally an open invitation allowing people to take part in a range of positions and in many different ways. The multiple sites of protest were diffusing the mobilization across Chile and growing the number of those who felt part of a bigger and broader common cause. A relevant point is that in the claiming of urban space as something that belongs to everyone, other kinds of rhetoric beyond that of neoliberal productivity, could exist and be given legitimacy. This act involved a tension concerning what was permitted, and involved realizing that in the display of their bodies in different urban locations people were experiencing its common condition as subjects with rights.

In this particular element it is possible to observe a difference between the Chilean movement of 2011 and reports from other movements that same year, such as the Occupy movement in different cities in the United States, and the Indignados movement in Spain. According to David Graeber (2013), in the US the occupations were held in certain public squares or in specific business centres, and in Spain they were held in the main squares of the principal cities (Castells, 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014). In the Chilean case, the occupations were more extensive – geographically and temporally – and did not concentrate on one particular point (Urzúa, 2015), as there were hundreds of schools and universities occupied, and there were no settlements in the style of Indignados as we have seen in this chapter. Instead of being in one centre, activists were present at different points simultaneously and also at different times; from acts close to the house of government, to the National Congress, as well as in main city squares and in any given corner throughout the streets of Chilean cities.

There are many reasons why some means of protest were successful in certain places whilst others were not, but what seems to emerge from this difference is the aforementioned specificity of contexts. Using Mouffe's terminology, while in Occupy, Indignados and the Chilean movement it is possible to observe an enemy

beyond the immediate control of society (neoliberal economy) and an adversary encapsulated in a little group of people (the political system), in the Chilean case there was a third adversary: the obsolescence of the 'we' as a political power, and the voice of the people as something illegitimate and invalid outside of the mainstream political means to validate people's point of view, such as votes and surveys. Thus, while in other regions of the world the motto 'We are the 99%' became an emblem of particular settlements, in Chile the idea behind that motto was vividly experienced in actions placed in several urban spaces – from central to peripheral squares – and with a varied range of styles – from marches in downtown areas to local pots and pans meetings – as if every corner of the city was occupied by citizens poised and ready to act. The participant omnipresence of the movement in the urban realm contributed – from a perspective focused on political commons – to a bodily experienced performance that seemed vaster and more rooted in daily life than the symbolic or functional occupation of a specific place in the city.

And here, simultaneous marches, demonstrations, and the constant presence of bodies in the urban space allowed this emerging togetherness to acquire a sense of being in common (Dardot and Laval, 2014) as a human wave permanently facing the institutional expressions of mainstream political power. And the most interesting thing was that in the perception of those mobilized there was a clear voice constructed with different rhythms, colours, origins, and commitments, making the activists feel that the increasing number of people, of commitment and joy, was reaping results – not in direct measures, but in terms of political recognition.

Streets were not only to march. Those public spaces were to dispute ideas. We went to the squares with posters, we made open air lectures, people saw us, talked to us, we explained them what our demands were. We went to shopping malls, to supermarkets distributing leaflets; we occupied political parties' headquarters, the offices of the Ministry of Education. I think our main achievement was to be displayed in the urban space day after day and make evident for the normal people using the public transport or walking in the street – originally indifferent to this matter – that there was a problem. At some point 80%

of the people was in favour of this movement and not trusting what the government was saying. Sebastián Vicencio.

Thus, a final element of the contribution of these practices involves the representation of a possible 'we'. Even when all publicly embodied practices had a performative and representational aspect, it is the second element that anchors the idea of the commons as the main message in the specific context of the 2011 mobilization. The body, the columns of people, the people in the street, breaking normal life with joy, was an image and an idea manifested through varied means in the collective, that rendered a picture of togetherness, of belonging. Here, their observation and conversation about marches, the self-representation of marches on the web, the pictures showing the mass scale in the media, and the acknowledgement of the marches from the state, contributed both to the awareness of their size, their observation as a growing commons, and their political agency as a common body with voice.

Conclusion

The set of practices referred to in this research as 'urban embodiment' contributed to moving the knitted trust from the protected walls of schools and homes to the urban realm. In this process the intimate became public, occupying mainstream and daily living spaces but subverting their normal use. In this sense, this urban occupation released streets and bodies from their biopolitical condition (Agamben, 1998) and their neoliberal punishment (the suppression of joy, pleasure, and traffic). In this rupture, the act of commoning was an invitation to those who wanted to participate in making their voices heard (Carpentier, 2011; Dahlgren, 2013) and an act of 'production, reproduction, cultivation, and care' (Euler, 2015) of an arena appropriated for that purpose. And it was not unidirectional or vertical – far from what Freire (1996) termed as the 'banking concept of education'. It was made by connections constantly evolving, forming disagreements, agreements, and sharing conditions for its existence. Thus the streets might have been places where those disagreeing with the state of affairs fought for a change of policies, but they were

most importantly places in which the political was embodied in a media – the streets, squares, and avenues – enacted by communicative practices that followed a commons ethos.

The urban realm thus appears in this chapter as an arena opened up by people embodying collaborative relations which permitted them to give an account of the self and, in doing so, speak to a political adversary. Understanding the communicative potential of the urban realm as a social and political media on its varied placements – rather than focused in specific places, like in the aforementioned Occupy or 15M (Castells, 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014) – gives light to more spread and inclusive chances to redefine the political. The latter because participation does not happen just in one place – like camps – and because allows the inclusion of more people than the hardcore activist. On this sense, the Chilean case connects with the idea of taking political action from our more common resources and to subvert our daily life landscapes with commoning practices.

However, the opening up of a space and speaking to an adversary had limitations. The first limitation is one familiar to contentious movements: the fact that this type of practice will always be momentary; it will always rely on the specific experience; and, in practical terms, it will take a considerable effort to sustain that kind of performance and be successful in each endeavour (della Porta and Diani, 2006; Gerbaudo, 2012). The second limitation comes from the reduced scope of marches, rallies, and demonstrations. Even when they were the largest demonstrations since the recovery of democracy in 1990 and were placed in several points across the cities, still its scope was reduced when compared to the reach of mainstream media.

At the junction of these two limitations it is possible to locate the need for the movement to move and root that representation on the terms of the movement as far as possible in space and time. Because while memories, pictures, stories,

news, and footage were going to flow through different channels – at a private level, in groups, at school and at work – the media was regarded by the students as the most pervasive and powerful news-teller and reality-framer. So if they wanted to take the representation of ‘us’ to a national level and dispute the story that the media was going to tell, they had to ensure the matter was dealt with. The strategic creation of a narrative will be discussed as a topic in the next chapter in which I will manifest that through a media-based action, the movement tried to shape an imagined commons.

Chapter 6

Imagining the commons: articulating 'us' in mainstream media

We never fell into childish ideological behaviours. I mean, it was essential for us to know that the bourgeois press is bourgeois and nobody discusses it, but sadly it was the only press with a massive reach in this country. Therefore if you withdraw from the media's game you will withdraw from public exposure for life.

Alfredo Vielma

We discussed a lot, but finally the idea about the relevance of having a communication policy remained, assuming that media builds reality and that if you decided not to get involved in it you were going to lose. So we were really dedicated in building a discourse, in sharpening the discourse of our representatives, in deciding around what and how to confront our adversary.

Cristián Inostroza

As previously mentioned in earlier passages of this research, in the preamble to 2011, students had acquired knowledge of activism and media labour from their previous experiences of old mobilization processes. This progressive knowledge within Chile's younger generations as well as the country's political circumstances – it was the second year of the first right-wing administration since Pinochet's era – formed the movement of 2011's approach to the public realm and foregrounded the importance of dealing with mainstream media. In spite of considering it an adversary, the Chilean student movement did not reject or avoid the media, but instead resolved to deal with it strategically. And even when the work of the media relied mostly on the higher organizational bodies of the movement – students' unions, federations, representatives of assemblies – agreement also existed across and within grassroots activists. The two quotes at the top of this page come from high-school and university students belonging to organizations with anarchical structures and horizontal decision-making processes.

The reason for the strategic approach to dealing with the media was due to a belief

in its privileged role in framing reality. Surveys of media consumption in Chile⁸⁶ (Azócar, Scherman, Arriagada and Feedback, 2010), and the perceptions of the activists, supported the view that mainstream media was the main purveyor of news concerning the events of the country. As Javiera Vallejo expressed in one of the interviews undertaken for this research: 'we live in a hyper-mediatized society and generally people are highly ignorant; they are not people who ask questions and read, they are guided by media summaries or, even worse, by the headlines of media.' So instead of withdrawing from any relationship with the media, the activists chose to deal strategically with an actor they regarded as a protector of neoliberalism and a denier of grassroots movements as valid political actors. Assuming the imminent character of the events of 2011, the movement decided to exploit their relationship with mainstream media, aspiring to install topics on the media agenda with certain aims and expectations.

The first section of this chapter will focus specifically with the topics the movement tried to transmit via the media; the method by which they planned to do it; where the movement had a media presence; and the relevance of the spokespeople involved. Thus I will depict elements of a strategy that was conservative – in its formal display, similar to that which an NGO or a political party would do (Maarek, 2011; Silver, 2003) – to engage with the establishment's media in an intelligible way. In the second section of the chapter I will assess more closely the aims and consequences of the strategic behaviour towards the media. In this assessment I will observe first an endeavour to disarticulate (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014) the discourse that that market-driven education was the only possible way to administrate Chilean education; and that the institutional actors of Chilean democracy were the only ones entitled to take part in politics. Secondly, I will analyze students' media action as a way to create (Hall, 1985; Laclau, 1977) three key articulations: a cleavage between market driven education and equal, free and

⁸⁶ According to the First National Study on Print Press (Azócar, Scherman, Arriagada and Feedback, 2010), 85% of the Chilean population consumes TV on a daily basis for informative reasons. The percentage of people consuming radio is 60%, while cable TV is 48%, the Internet is 20% and 17% of the population read print press.

quality education as well as between neoliberalism and democracy; the validation of activists and protesters as well-intended and legitimate actors to express dissent and mobilize; and, thirdly, shape a 'good versus bad' story where the students, the movement, activists, and people supporting the mobilization, were firmly allied to the side of the 'good'.

Covering these two sections I will sustain that through this articulation process, the movement sought to create an imagined commons⁸⁷ with a clear 'them' and 'us' based upon contents and subjects: contents, as long as the movement pushed to instil in media the idea that a neoliberal democracy does not acknowledge, hold, or protect social rights; and subjects, as far as the students – and others who joined the mobilization – gained validation to take part in the discussion on education once the 'common sense' of neoliberalism was tackled.

Thus, the chapter will conclude by asserting that the movement affected what Donatella della Porta calls 'metaframes': 'the frames referring not to protest issues themselves, but to the right to protest' (1999: 68). In other words, I will state the movement needed to ingratiate itself into mainstream media to quickly progress an imagined commons. In doing so, the students executed a successful strategy, not only validating the topics of the mobilization but also the right to mobilize and the legitimacy to be a political actor from that position. In doing this, the configuration of the imagined commons carried a political recognition creating the opportunity for the political conflict to happen (Rancière, 2004) and contributing to the idea that democracy should not be an enclosed arena fenced off by the wires of neoliberalism. In other words, that the political can, and should, follow a common principle affecting the way in which democracy is conducted in Chile.

⁸⁷ The notion of imagined commons is based on Benedict Anderson (2006) idea of imagined communities. Anderson's imagined communities refers to the identity of nations as something not natural but intentionally designed to culturally and socially bound people with the aim of providing a shared and usually univocal identity. In the case of the imagined commons, I will use Anderson's idea not thinking in the nationalistic sense of identity making but in the sense that through the simultaneity, reach and the ways in which media frame reality it is possible to connect and share an identity with people living in distant sectors of the country.

What, how, where and who: a conservative approach

By 2011, student unions had reached the conclusion that, due to the bias of Chilean mainstream media, the Chilean politico-cultural landscape, recent mobilizations for education, housing, and indigenous rights, it was necessary to introduce changes to the way mobilization was perceived by the people and deployed by activists. Part of the latter was conveyed by actions reviewed in the previous two chapters, but there were areas where it was necessary to penetrate the media. Camilo Ballesteros, president of the University of Santiago Students' Union (FEUSACH), provided an anecdotal account outlining one of the reasons for the need for sustained media liaison: 'When I want to know how deep something is, I call my grandmother. She lives in Curepto⁸⁸ and she gets the news from TVN (Chilean National Television channel)... she makes herself an opinion from what she watches'. This story relates to the prevalence of the mainstream media as the most prolific source of information about political and national affairs. The latter was a technical and ideological problem for the activists. It was technical in as much as it was about getting to the broad population in different regions of the country: Over the course of a week, 70% of the Chilean population watches the 9pm news on TV (Cordero and Marin, 2006), and students did not see any other way of achieving the same reach within a short space of time without dealing with the media. It was ideological because of the bias of the Chilean media landscape, as reviewed in Chapter 2, and as perceived by the students who considered it to be 'still owned by a few and giving voice to a few', as Camilo Ballesteros expressed.

This disposition to deal with the media came first through the actions of four students' unions from the universities with the largest number of students. In January 2011, these unions hired a small advertising agency called DID. Run by

⁸⁸ A small village in the central region of Chile; the economy of the village revolves around agriculture.

friends⁸⁹ of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile Students' Union, the company was hired to create a plan to increase the appeal for reform in education and to widen the reach to the broad population. After some research, the company created 'a communication and design strategy to build awareness of the problem and to help mobilizing students towards a first public demonstration on May 2011' (Rebolledo, Chilet and Fuentes, 2011), which exceeded media scope, reaching other communication modes such as the more autonomous practices that I will cover in the next chapter. As Nicolás Rebolledo, one of the people in charge of the consultancy, expressed: 'The first foundation of this strategy was to move the education problem from an interest group – the students – to an issue of Chilean families that was entirely unfair because of the increasing loans that families had to pay to universities that – in some cases – were making profit from the education business.' Most importantly, this consultancy gave the students three constituencies to talk to: citizen-students, families, and citizen-professionals. The division of this triad had as one component, the actual students who were considered privileged due to having the opportunity to study; another component was, the families paying high fees and facing heavy loans and college credits for decades; and, finally those feeling hopeless due to having graduated with large debts and no employment, or large debts and low incomes. The notion of articulating the three subjects, and therefore the people in general, was the idea that without quality education and the intervention of the situation in 2011, the future was bleak for all.

There were two demographics broadly present in the identity of the Chilean population that this campaign was trying to influence – debtors, and Christians⁹⁰. The unfairness of having to use tuition fee loans and end up paying several times

⁸⁹ DID agency – comprising Nicolás Rebolledo, Marcos Chilet and Gabriel Fuentes – was hired by the students' unions of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, the University of Chile and Santiago University. The consultancy service, paid for by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, was later shared as a gift and as advice to follow to the Confederation of University Students of Chile (CONFECH).

⁹⁰ According to the 2002 Census conveyed by the National Institute for Statistics (INE), 85.1% of the population declared themselves to be Christian: 70% Catholics and 15.1% Evangelicals. <http://www.ine.cl/cd2002/religion.pdf>

that amount for two decades or more, appealed to debtors. This message was framed in terms of an unfair market and took a more Keynesian approach than liberal capitalism, expressing the notion that in Chilean society everybody was surrounded by debt with consequences such as anguish, fear, stress, and anger. The second appeal was directed at Christian feelings of guilt. 85.1% of the Chilean population are self-declared Christians and many institutions, including medical centres, radio stations, universities, and schools, belong to the Catholic or Evangelical Church. So while there was no direct appeal to Christians *per se*, there were messages targeted at that section of Chilean society and to the deep-rooted feeling of guilt – messages such as ‘how could you, (or your children or siblings) study when another person cannot do it due to lack of money’.

Beyond this consultancy, the interviewees expressed that in 2011 there was an agreement amongst activists about how they should conduct themselves with the media and with journalists, due to an accumulation of experiences from decades of mobilization, but most recently as a consequence of the ‘Penguin Revolution’ of 2006. Observed in retrospect, students mentioned two specific moments during the 2006 mobilization. One was the change in media coverage, from news praising the vigour of young people fighting to improve higher education conditions, to depicting students as stubborn and spoilt adolescents with no intention of seeking a real solution to the conflict (Chauvin, 2015). The front page of the 3 June 2006 edition of national newspaper *Las Ultimas Noticias* (The Latest News) embodied this change after the students rejected a bundle of measures announced by President Michelle Bachelet. ‘Kids, do not take advantage’, said the yellow-coloured headline with a full-size image of one of the young women leading the movement (Chauvin, 2015). The second moment was the acceptance of the invitation made by the administration of the socialist president Michelle Bachelet, to a dialogue table. For the media, this table meant the end of the mobilization, but for the students it was nothing more than ‘a carefully democratic-like exit to the problem with accurate authoritarian efficacy’ (Figueroa, 2012: 16). From that point onwards, every attempt to keep the mobilization alive, and each attempt to go back to the streets was

regarded by the media as an action perpetrated by irresponsible adolescents. Both memories of 2006 drove the actions of students in 2011. In the opinion of Noam Titelman – delegate of FEUC in CONFECH meetings during 2011 – 2011 media actions were ‘much more deliberate, and that was a difference to what happened in 2006 because in 2011 we had a strategy from the beginning focused on communication’. And this focus had a clear and direct message at the beginning of the mobilization: the need for education reform to stop extortionate fees and thus to end the practice of people getting bank loans that would take decades to pay off.

With increasing support for the mobilization in the weeks following the first marches, and after discussing it in assemblies throughout the nation, the original idea of a reform transformed to the need for free, public, high-quality education. Both the education reforms and later the fundamental change to the education system had to be communicated and shared as extensively as possible. And that was a major question for the movement: how to present topics in a realm that was historically adverse to students and to any claim which might try to break up the structure of the Chilean education system? Their response was to be found in past experiences of mobilization and the permanent debate in assemblies at different scales (within CONFECH meetings, at a local level, within high schools, etc.) and involved a translation from complexity, to more simple terms and ideas. Through this action, activists designed four patterns to start disarticulating (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014) the discursive structure of neoliberalism in Chile in order to articulate (Grossberg, 1996) an anti-neoliberal discourse and a common identity.

According to Hall (1985), Laclau (1977), and Laclau and Mouffe (2014) the disarticulation/articulation process refers to the destruction/creation of a discursive unity from elements that not having a necessary or natural belongingness (Grossberg, 1996) are disconnected or connected to present a coherent counter position against dominant discourses (Laclau, 1977). The aim of articulation is to make emerge ‘other forms of social organization’ (Zylinska, 2005: 19) and to do so, the process of articulation implies a deliberate effort of linking topics, ideas, representations and meanings with core beliefs, values and daily life of the people

(Grossberg, 1996). The final aim of the articulation is to change the way in which people represent 'the world to ourselves and one another' (Hall, 1985: 103). This process is also understood as not permanent and as unstable due the oppositional forces emerging in front of a particular of disarticulation/articulation attempt (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014). In the case of the students, the patterns to begin disarticulating the discursive structure of neoliberalism in Chile and articulate an anti-neoliberal discourse and common identity were: to be simple and clear in their messages; to avoid the usual left-wing language of activism and the aesthetics of the past in order to break with old clichés; to resolve their disagreements within the assemblies and express unity on the broad topics in front of the press; and to be serious, informed, and challenging but respectful.

Clear and simple

Once the limited chances of success by speaking in complex, redundant, or flamboyant terms were acknowledged by the publicity agency consultancy and by the students' experience, the strategy was focused on reducing complexity and making the movement's claims compelling and easy to comprehend. To translate the ideas from complexity to simplicity, they anchored the problem of Chilean education in a daily life experience: that of obtaining extortionate loans and carrying debt for a lifetime. As Camilo Ballesteros expressed, this issue was close to the real life of Chilean people, therefore it was simple to understand and relate to: 'all families have someone studying and they all have debts, they are having a hard time because of that, they are distressed'. This first reduction of complexity, directed at a vast majority of the population, was moved to a second stage weeks after the beginning of the movement. In this case, the problem was centred on the fact that some people had access to quality education just because they had the financial means to pay for it, while other people, with the same intellectual capacity, could not do this because of their family's limited financial means, or could do it, but with serious detrimental effect on their lifetime finances. From this position, the students targeted the education system as an unregulated money-making industry

and highlighted the need to change it for a responsible public system granting free, high-quality education. In other words, they put forward the right to have access to good education no matter the family income, thus curtailing the abuse of private entrepreneurs continuously profiting from education. This way, the movement aspired to make their claims simple enough to be a topic of conversation on a bus, a taxi, in a political debate, or on breakfast television programs.

The whole idea was to make this question understandable, you get me? I am going to be even more direct; my goal was to make this so simple to understand that two people meeting in the street could talk about this, normal people. I know that this is disruptive, dialogically speaking, but my idea was that it was not disruptive. Look, I am going to put it in even more simple terms: my idea was to make this a topic that could be a matter of conversation in a morning TV show.
José Soto.

Avoid old aesthetics and break clichés

For activists, the need to avoid the images and visual repertoires of left-wing sectors during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's was quite clear, but not because the movement rejected those images or because old claims for reform or revolution did not accord with their points of view. In order to reach a large proportion of the Chilean population, those involved in the mobilization recognised the need to put aside the aesthetics of the Latin American and Chilean social and political movements of the 1960's. That task included iconography but also discourse and personal aesthetics. Otherwise, students assumed it was going to be extremely difficult to shape a wide political commons involving others outside of the left-wing sympathizer category.

You have to get to people that will discriminate against you earlier if they see that your icons are like Ramona Parra,⁹¹ and that was a conscious analysis made by the ones who designed the posters. There was consciousness in realizing that there is an audience beyond the left. They made that analysis: 'We cannot keep calling the same people always; the ones that will agree with you because they

⁹¹ The Ramona Parra Brigade was a left-wing organization that in the 1960s conveyed actions of political propaganda in the public space, painting walls with contingent issues – in the way of murals – and written slogans. Their aesthetic was highly recognizable and encapsulates a world vision of revolution and liberation in front of imperialism (San Martín, 2015).

have similar positions'. We have had to access an audience beyond, therefore your message; your shapes and your content must be friendlier. Cristian Inostroza.

This avoidance of aesthetic and symbolic repertoire was also a way to avoid clichés that were often levelled at mobilizations, their participants, and their leaders, especially in a movement mainly comprising young people. Some of these clichés related to the movement as a puppet of political parties; to criticism for demanding things that were technically impossible to achieve or were mere ideological wishes; or to be an anarchistic and violent movement without any motive except to cause havoc. In the face of these clichés, the movement had ways to counterbalance such accusations. When the media or politicians stated that the activists were arrogant, violent, full of theoretical ideologies, and lacking in common sense, the activists tried to appear in the public media with clear demands, coherent arguments, a serious attitude, and with a physical appearance very different to that of the clichéd revolutionary leader.

In my case, what interested me the most was to tear down the stereotype fence that existed towards what a student representative was supposed to be, and show other possibilities of representatives, like people that could wear a shirt and trousers and not necessarily a black T-shirt, because that allowed us to discuss. Stereotypes are mental shortcuts used by people and I did not want to give people mental shortcuts, it is self-defence, I did not want to be prejudiced. Giorgio Jackson.

Unity above all

Another element related to the way in which activists portrayed their message was to avoid divisions in front of the mainstream press due to the antagonistic character that mainstream media attributed to the movement. Within the movement there were different perspectives based upon the divergence of institutions, ideological divisions, different social classes, geographical origins, and student numbers, but in front of the press they showed unity in their demands. Even when there was disagreement on their demands within assemblies, in general terms the students put forward a unified claim. This was expressed by assuming in mainstream media

their divergence on some topics, but strong unity on their main topic. Thus, according to the activists, the movement presented its claim as one and presented themselves as a firm and mature bloc, thereby avoiding the weaknesses of past movements – such as appearing on media delivering contradictory points of view. The latter allowed them to face what they called ‘the traps of mainstream press’.

We were united in our actions. Many times they tried to make us fall in their traps. Sometimes we stumbled and fell in their traps but because of obvious reasons, some others were inventions of the press. Anyway, we tried to cover our backs because we knew what we were facing. This idea of attacking us was constant, of attacking CONFECH with things like the violence in marches. When they could not attack us because of violence, they tried to divide us. It was permanent: every Friday in La Segunda, every Saturday in La Tercera and on Sunday there were published reports about the ‘division’ within CONFECH, or the ultra-left-wing versus the moderate ones, and the like. Sebastián Farfán.

Serious people

A fourth element extended to the students’ media practice, was to avoid banal media treatment. Again, the experience of 2006 was highly relevant to this matter. The episodes of that mobilization showed the activists two sides of the coin. On one side was the skilful display of leaders on TV, radio, and press conferences, to become credible representatives of a student movement. On the other side, media coverage involved those leaders in gossip-based news stories that were not conducive to the unity of the movement or for their cause in general. In 2011, activists kept this memory in mind and tried to adopt only the serious aspects of the 2006 experience. In order to accomplish that goal, they appeared in front of the camera or on radio stations, predominantly addressing educational and political issues, showing themselves as people who were prepared and aware of pertinent technical, legal, and theoretical information, and refusing to talk about their personal life. The result of this behaviour in news programs and talk shows was highly valued by activists as it allowed them to combat the cliché of them as ignorant and unprepared young people, especially when they had the chance to debate on live broadcasts with members of mainstream political groups.

The government tried to reduce this to another march of one tiny group of people talking against neoliberalism, but they faced an entirely different thing, something far more serious, something composed of good guys. It was a very powerful moment when the leaders presented our proposals and how that image came out, it was very powerful, because while the government said these are the ones using balaclavas looking for war, you watched student leaders presenting their ideas in National Congress. Noam Titelman.

Who and where: spokespeople and media outlets

As I have noted previously, the activists decided to deal with the media using all the spaces they could get into: from nationwide TV channels' breakfast shows to cable TV discussion panels, from community radio programs to local newspapers. Of all the different types of media, activists preferred live broadcasts to explain their points of view without interference from journalists. In general, activists were extremely cautious in their interactions with journalists to avoid misunderstandings, and to debunk the image of students as adolescents lacking knowledge on mobilization topics or having a naïve or reckless attitude. To ensure they exercised maximum care with their message, the most prominent organizations continued a tradition which helped them to avoid misunderstandings in front of the press: to have spokespeople on national and regional scales. Thus CONFECH, CONES, ACES, and even some high schools selected their own spokespeople according to democratic criteria. In some cases, such as CONES and ACES, there were elections in national assemblies to select spokespeople. These elections had candidates who, in case of being elected, had to be permanently available for media appearances and were the authorized voice when journalists wanted to have the official version of events from an organization during the mobilization, such as after meetings with the Ministry of Education or during a rally. In other cases, such as CONFECH, the person in charge of public statements would change from time to time within their constituents, therefore embracing the idea that power and representation were not centred on a particular person but on the whole movement.

As a consequence, spokespeople were the ones struggling with the media to avoid

misunderstandings, lack of knowledge, embodying the seriousness and youth of students' claims in front of cameras and microphones, although they were also under permanent scrutiny from their own side. The purpose of this scrutiny was to avoid the spokesperson saying things that were not agreed beforehand in their assemblies. That is why, during their national meetings, students had long debates to clearly state what they were going to say in front of the press, and were committed to not saying anything other than which was agreed within assemblies. In the event of them alluding to or expanding upon something not agreed to beforehand, the spokespeople were reprimanded in the next meeting and the continuation of their role was called into question. If considered necessary, the members of the assembly replaced the spokesperson with another activist.

After some time guys began to distrust, just like in 2006, to distrust us. Well, I do not know if distrust but touchier because they said, for instance, when we finished a meeting, and they said: 'you have to say this and that, nothing else, we are going to be watching out'. So in the end we were between a rock and a hard place. If we said something that was not previously agreed the guys got angry and that happened. In the end, we arrive to the next assembly and when arrived some representative guys told him 'hey, I watched you on some channel and you said something we did not agree'. Freddy Fuentes.

Thus, in terms of the activities relating to mainstream media, including newspapers, TV, radio, and the internet, the movement relied on their representatives who acted as spokespersons in front of microphones and cameras, hoping to achieve good performances or to improve their performance for the next time. In this sense, the Chilean case sharply contrasted with other mobilization processes during that year, like the Spanish *Indignados*, and the way they performed the movement's horizontality in front of the media. As Castells remarks, in the 15M movement 'there would be no leaders in the movement, either locally or nationally. For that matter, not even spokespersons were recognized. Everyone would represent him/herself, and no one else' (2012: 131).

Contrary to that which had occurred in Spain, Chilean activists did not consider the principles of horizontalism as being betrayed by the use of spokespersons. However, and as a consequence of media exposure, there were two students'

representatives that courted attention that was unusual and beyond the recognition achieved by all other students: Camila Vallejo and Giorgio Jackson, presidents of the biggest university students' unions in the country and CONFECH spokespeople for part of 2011. In an unprecedented move, these two figures – Vallejo, a communist militant, and Jackson, a member of a new and moderate left-wing movement inside his university – gained media attention and in the eyes of the press became the official leaders of the movement. They were seen as a woman and a man publicly performing the role of young, brave, and poised students at the forefront of millions fighting for the future citizens against older politicians.

The figures of Camila and Giorgio are communicatively powerful. On one side you had a woman president of the FECH, communist, very pretty, very intelligent and speaking fluently in very simple terms. On the other hand, you had another reality – although it sounds like a caricature, but is simpler to put it in this way – with a wealthy kid, blond, who lives upwards Italia Square, who is also concerned about these issues and who has more skills than Camila to get ordinary people to understand him. Then, Camila is more understood by the left and Giorgio has the ability to reach more political sectors. Rodrigo Rivera.

The latter presented both an advantage and a problem. The advantage was that due to the media's particular attraction to these two leaders, the movement gained more presence in the media with people who portrayed the gravity the movement desired and avoided the clichés of student activism. The disadvantage, or problem, was itself the idea of having a rotation of spokespeople and not anchoring the movement in one or two particular figures. Even at some point in 2011 when Vallejo and Jackson were not CONFECH spokespeople, the media insisted on talking to them.

Consequently, it is possible to see that while the engagement with established mainstream media had benefits for the movement, it also had consequences for them related to the manner in which the media understands and broadcasts political affairs and the power and autonomy they have in doing so. As mentioned in chapter 2, mainstream media news coverage in Chile is characterized, especially on television, by a melodramatic style based upon the personalization

and emotionalization of social phenomena (Mujica and Bachmann, 2015). This personalization could have easily turned into what Briggs and Burke (2003) refer to as the making of celebrities –understood as people not renowned because of their achievements but only because of their image (Briggs and Burke, 2003). In other words, the problem for the activists was not only that media personalized the movement but also that Vallejo and Jackson could become celebrities. The ultimate consequence of this would have been to drain the movement from any political and critical content due to heightened media exposure.

A turning point for impeding this type of media treatment occurred on 22 August 2011. That morning, the tabloid *Las Ultimas Noticias* published on its front cover a picture of Camila Vallejo on the stage of a massive rally held the day before in Santiago, in which an estimated one million people gathered in a familiar environment with singers and music bands. The headlines of the tabloid said ‘Camila Vallejo no quiso mover la colita’ [Camila Vallejo did not want to move the tail], which means that she did not want to perform a particular dance in which a person moves his/her bottom in a seductive way. The reaction of Universidad de Chile students’ union was immediate and was delivered through a press release in which they made a clear statement criticizing the newspaper for attacking the movement, attacking Camila Vallejo and attacking women in general⁹².

As the case above demonstrates, students tried to reduce complex issues such as sexism, into simple and common terms, attributing in this case an attack on a particular woman, to an attack to all Chilean women. Indeed, aware that when accessing the media and courting media coverage, students were dealing with an ideological adversary as well as accessing an audience in front of which they

⁹² The three points of the press statement said: ‘1) It attacks the movement: having so many nice things to show about family, political, social and artistic act [the newspaper] shows a cover of sexist character, with zero relation to what was lived yesterday (Sunday 21 August). 2) It attacks Camila Vallejo: she is one of the leaders of the movement, is not a model discotheque. 3) It attacks women: all women, agreeing or not with the movement, are offended, because with this cover reduces the woman to an object’. An article with the statement is available in <http://www.publmetro.cl/nota/cronica/fech-rechaza-portada-de-diario-con-camila-vallejo-y-la-califica-de-deplorable/xlQkhv!thL0O4JdfVug/>

wanted to be clear, simple, serious, and unified in their stance, their actions were conservative and not significantly different from that of a standard party media performance (Maarek, 2011; Silver, 2003). In total there were three main media activities: press statements, interviews, and media monitoring.

Press statements: Press statements were formal ways to approach the press in a way that showed the unity and breadth of the movement. It involved two types of actions: press conferences, and press releases. Press conferences were usually held before a rally or a march. The main organizations – CONFECH, CONES, and ACES – held a press conference, usually in the headquarters of Universidad de Chile Students' Union, in Santiago. At a long table and in front of the press they made the call, stated the reasons, and explained the objectives of the march, allowing time for questions and queries from the press. After the press conference, press releases were sent out on a national and local scale. The releases contained the reasons for the call, students perspective regarding a particular action made by the government, and their demands for reform of the Chilean education system. Press conferences were mainly held on a national scale but also in regions. This united presence in front of the press was also visible after long CONFECH assemblies, or at the end of meetings between the main organizations of the movement where the selected spokespersons of these institutions talked in turns to the journalists. On every occasion, a press release was handed to the press and distributed to the media as an official message of the main organizations behind the mobilization.

Interviews: During 2011, the presence of the movement in mainstream media was increasing week after week until the point where – as some of the interviewees stated – they seemed to be everywhere. Aware of that presence, they performed two functions: calling some media to be on their programs and accepting invitations from wherever they were invited – from local radio stations, to international media. As the weeks went by, activists gave priority to certain spaces as the demand for multiple media outlets was increasing. As a consequence of this experience,

activists regarded as the most important media, TV and radio stations; firstly, due to its high and broad consumption among the Chilean population⁹³, and secondly, for being a place where it was possible to talk, debate, and express their points of view in more depth. As José Soto expressed, 'Television and radio were always the more welcomed media, because you could go on a live broadcast, it was much less edited, so you get – especially on TV – to a million people in a minute.'

Media monitoring: Along with these three actions there was also a permanent revision of the press as a means of evaluating their performance in the media. It was a normal task for grassroots supporters but a key element for students' unions – all of them have a secretary for communications in charge of the media – and a topic of discussion within local and national assemblies. While there was not a systematic analysis of the media during this period, there was a general state of alert regarding the news. As Francisco Figueroa mentions, 'there was much concern when we did not get coverage and when we were covered there was always attention of the student community about how media was treating us'. An example of the latter can be found in the students' indignation with the aforementioned front cover of *Las Últimas Noticias* with Camila Vallejo. Another example was the more positive reaction after the broadcast of the TV programme "En la Mira" [In sight]. The report⁹⁴, broadcast on July 20 by private TV channel Chilevision, was surprising for the students because of its more favourable treatment and because of its impact in their favour.

Paula Urizar: I remember that Chilevision made a special report on the students' movement and all of us, every student, watched that with suspicion, with huge

⁹³ Television and radio are the most trusted informative media sources for the Chilean population. The First National Study on Print Press (Azócar, Scherman, Arriagada and Feedback, 2010) divided the country into four zones: north, centre, south and metropolitan region. In the four of them the most trusted media was open-air television (40%), followed by radio (26%) and print press (11%). These percentages are a tendency in contemporary Chile, as shown by the study 'Los Medios Masivos y las Transformaciones de la Esfera Pública en Chile' (2006) [Massive media and public sphere transformations in Chile] by Rodrigo Cordero and Cristóbal Marin. This study shows that, in 2005, television was the most credible form of media (58.9%), followed by radio (22.8%) and newspapers (9.4%).

⁹⁴ Available in this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkAA_oz9Ybl

suspicion. It was 'ok, let's see how this guys are going to distort this to show it in the way they want.

Interviewer: *And what was your opinion about it, after watching it?*

Paula Urizar: *The report was pretty emotional. That particular report was good, although it was like "ok, but I still do not believe in them" (laughs).*

The reasons for the students lack of trust in the press and their caution with mainstream media, was based upon three elements. Firstly, because of their assumption that mainstream media was the channel used by political and economic powers to talk publicly, it was necessary to know what the 'real power' was trying to say. The second was a consequence of the first and implied taking positions and finding ways to present their claims, to modify some points, to deepen some aspects of their demands or to drop some actions in order to gain support. A third and more general reason was to observe some elements talking about the general support of the mobilization, their actions – such as marches and occupations – their leaders, the state of negotiations and the way their adversaries were portrayed.

Overall, the students developed a conservative but careful approach to media transactions in order to reach the media in the most professional way, taking very seriously what, how, and where to make statements, who was in charge of speaking and, in addition, permanently assessing their actions. The traditional character of their media work appears here as a key element for a strategic design made to access mainstream media within the boundaries of legitimacy and intelligibility of a determined culture (Williams, 2004), which is the culture that Chilean media has set for communicating politics. By acting within the frames of that legitimated culture, the movement was able to reach a larger audience with a repertoire that was not disruptive for media.

Once within the boundaries of the media, the movement sought to disarticulate the codes of – in Swidler's words – the 'giant machinery of publicity that defines antiwar activists as unpatriotic, feminists as man haters, and the wealthy as

beleaguered taxpayers' (2003: 34). And activists did so by translating from complexity to simplicity the moral, political, and technical criticism towards Chile's market-driven system of education, thus articulating a discourse on the fissure of a dominant culture. In that crack in the neoliberal hegemony the movement invited people to perceive their lives and destiny as unwritten, that an ethical change was required, and that there were reasonable and reliable people already working towards this.

Aims, resistance and outcomes

As mentioned earlier, the actions conveyed by the students were part of a strategy looking to establish a direct relationship with the media through conservative means in order to disarticulate the foundations of the hegemonic discourse of market-driven education system in Chile. The type of message, the method and rationale for how that message was conveyed reflects an ideological confrontation that poses the meaning of the movement's media action closer to what the New Social Movement theories understood as the main feature in contemporary struggles (Melucci, 1985, 2003) – the cultural and symbolic confrontation of a world vision – and what authors like Laclau, Mouffe (2014) and Hall (1985) label as a process of articulation.

For analyzing social movements' media action the notion of articulation is particularly relevant as it enables us to understand the discursive creation of a social conflict (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014), the manners in which the conflict and its solutions are represented and the ways used to resonate with people's worldviews. This observation is pertinent also because of the prevalent role of the media as the most pervasive framer of national politics (Nash, 2008). A framer that in the case of Chile has a strong ideological bias, as mentioned in previous chapters.

So, in the following section of the chapter I will go over the three main articulations observed in the Chilean case. The first aimed to create two cleavages: one

expressing that market-driven education and the right for free and quality education cannot go together; and the second one directing the previous cleavage to the incompatibility of neoliberalism with democracy. The second articulation relates to shaping of protesters and activists as well intended and well-prepared subjects trying to change the country for the better, not vandals or criminals. The third and final articulation is the shaping of a simple story of adversaries in which the mainstream political institutions, the government and powerful business corporations were the mean-spirited player and the students and the people in general were the favourable opponents.

After describing these three articulations I will observe how – from the testimonies of students in focus groups and interviews – mainstream media kicked back, illustrating media's resistance to students' intentions with specific cases and examples. Later in the chapter I will deep in the final outcome of the movement's media work: the shaping of an imagined commons based upon subjects and contents.

Marking cleavages

One of the aims of the movement was to create a field for the battle, a symbolic arena shaped through the identification of broad colliding forces defining the situation of Chilean education. The junction between these two forces was a cleavage signalling two broad areas inviting people to take a position on the education problem: It was one side or the other. So an aim of the movement was to point out a clear colliding junction in a way that granted the students increasing support. Initially, the tension was centred around the junction between market and rights. Appealing to the common experience of living month after month paying debts, students managed to set the idea of a problematic relationship between market-driven economies versus the human right to education. In press releases, during interviews on TV, radio programmes, at the end of a rally, or a national assembly of institutions such as CONFECU, activists rallied against the idea that

the market was able to provide social rights, and underlined that a neoliberal system of education was promoting a never-ending inequality. Through this cleavage, activists were looking to affect the broad population from their most intimate foundations and daily life sentiments, such as Christians and debtors.

We had the capacity to make people at home understand the problem and say 'you know? Yes, my boy is studying but he is doing it with a loan that means that I will be paying that debt until who knows when? Some people lost their house because they were cheated by these loans, so when we started to talk about profit it was clear for people, and I think it was one of the reasons why they joined the mobilization. That is why you just did not see students only in the marches, but also families and workers. Rodrigo Rivera.

Once activists became aware they had the attention of the media – because of the increasing coverage on the mobilization as well as requests by media outlets to interview activists and their leaders – due to their daily life experience as well as in polls and surveys, they sought to deepen the cleavage by confronting neoliberalism and democracy as two incompatible poles. This cleavage allowed them to express that the rationale underlying the denial of free high-quality education for everybody was a consequence of political and economic power. Therefore, they maintained the problem of Chilean education was not technical but political and ideological.

The students considered the deepening of the cleavage necessary to avoid centring the conflict in a mere adjustment of the market. And in doing so they used all the communicative means they had at their disposal and that are covered in this thesis. As José Miguel Sanhueza expressed, 'there was an effort of communicative codification of politics using that kind of tool [the creation of cleavages]. We worked a lot in the difference between rights versus market, democracy versus market and move that into products'. The products to which José Miguel Sanhueza refers, were posters, flyers, web interventions, certainly their mainstream media products, and the discourse of students in the media.

Drawing this new cleavage, students were able to extend the problems they had expressed in education, to other areas neoliberalism had penetrated outside of the control of the people: the privatization of the health system, highways, pensions, and natural resources, amongst others. In the end, this media work directly stressed that the ideology sustaining and defending the Chilean market-driven education was in crisis. As such, it needed to be questioned from its foundations in order to build another model based upon values such as democracy, equality, quality, and well-being.

To change the relation between object, subject and meaning

A second articulation aimed to modify the attributed meanings that people gave to actions and subjects related to social movements and political claims from civil society. This task was targeted at reforming an entrenched perception that equated protest with vandalism, activists with vandals, and movements with unachievable ambitions – causal relations that for the movement were the product of decades of biased media coverage. As one student expressed during a focus group – Focus Group 1, Respondent 3 –reflecting the power of the media in framing social movements: ‘Many people do not go out of their homes. Parents and grandparents get informed about the movement only through TV and TV only focuses on disturbing people with messages like ‘students marched and destroyed traffic lights and kiosks’. Many people keep that message, like my grandmother. She hears the word mobilization and associates it with disaster.’

In a landscape of permanent defeat of social forces and the criminalization of dissent, the movement progressively sought to validate protesters as good people working to change the country in ways that were reasonable and meaningful, according to the divisions they were opening. Camilo Ballesteros reveals this objective very clearly: ‘When we began our communication campaign our aim was that when a lady watched a kid throwing stones she did not say ‘the kid is mean’ but why the kid is throwing that stone.’

Trying to be clear on their intentions, simple on their concepts, empowered, appealing and looking like people easy to relate to, the movement expected two changes in people's common sense as result from their action. Firstly, to break the order of causes and consequences in which Chile's mainstream media framed social problems. In other words, students not as vandals but as legitimate political actors. Secondly, and as a consequence of the former, to invite people to think about the movement as an endeavour that, beyond the youth of its main actors, was rooted in tangible problems likely to be changed if the movement succeeded.

To shape the good and the bad story

A final and overarching aim of the movement in their relationship with the media was to articulate a story in which the government was portrayed as a mean-spirited and unkind player while the young people of the movement were the favourable opponent. This story aimed to portray the position of the movement and its adversary in a simplistic way that was easy for the Chilean people – used to cultural consumptions where tensions run between good and bad characters, such as soap operas, Western movies or action series – to grasp.

The students laboured to clearly distinguish their direct adversary – the government – and a secondary adversary – the political class – as entities not only against the students, but also against the most basic interests of the country and as being in favour of neoliberalism and private corporate interests. An example of this battle to portray the adversary as an unfavourable contender can be found during marches and rallies. While the communicative efforts of the movement were focused on highlighting their claims through upbeat methods, and accusing government of intolerance, police violence and a lack of dialogue to revolutionise education, the government accused the students of destroying urban furniture, burning public buses, and attacking police officers without reason.

Another example of the good/bad relationship between the movement and its opponents occurred during a CNN Chile⁹⁵ special programme called 'Chilean education: myths and realities'. Three people took part in the live debate show on 22 August 2011: Joseph Ramos, an economist defending Chile's economic model; Sergio Bitar, former Social Democrat Education Minister who promoted bank loans to pay university fees; and Francisco Figueroa, Vice President of Universidad de Chile Students' Union. During the show, Bitar – minister during the Ricardo Lagos administration (2000–2006) – appeared disgruntled, arrogant, and furious with arguments Figueroa was presenting in which he was accusing the administrations of Concertación (1990–2010) of promoting market-driven education, deepening inequality levels, and condemning people to heavy bank debt, and accusing them of being the only winners in that deal. In the broadcast, Bitar was irritated enough to let his professional veil slip and he called Figueroa a 'child'. Soon after the end of the program, the recording was uploaded to YouTube and circulated widely on Facebook and Twitter, creating an iconic exchange to show two generations in two ethical and political positions. In the opinion of Chilean sociologist Alberto Mayol, this show created the moment when students defeated the political class and its experts (2012).



The snapshots, from left to right, show Sergio Bitar, Francisco Figueroa and both in the set of CNN Chile.

As mentioned earlier, mainstream media was an ideological adversary for the Chilean students. All the work directed towards mainstream media was for the students an attempt to uphold a counter hegemonic view through an articulation

⁹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lajTRaJIQ04>

aiming to be intelligible and shared by the people as a collective situation (Grossberg, 1996). However, in this process the Chilean mainstream media did not react complacently and robustly defended its position. Before addressing the manufacture of an imagined commons expressed in contents and subjects, it is worth looking at how the students perceived the media response.

Students observed three aspects of the actions of the media trying to weaken the movement's intentions. One was the claim about being taken 'out of context' in cases where an article or report published something they have not expressed or have expressed in a different way. The latter tended to happen against the best interests of the movement, such as the idea that the movement was about to collapse because of internal fights between the constituent parts within the movement. An example of the latter can be seen in the case of Rodrigo Rivera, at that time a high-school representative of CONES: '...in my case there were two interviews in 2011 where my comments were taken out of context, saying that we practically were going to leave the student movement'. A similar situation was experienced by Quenne Aitken, in charge of communication of the Bío-Bío University students' federation in the south central region of Chile: 'They [the press] interviewed the president of the student union and took us out of context, especially when they saw the effervescence of the movement and tried to say that our students' union did not agree with the line that the movement was taking.'⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Among the reasons about why this might have occurred there are certain elements mentioned earlier in this chapter and in previous chapters as well. The first of them is the ideological bias of mainstream media and the second is the power of media owners and editorial staff in front of the autonomy and independence of journalists (León-Dermota, 2003). Indeed, research about the way in which mainstream media covered the movement has underlined the stereotype they made about activists and the mobilization on a regional and national scale. The work of Browne, Romero and Monsalve (2015) analysed the coverage given to the movement by the newspaper *El Diario Austral* (The Southern Daily) - part of *El Mercurio S.A.* and the most read media outlet in a vast region of southern Chile - and concluded that it was highly stereotypical of activists and the movement in general. The research expressed that while the coverage of the movement was informative, on a first moment, with the extension of the conflict media coverage was progressively leaned to a sensationalist treatment stressing the use of violence by the activists and, ultimately, depicting the movement as a decaying and weak expression of a few. On a national scale, academics and media observatories expressed their criticism towards what they called a biased treatment of the movement ("Especialistas").

This problem with the media occurred frequently in the printed press but also on television. Students accused journalists of selecting and broadcasting specific parts of long interviews highlighting only those moments where something confusing, wrong, or vague was stated. The repetition of this type of cynical editing made students think beyond the professional coverage of the mobilization and about the real topics the media was trying to put onto the agenda. With the passing of time, they understood this tendency as part of the political action of media outlets, so they became careful to issue short and concise statements to journalists.

In TVN we saw that a lot, the same thing in Channel 13. They put the worst quote they could select. When we watched those things on TV it was like 'what! Are you kidding me?' Because they interviewed us for 20 minutes and then selected just the comments you made in a minute when you doubt about something or when you were not that clear. And I recognize that it is one's mistake for not doing well all the time, but anyway it is not correct for them to do this. Diego Vela.

A second problem for the activists came as a consequence of the previous point. When the media expressed something that for them was erroneous, inaccurate, or omitted, the activists saw their position weakened in terms of their ability to create impact in the media. Students saw that in spite of their work, the media still veered towards certain inaccuracies and simplifications – students as vandals, lazy and irresponsible people, not interested in real change, spoilt, puppets – that were permanently coming to the fore in news shows or in daily newspapers. And it was difficult to contest them. The use of social media (as I will cover in the next chapter), meetings at schools, and conversations at home, were important to counter media reports, but not enough to contest media power⁹⁷. A case which demonstrates this situation can be found in the position after marches and rallies,

⁹⁷ Assessing mainstream media coverage of the student movement in 2011, researchers tend to conclude that while there is an evident media power on the ownership of companies and media corporations, there is another one in the main discursive power they have and, accordingly, on the way they represent conflicts, agents and their aims. Gascón I Martín and Pacheco (2015), analyzing media from the region of Valparaíso, pointed to the power that media had to simplify, exclude and take out of context what actors and social processes were doing. Through “the censorship of certain conflicts –initially- or with a segmented and fragmented coverage”, Gascón I Martín and Pacheco (2015) sustain that mainstream media sought to anchor the conflict in stereotypes in order to avoid the conflict the movement was trying to put in the table.

when the media's estimation of the number of attendees tended to be lower than the numbers observed by the activists.

At some point it was ridiculous. Reading the newspaper at the occupation we even laughed about it because had you been at the march, you would have seen everything that happened, the way police had beaten you. But the next day you opened the newspapers and it was all about the violence of the people attending the march. El Mercurio and La Tercera depicted marches like the apocalypse. Focus Group 2, Respondent 1.

We had a problem with Channel 13 because they said we were burning food. There was a barricade in the street out of our Lyceum and two garbage bins came to the street. Those bins contained cans of expired food that we had not had eaten because there was not much attendance those days. When people saw the news about that, they said 'miserable boys, you are burning food when other people do not have enough to eat'. So we made a public statement signed by the yard inspector of the Lyceum saying that we did not burn that food, but even when you have a signed paper in your hand people will not believe you. Generally they will trust more in media than in a boy. Angel Salvo.

The third aspect of the students' difficulties could be found in the power of images. Whether on the front cover of newspapers, at the top of the most-read websites, or on prime-time TV news shows, the images used by the media consistently went against precisely what the activists were trying to show. Urban violence, people wearing balaclavas on marches, and vandalised occupied buildings were a favoured way in which media depicted the movement. A case that demonstrates this issue occurred on "24 horas" [24 hours], the news program of the state channel TVN. When the program focused on education issues, behind the news presenter there was an image of a man covering his head with a balaclava and carrying a backpack. The images below⁹⁸ are three screenshots taken from the program in the months of June and July. This trend of criminalizing the movement in TV news programs had also some cases – like the TV programme "En la Mira" [In sight] mentioned earlier – in which according to the students there was a report about the real life within occupied buildings and the real aims of the movement.

⁹⁸ These images were taken from the website <http://www.otraprensa.com/el-encapuchado-de-tvn>



The snapshots, from left to right, expressing titles such as 'Students maintain mobilizations' (June 14th); 'The student strike continues' (June 26th); and 'Rectors: doubts are cleared' (July 11th).

For the students, these three elements were the most notorious manners in which the media expressed its adversarial character towards the mobilization in their daily coverage during 2011. Nonetheless, activists observed how the divisions they were trying to establish between market and rights and their validation as conveyors of an emerging common voice, had more space in the media. Indeed, by the end of July and August, the movement appeared to have achieved two goals: the disarticulation of the neoliberal discourse as the only way to sustain the education system, and the articulation of an 'us', which I refer to as an imagined commons.

In the first place, the idea that the market could regulate education was no longer a 'common sense' matter and nobody publicly kept defending that idea without the risk of becoming a social and political pariah, as surveys conducted during 2011 expressed⁹⁹. To defend the idea that education should be a business was to immediately align with a minority. This turn has been signalled by recent research (Martínez, Poblete and Ugalde, 2015) as the point at which the neoliberal discourse established after the dictatorship went down. During and after breaking the foundations legitimizing the neoliberal ideology, Chilean media opened a diverse range of debate including increased criticism of the market as the main body for making decisions on matters relating to social rights. In this regard, the

⁹⁹ According to the survey carried out by Adimark GfK (available in http://www.adimark.cl/es/estudios/documentos/0_10_ev_gob_oct_2011.pdf) between 3 and 29 October 2011, 86% of the population between 18 and 24 years old approved of the demands of the students' movement and just 8% disapproved of them. In the segment 25–35 years old, 67% approved and 21% disapproved, and in the case of people between 36 and 55 years old there was a 72% approval for and 18% sentiment against the movement. In total, including men and women older than 18 from the 15 regions of the country, the study signaled that 67% of the population approved of the students' demands while 24% disapproved of them.

students' movement severely affected the hegemonic culture of neoliberalism, understanding culture as a collection of beliefs, images, feelings that helps define 'all social action and the world as we see it' (Jasper, 2007: 12). Media work by the activists, in this case, contributed to weakening the neoliberal framework and opening an opportunity for the social movement to advance the process of articulation and reality construction (della Porta, 1999).

Along with the latter came a second outcome: the articulation of students and activists in general as serious political subjects, overcoming the axiom that the media associated activism with violent, irresponsible vandals. What is relevant is that this articulation was imagined as an 'us' whose presence in dialogues, debates, communicative exchanges, and political participation was indispensable for democracy and could no longer be impeded because of neoliberal influence. This imagined commons was therefore highly political as it pictured a fresh and meaningful social bond, emphasizing the change in the type of relationship that should have the life in common within the nation (Mattei, 2012). This was a relationship in which the rules of political participation (Dahlgren, 2013) replaced the damaged representativeness of neoliberal democracy, proposing a basic and broad 'set of proposals for the positive organization of the social' (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014: 172).

Conclusion

In summary, the Chilean student movement of 2011 achieved two things through its relationship with the media. Firstly, through the mechanisms and channels of mainstream media, the movement signified in simple terms, the problem with the education system as an issue relevant to the lives of most Chilean people and, furthermore, future generations of Chileans. Secondly, by pointing out the ethical, political, and ideological roots of that problem, the movement created an imagined commons made up of all those who were against extortionate debts and in favour of free, public, high-quality education. Accordingly, the main media work conveyed

by the movement was to define an 'us' and a 'them', stressing the opposition in terms of topics, people and, finally, ideology.

From this summary and, indeed, the whole chapter, the symbolic element becomes central. In 2011, the movement did not achieve the goals of free, public education with high equitable standards – as I will explain in the conclusion of this thesis – so it can be said that the movement failed, in as much as their goals have not been achieved. But when this supposed defeat is observed in the light of the rendering of the commons, the evaluation changes. And it changes because what the movement was able to do in 2011 was to disarticulate the dominant rationale (Swidler, 2003; Foweraker, 1995) of neoliberalism as the only way for the economy to thrive and for the nation to follow.

In doing so, the movement installed other worldviews (Melucci, 2004) regarding social rights, democracy, politics and participation. And it went beyond, reaching metaframes (della Porta, 1999) such as the incompatibility of the market and high-quality education and the legitimacy of grassroots activists as political actors. Because whilst in Chile protest was not banned or prohibited, movements and activists before 2011 were not regarded as politically legitimate actors by mainstream politics and media, condemning dissident voices to subalternity and to the closure of the political (Rancière, 2004) due to the invisibility of conflict. But the emergence of the movement in 2011 implied a recognition and validation of activists as political agents with the entitlement to criticize Chilean democracy and, as della Porta expresses, accuse 'their adversaries as those who violate the rules of the democratic game' (1999: 68). Indeed, while students could not change education policies through the set of communicative practices observed in this chapter, they were able to tackle the power of a dominant discourse a little more: not only by going into the cracks of the neoliberal economic policies and the acquiescence of the Chilean mainstream political system, but by contesting the control over the mainstream media's agenda (Lukes, 2005) and by ultimately setting the scene for an ideological confrontation. The successful media strategy

thus not only allowed the activists to translate complexity into simplicity but permitted them to cut the fences of neoliberal democracy, if only momentarily. The reason for this momentary achievement has elements that are common to social movements and to the articulation of counter hegemonic discourses, and other elements that relate to the specificity of the Chilean case.

Regarding the first of these elements, it should be considered the temporary and cyclic character of social movements (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Tarrow, 2011) and the temporary character of the articulation process. As Zylinska expresses, 'articulation involves a temporary stabilisation of signifiers' (2005: 19), which means that articulation is never fixed once and forever. Its partial character is determined by the varied and variable changes of social life, as well as – in cases like contentious social movements – by forces colliding for the hegemonic definition of reality (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014).

The latter is significant in the Chilean case in terms of the unbalance of power between pro neoliberal media corporations and social movements. Chilean media is a strong block with a hegemonic discourse defending neoliberalism as a foundation of democratic life, so while contentious movements and perspectives might find a space and get coverage in the way students wanted, media will articulate a counter discourse and respond. Considering the ideological bond between media and mainstream politics, the most likely outcome in this type of situation is what Gabriel Boric, President of University of Chile Students' Union in 2012 and activist during 2011, depicts in this way.

Regarding our adversaries, they have not managed to hold a legitimate place as we hold and this brings as a consequence that they cannot gain a relevant support on the public opinion. But they still have wide political and economic power.

The assertion by Gabriel Boric helps to measure the balance between the opportunity people have to make their voice heard, and the power of mainstream

media companies and political mainstream power to create imagined communities, worldviews, threats, and truths (Anderson, 2006). In this sense, the success of the student movement's media work in 2011 runs in parallel with its limitations. A first limitation is the fact that it took a wholesale strategy and tremendous effort to accomplish the movement's goals in the media. So yes, it was successful, but it seems more of an exceptional circumstance than something likely to happen permanently considering that – as Boric manifests – the property of media is under the ownership of a few corporations who share business and ideological bonds with mainstream political power. Secondly, students' media work was a conservative and traditional endeavour tailored to follow media protocols where grassroots activists played a secondary role as spectators. Rather than taking part in the construction of the 'us' – as in the communicative practices observed in the two previous chapters – they were part of the imagined commons that was ultimately defined by mainstream media.

These limitations leave questions about the type of communicative engagement that mainstream media permits to activists, and the means that people possess for large-scale mediations. In a general theoretical framework, this last limitation is in line with what New Social Movement theories, and post-structural and cultural studies have not been able to deal with: how to go beyond challenging hegemonic paradigms through symbolic means to enhance democracy through communicative practices. The next chapter will examine this gap more thoroughly through analysis of the uses of the internet by activists in the Chilean movement of 2011.

Chapter 7

Bursting the commons: internet and the short life of solidarity

Social networks, especially Twitter, are extremely undemocratic in spite of that illusory image that some people have. Social networks like Twitter replicate the hierarchies of accessing public discourse.

Noam Titelman

In the previous chapter I stated that, whilst the Chilean students' movement was successful in its media strategy in terms of gaining coverage, people in the movement felt they were never able to become the primary definers of the agenda, set the terms of the debate in a more permanent way or define the nature of the coverage they got. In other words, activists agreed they did their best to shape the image portrayed of them but realized they were not the *primary definers* (Hall et al., 1978) media was focused on to tell the story of the movement¹⁰⁰. This awkward dependence upon the mainstream media contrasts with the more autonomous communicative practices reviewed in previous chapters where activists felt more in control and able to participate fully in the processes of mobilisation. As social movements have felt increasingly alienated from institutionalised politics so they have increasingly embraced political autonomy (Barassi, 2015) in terms of independence from political parties, criticism of representative democracy, and rejection of traditional social and political collective identities (della Porta and Diani, 2006; McDonald, 2007; Jeppesen et al, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ By *primary definers*, I refer to the idea (Hall et al., 1978) that media are not the first definers of what the problem covered in any particular article or newscast is about. For Hall et al. (1978), while the media select and decide to cover an issue and frame a particular matter, the ones shaping the nature of the problem are the sources used by the media to define from the very beginning what the problem is – like institutional spokesmen or economic experts. The concept is interesting in terms of observing how media reproduce power not necessarily by stating their opinion straightforwardly but by defining the nature of a particular issue based on entitled actors – usually institutional authorities – setting 'the terms of reference within which all further coverage or debate takes place' (Hall, et. al., 1978: 58).

The internet has played varying roles in this autonomy. A testimony collected by Veronica Barassi (2015) from an activist of the Spanish organization *Ecologistas en Acción* [Ecologists in Action] during her research on activism on the web, depicts one of these roles. Reflecting on the significance of the internet for social movements, Luis (the activist) says: 'The internet has also provided us with a greater autonomy, in the sense that we do not have to rely on dominant media and their politics to transmit our messages' (Barassi, 2015: 81). The observation made by Luis and selected by Barassi lucidly illustrates – in a case that resonates in other parts of the world – the internet has contributed to the acquisition of increased autonomy in terms of the diffusion of information. However, the latter does not mean that autonomy regarding the internet is unchallenged in the available literature (Hindman, 2009, Freedman, 2016); that the case of Luis should apply to everyone, and even less that the political outcome of using the internet should be the same in every single case.

I begin this chapter with an acknowledgement of the potential for autonomy facilitated by the internet, but also being cautious about falling into technological and political reductionism (Curran, 2002; Tilly and Wood, 2009). Being cautious about technological determinism involves scepticism of approaches which attribute revolutionary powers to the internet *per se* (Papacharissi, 2004; Fenton, 2012) and to those claiming that participation in a mobilization through the internet is a lower grade of political activism, sometimes referred to as 'clicktivism' or 'slacktivism' (Karpf, 2010). This scepticism also includes those insights which pinpoint social media as the way to achieve horizontal (Coretti and Pica, 2015) or personalized engagement in social mobilization (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013), without considering other forms of horizontal and personal involvement, such as those discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

When referring to political reductionism, I refer to the immediate attribution of social movements' actions to changes within the margins of mainstream politics and institutions – such as the electoral system (Galindo, 2012) – and not in broader

political landscapes (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014). This type of reductionism – usual in political process theories in the study of social movements (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001; Reese, 2005) – understands that the main aim of a determinate mobilization is to attract ‘the attention of policy makers and broader publics on hotly contested issues’ (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013: 114) and to solve issues within the political, administrative, and organizational boundaries. In this regard, what political reductionism misses is the opportunity to look at the broad terms of the political, ‘not just limited to institutionalised politics’ (Dahlgren, 2013: 35), and to think of the outcomes of mobilizations beyond patching up and mending already weakened democracies.

Careful of determinisms and reductionisms and seeking to know how the internet was used during the movement of 2011 in the context of the build-up of a commons, I analyzed the way in which activists used the web across two poles: On one side, a vertical top-bottom relation; on the other side, peer-produced expressions involving co-production and co-distribution. Most of this analysis is gleaned from focus groups and interviews. It is also gleaned from observation of the website www.reformaeducacional.cl, comment threads on Facebook events, and posts on Twitter as a means of confirming, contrasting, and obtaining a better grasp of the testimonies of the activists. After observing and analyzing activists’ testimonies and web archives across these two poles, I argue that the use of the internet by activists during 2011’s student movement in Chile, contributed to the impossibility of the commons.

The reason for this impossibility lies in the prevalence of an aggregative and individualistic type of participation in communicative practices that could not achieve more horizontal and collaborative bonds. Whilst important for sharing news or calls to marches with an enthusiastic solidarity drive (Nash, 2008), the use of the Internet was less successful in achieving debates and discussions in a respectful arena. The prevalence of talking rather than listening turned the drive to inform and spread awareness of the movement, into a fight in which the other was more an

enemy than an adversary (Mouffe, 2005), i.e. someone who was soon dismissed as a valid interlocutor in a conversation.

This reference to the difference between adversary and enemy is key to understand the implications of communicative practices conducted on the web, especially when the use of the internet moved from informing, to deliberating in debates and discussions. The adversary/enemy relationship refers, in Mouffe (2005), to the way in which political conflict is set between different actors. One way to sustain this relationship is, for Mouffe, when the forces that are part of a conflict acknowledge the other as a legitimate counterpart. In this case the other part is an adversary because it is not calling 'into question the legitimacy of their opponent's right to fight for the victory of their position' (Mouffe, 2013: 7). Understood in this way, the notion of adversary becomes a foundation of democracy because it entails an us/them relationship of conflict in which both parts recognize the other as a legitimate counterpart in a way 'that is compatible with pluralist democracy' (Mouffe, 2005: 101).

Conversely, the idea of the enemy – as Carl Schmitt (2007) sustains – denies the antagonist as being a legitimate part of a disagreement. Mouffe (2005, 2013) makes a sharp contrast with Schmitt's concept of the political. For Schmitt, the political is made by a conflict set between friends and enemies. This distinction implies in Schmitt that 'the existence of the one side of the relation is a threat to the existence of the other' (Smoleński, 2012: 66). Ultimately, the friend-enemy relationship is one conveying the extermination of the other¹⁰¹ and producing a type of democracy ruled by homogeneity. As Schmitt says, democracy requires 'first homogeneity and second – if the need arises – elimination or eradication of heterogeneity' (1998: 9).

¹⁰¹ Going deeper into the friend-enemy relationship, Schmitt (2007) says that what connects both concepts is the notion and the practice of combat. 'It does not mean competition, nor does it mean pure intellectual controversy nor symbolic wrestling in which, after all, every human being is somehow always involved, for it is a fact that the entire life of a human being is a struggle and every human being symbolically a combatant. The friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing' (33).

In this chapter I will try to demonstrate how the internet helped to connect people, share information, instil a feeling of growth and increased momentum of collective will, but was unable to move from a position of diffusing information to deal with difference and conflictual positions. I will support the view that the momentum reached by the movement had, through the internet, an expression that was based upon diffusing information (in varied ways – images, sounds, text, and streams, amongst others) but was fragile in sustaining dialogue and debate amongst those with divergent positions which were therefore less likely to happen. In conclusion, the chapter asserts that the communicative collective momentum of the web in the Chilean case exploded in several parts, making the web an arena of groups communicating only with others who had a similar stance on the conflict; not accepting or tolerating difference and disagreement, and ultimately damaging the further development of a political commons.

Vertical relationships: www.reformaeducacional.cl and Twitter

By July 2011, half of the Chilean population had access to the internet and 71.4% of the overall users were aged between 15 and 29 years old – an age range containing most of the Chilean high-school and university students¹⁰². The prevalence of the internet and social media amongst students¹⁰³ was a relevant factor during 2011 in terms of media and communicative practices. As I have reviewed in chapter 6, a usual complaint amongst Chilean activists was that the coverage of social mobilizations by the mainstream media was biased. Besides the media strategy covered in the previous chapter, the company which was hired for design and communication consultancy proposed launching a website to put in

¹⁰² According to the 2012 National Survey on Cultural Consumption [Encuesta Nacional de Consumo Cultural] run by the National Council of Arts and Culture during the months of August and September 2012, 65.4% of the Chilean population over the age of 15 declared that they had used the Internet in the previous month. Amongst these users, more than half (64.3%) declared accessing the Internet on a daily basis; this tendency was stronger in people between 15 to 29 years old (71.45%). In reference to social class, 59.9% of people from lower classes (E, according to the NRS social grade) used the Internet, while 78.9% of people belonging to the class ABC1 used it permanently.

¹⁰³ A report by the company comScore (www.comscore.com) stated that, by May 2011, nine out of ten Internet users in Chile were using social networks, dedicating 30% of their time on the Internet to the use of Facebook. These figures positioned Chile as the country with the third highest presence on Facebook, just behind the Philippines and Malaysia (comScore, 2011).

simple terms the goals of the students during 2011: a reform of the national education system. Launched in April 2011, www.reformaeducacional.cl was the only website owned by students and focused on students' activism that was relevant for the mobilization. The site had three sections: an information section with a summary of the students' aims, identity, news, and videos; an engaging section with a form to subscribe to a newsletter; and a campaigning area with a varied set of resources to facilitate participation in activism and dissemination – whether on the web or in the streets.

The information section contained three subsections. The first was concerned with the identification of the movement and its aims. Thus, in the 'who we are' section, the site clearly defined the activists' identity: *'We are the student community that wants to eradicate the obstacles impeding that your future could be free and equitable in higher education issues'*. In reference to their aims, the site stressed one core and general objective with ten secondary objectives underpinning the main aim. All of them were written in fewer than 140 characters and had a prominent button so people could immediately retweet them. The core aim was to *'help in the construction of a quality education, oriented towards the benefit of Chile and the Chileans...'* At the end of this paragraph they asked: *'help us spread our aims on Twitter and on Facebook. For a reform in education, act now'*.

The secondary objectives were written in this way:

02

We need equal opportunities: less than 10% of the poorest students manage to finish a career.

03

Fees in Chile are the most expensive in the world and almost no university is in the ranking of global quality.

The second element in the information section was news about ongoing activities in which students were immersed, such as visits to the Ministry of Education, street demonstrations, or public statements directed at some government

initiative. The third subsection housed a set of videos about the critical points of the Chilean education system, created to provide a simple battery of information. Some of these recordings explained with figures, graphics, and animations, the current state of Chilean education, stressing in one minute its inequalities and how harmful it was for the families of current and future students. Other videos contained testimonies of almost every single student federation president addressing the people and explaining to them why they were calling for a reform in education. Lasting 15–30 seconds, the videos were shot in medium close-up shots with the students talking directly to the camera, as demonstrated in the following images.



Snapshots from videos presented by students on the website www.reformaeducacional.cl

The website prioritised education reform as a matter of urgency and consequently contained a section calling upon readers to ‘act now’. With this aim in sight, the website put out a call to collect 50,000 supporters for the reform who were each required to sign a form on the website to help disseminate information to peers, families, classmates, and acquaintances. The online call reached 50,000 supporters and by June 2011, exceeded it by a significant margin, when the mobilization gained momentum described by the same activists as being far beyond their expectations.

Finally, the campaigning section held an innovative set of elements and instructions for web and street activism from a ‘do it yourself’ perspective with two subsections: ‘act on the Internet’ and ‘act in the territory’.

The ‘act on the Internet’ section contained an innovative set of tools and instructions for web and street activism using social networks, including

twibbons¹⁰⁴ and memes¹⁰⁵. Both twibbons and memes were not provided simply for copying and pasting on other platforms. Whilst there were images available to copy and paste, the website encouraged supporters to create their own memes and twibbons using step-by-step guides. To make this work easier, the team operating the website uploaded a set of ‘resources for action’. These resources included fonts especially crafted to enable others to make their own creations. In the case of twibbons, the website offered the opportunity to customise Facebook and Twitter profiles with images that supported the reform, as shown in the following example.



This is the way twibbons appeared on Facebook or Twitter profiles.

But these resources were not solely for web action; they also included materials for street campaigns in neighbourhoods, and their own body of activists through the second subsection ‘act in the territory’. These resources followed the same step-by-step pattern to support the creation of objects for dissemination. In this case there were guides for creating leaflets, posters, big banners, and design T-shirts, set out in a simple and straightforward manner to make them accessible to the average user of text processors. Moreover, the web provided a font source that, instead of having letters, had symbols resembling people, buildings, money, diplomas, and the face of the President and his Minister of Education, in order for the user to produce designs quickly and easily from any computer.

¹⁰⁴ A twibbon is an image overlapped on top of a social media profile image, also known as an avatar, with the idea of expressing support for a cause.

¹⁰⁵ When applied to the Internet, the term ‘meme’ refers to user-created images with short texts ‘articulated as parodies, remixes, or mashups’ (Shifman, 2014: 2).

j	J	k	K	l	L	z	Z	x	X
⊙									
v	V	b	B	n	N	m	M		
									
+	*	,	;	-	—	[]	<	>
									

This is the type of font available from the website. While letter v has an image of the president of the nation at that time, the letter x depicts Chile's presidential palace.

From the start of the mobilization until its end, social media platforms were used as a means to keep contact, inform, to be informed, to create groups and events, and, over and above the vertical top-bottom relationship included in the website www.reformaeducacional.cl, activists' use of the internet was geared towards peer-produced expressions, although not in every case. The use of Twitter reflected a type of relationship which followed a more vertical logic when compared with the use of Facebook and YouTube that were closer to peer-produced expressions, and involving co-production and co-distribution. In the following paragraphs I will describe the vertical features of the use of Twitter.

In general, activists did not regard Twitter to be a commonly used social media platform. However, it is possible to find three areas of recognition around how Twitter was relevant for the mobilization. The first was as a means of gaining media attention for the opinion of certain actors (such as student unions and student leaders) on current affairs concerning government announcements or events occurring in marches or occupations. The second was very similar, but with a leaning towards the activists and those in general who had an interest in having a direct link with leaders and unions. The third was simply as a useful means to spread content in a concerted way.

The first of these methods of using Twitter was through the accounts of student unions, and mainly of student leaders who became news providers for the mainstream media. Camila Donato, President of Feumce Students' Union, described how they could quickly get in touch with news radio programs: 'Twitter was used more to get to media than to people. We wrote something like "Special police forces trespass college building" and tagged radio stations, like @biobio¹⁰⁶.'

There was a second use connected with the previous method, favourable towards activists and those in general who wished to pass on information as quickly as possible – whether a resolution or a clarification of something the media had published. Most of the students' unions had a Twitter account, but the most prominent figures of the movement were those who took the most from this leader-follower relationship. Indeed, by the end of August 2011, Camila Vallejo, the president of Universidad de Chile Students' Union – and one of the two most notorious leaders of that year – had approximately 170,000 followers. At the end of that year the number reached 356,411, surpassing the number of followers for the 'Government of Chile' account at that time.

The third way of using Twitter demonstrated the awareness of some community managers, of the power of social media when a permanent and, at times, unified effort was conveyed. This was the case with the account @movilizatechile which was managed by one student and consistently created, linked, and replied to information through Twitter reaching more than 40,000 followers that year. In September 2011 the man behind the account formed a coalition with other community managers and Facebook page administrators to create a more powerful and unified position in the face of government actions. This coordinated action reached agreement about what they would do using their social media accounts, and the way they would do it. That collaboration allowed them to accomplish concerted media strikes around specific contents, particularly in the final months of the mobilization.

¹⁰⁶ @biobio is the username of Radio BioBio, one of the most important news radios in Chile.

There came a moment when we were in touch with other people sending messages to our accounts saying 'hey we could do something' until a moment when we created an internal Facebook group that we called 'Coordination Web'. Every account involved in this group had thousands of people following them, so we created this space to support each other. But this coordination began before with the aim of setting the conflict in the position we thought it deserved to be. I remember once there was a blackout in the whole country. After that we wrote on Twitter 'thanks to everybody for taking part in the blackout for Education'. At 9 or 10pm that was a trending topic and people were talking about education. Gonzalo Flores.

Beyond this use by entities such as student unions and student leaders, and by a small group of people in charge of social media accounts, students did not consider Twitter to be something even close to being a catalyst for mobilization, as has been considered by some scholars in the case of the Arab Spring (Castells, 2012). The reason for this belief can be found in the low use of Twitter by the Chilean population¹⁰⁷ and because activists regarded it as scarcely compelling in terms of actively participating in political terms and not being a mere follower. Furthermore, within the movement there were problems and concerns with the use of Twitter: The potential damage caused by spreading rumours that were difficult to curtail or deny; the idea that it was possible to conduct politics exclusively through Twitter; and the fact that the only accounts with a significant following were those already raised as leaders by the mainstream media. This last element convinced students of the notion that Chile's mainstream media, and not Twitter, was the ultimate agent of recognition and consequently, Twitter was not breaking that vertical style of relationships.

Peer production and more horizontal relationships

The use of Facebook was geared towards peer-produced experiences of co-production. Closer to the daily life of a considerable number of people – by 2011, 90.7% of internet users in Chile had an account (comScore, 2011) – Facebook was, from the beginning of the mobilization, a place to write comments, post links, and a forum to communicate with others against a backdrop of the perception of a

¹⁰⁷ In May 2011, only 13.8% of Chilean Internet users had a Twitter account, in contrast to the popularity of Facebook, which is used by 90.7% of the population (comScore, 2011).

growing wave of contention. The experience gathered by students in previous years, motivated them to exploit the multitasking options Facebook offered, using it in a more purposeful way, as can be seen in the case of the Facebook page Toma PUCV (Occupation PUCV). Created in June 2011, during the first days of the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso occupation, the page was launched after it was agreed that grassroots students would have a network to facilitate fast, clear, and concerted communication. Without awaiting a central command from their union, a group of students put the page in motion with the mission to contest mainstream media information, share relevant data about education issues, and disseminate information regarding events such as rallies, marches, assemblies or meetings.

One of the usual practices of media at that time was to broadcast news with a discourse that was quite different to the one we – the students – had. And in that moment Facebook was the main way to inform. So one of our tasks was, considering that we had control over that tool, to use it and hopefully to make a counterbalance to mainstream media. Alonso Matus.

From an information-providing perspective, Facebook was used in tandem with the video platform, YouTube. Both merged in a prodigious way giving individuals, groups, and organizations, the chance to design their own videos and send them to friends and contacts with the capacity to receive immediate feedback on the number and names of people watching them, as well as feedback on the number of times videos were linked and shared. This happy tandem was relevant for activists in general to upload footage of occupations, marches, flashmobs, and rallies; to report violent acts from police forces; and to deliver local and international support to the mobilization.

This use of YouTube assisted activists' intentions to deliver information in several ways. It reaffirmed the national dimension of the mobilization as well as the international repercussions, elements of major consideration for the unity, and support for the movement. Observing and being aware of what happened in different cities of the country neutralized the fear of decay in their mobilization; the conversation thread that YouTube permitted also provided a means to measure

responses to the video footage and the *esprit de corps* amongst activists. In relation to their parents, or third parties unenthusiastic about the movement or its features, it served to destroy taboos or prejudices such as police violence; to show the positive side of rallies and not the violent one; and to sustain, with footage, the violent eviction of occupied buildings, amongst other things.

No one believed the image of the cop throwing tear gas on people's bodies, directly to bodies. And I remember a discussion via Facebook that was settled thanks to this video and after that it was not a matter of discussion anymore. It helped a lot. Focus Group 1, Respondent 1.

It helped a lot... to prove what you were living. It was not believed the use of paintball guns to mark people, to chase them later. People did not believe it, some said that body marks of paint were caused by mere accidents, but no, it really happened. Focus Group 1, Respondent 3.

Another important use of Facebook was as a tool to call for gatherings through the 'events' section of the platform. This feature allowed open calls for actions such as flashmobs, demonstrations, and marches. The students endorsed the organizational aspect of Facebook as a straightforward, fast, and inexpensive way to create events, but also as a way to check the reliability of the calls, to test the tone and receptiveness of people towards the event, and also to contribute to the development of that event. In this sense, event threads were a space where an open call for a particular action was susceptible to be transformed and modified to form a completely different kind of action. An example of the latter occurred with the flashmob 'Genkidama for Chilean Education':

I remember one day partying with some friends and me telling them 'guys, I want to make an event on Facebook calling for a Genkidama¹⁰⁸ for education'. It was just an idea, a kind of joke. Those days people made calls for marathons of kisses. So the next day I created an event on Facebook at 3pm. By 9pm it had three thousand people saying they were going. From that moment it became a snowball. And I just created the event with a little message and a picture asking for energy to have free and quality education! This snowball began to grow. The initial idea became something bigger and different. I just made the event but the people supplied ideas and that became something different. It is interesting

¹⁰⁸ A *Genkidama* is an energy bomb of the character Goku in the animated Japanese cartoon *Dragon Ball*. Japanese cartoons, and especially the *Dragon Ball* series, have been very popular in Chile since the 1980s.

because in the end it was a collective idea. Omar Astorga.

In summary, Facebook appears in students' accounts as a helpful tool that benefitted the mobilization because it was informative and intuitive to use, favouring an easy connection with people from different zones of the country, and for organizing different kinds of meetings. But the use of Facebook also presented a controversial and negative feature from the students' perspective.

The controversial feature was the idea of participating in the mobilization by sharing content or just clicking the 'like' button in a comment, image, or video. For some activists, this so-called 'slacktivism' (Karpf, 2010) damaged the spirit of the mobilization due its avoidance of face-to-face interaction. During one of the focus groups, a student – Focus Group 4, Respondent 3 – stated 'you cannot pass the feeling for the mobilization through media, it is difficult, and people think they contribute with something via Facebook. Today I do not even use it, it is just a calendar'. For other activists, sharing content on Facebook was not necessarily indicative of a lazy attitude towards the movement. A high-school student from San Bernardo – a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Santiago – whose school was occupied only for a brief time, participated in the mobilization mostly via Facebook: 'I lived so far away and everything there was like living in a bubble. So with my friends we contributed via social networks. That was the way we felt integrated into the movement. We read about things that were happening, I distributed information that I cared about and gave my opinion.'

The controversy around 'slacktivism' was not extraneous to what was a general agreement about a negative feature of using Facebook – that it was not a place for respectful or sustained debates. As stated by an activist – Focus Group 1, Respondent 2 – 'Twitter and Facebook are ideal to call for marches and assemblies but not to discuss. When you discuss on Facebook it's easy to have misunderstandings.' However, misunderstandings progressed to conflict which, in turn, impeded fluent conversation. At another focus group, a student – Focus Group 6, Respondent 2 – highlighted the fact that 'people disagreed with the movement and they talked a lot on Facebook. I read an infinite number of fights of

people against the movement and Facebook was their platform.’ Twitter and Facebook emerged, according to the account given by students, as a place for abusive and violent speech and a place where it was difficult to maintain any semblance of respectful conversation. Furthermore, and quite vehemently, all students in one of the focus groups held in Santiago replied unanimously when questioned about the following topic:

Interviewer: So, would you say that Facebook contributed to reconcile antagonistic positions?

Students at focus group number 3: No, quite the opposite!

Within the different types of relationship outlined by the uses of the internet described in the section above, there are two areas in which there is recognizable activist participation: information, and discussion. Probing further into these two areas, I observe an aggregative and vertical participation that became collaborative, but only within similar groups.

The solidary flight: spreading awareness

From what has been covered so far it could be argued that, on one hand, the use of the website www.reformaeducacional.cl complied with informative purposes giving activists the chance to follow students’ official perspectives and getting the word of the activists out of only their close circles of influence. To access this site, activists had to go out of their usual operations base – mostly Facebook – and visit a website in which their only contribution towards the cause was replying to content which had already been created and, moreover, in the case of news, content written in a manner resembling the formal patterns of the mainstream media. On the other hand, social media was part of the activists daily life and sites such as Facebook were ‘mobilized’ for activism, nurturing relations with political content, triggering comments and responses and gaining a sense of awareness of the situation and of themselves as constituents of a growing movement. This use of social media involved posting, linking, sharing, and creating content as well as non-daily-life actions such as streaming footage from an occupied building through a

laptop, spending eight hours per day managing a Twitter account, or devoting every single night to creating, distributing, and replying to messages on Facebook.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 6, the Chilean media landscape was more an adversary than an ally for the movement, and even when activists dealt with the media in a strategic way there was the feeling that – from leader to grassroots positions – students had in their hands resources to counter the power of the media in a more autonomous way. Social media thus was embraced as a privileged tool to publicize their personal and group perspective on the ongoing events, to contest media information, to cover the news in their areas of influence, and to do this with a growing feeling of solidarity. In one of the focus groups, a student from Santiago – Focus Groups 1, Respondent 1 - stated: 'Facebook might have a lot of flaws, but at that moment it was a big help; without it we could not have been connected nationwide.'

The quote above conveys the feeling of being actively engaged in part of a growing movement reaching the whole nation through the action of activists, without command from authorities. Beyond the involvement from their personal Facebook accounts, activists took advantage of social media by creating activism accounts – mostly on Facebook – the purpose of which was to inform those within their circles of influence, of their activity, and ideally to heighten the ever-increasing awareness. This affective drive proliferated in different cities, faculties, and homes, and carried with it the feeling of participating in a shared practice that involved 'not just engaging with an online platform or piece of content' (Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016: 10–11) but being part of a culture of sharing. In other words, it helped to shape a sense of solidarity, a feeling of togetherness that grew along with the mobilization. This type of participation had two limitations. The first was the reduced scope of its goal, which was to inform and spread news (Morozov, 2011). The second of these limitations was the aggregative, individualistic, and dissociative character resultant from the use of web platforms. I will firstly look more closely at the aggregative and individualistic character of the uses of www.reformaeducacional and Twitter.

Vertical relationships dominated the use of the website designed to campaign for education reform (www.reformaeducacional.cl) as well as the use of Twitter. The first of these promoted a top-to-bottom engagement by clicking and forwarding messages. The petition to join the campaign by clicking and forwarding what others had created resembled the binary logic of democratic acclamation – approval/disapproval, yes or no (Dean, 2016) – where the people do not have input on what is being decided (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978). Indeed, in the two sections of the website labelled ‘act on the Internet’, and ‘act in the territory’, there were instructions to campaign which were mostly directed at individual action. There was information on how to create leaflets or make graffiti on the surrounding walls, but no information about dialogical encounters with neighbours or others in general, nor how to convey assemblies in a tolerant and democratic way. In the end, with this type of engagement, even when using an activist discourse and the tools given by the website and social media such as Twitter, the kind of participation that ensued was individualistic, aggregative, and strongly determined from above. In this sense, it invited a type of participation that was no different to that which occurs on contemporary TV music and reality shows such as *American Idol* or *The Voice*. As Jenkins, Ito, and Boyd accurately reflect, this type of participation cannot be described ‘as resistant or alternative’ (2016: 21) but merely aggregative in a way that resembles a minimalist type of participation ‘where power is delegated, and leans towards elite models of democracy’ (Dahlgren, 2013: 20).

However, most of the internet use in the 2011 movement was not linked to the website www.reformaeducacional.cl. It was centred upon the two major social media platforms used in the mobilization – Facebook and Twitter. The use of Twitter was characterized by establishing an informative rather than deliberative relation, thus replicating the logics of mainstream media. As a purposive/directive and time-limited tool, Twitter was used to attract media attention as a vehicle for delivering the opinion of certain actors and to inform ‘followers’, with some urgency. In both cases, its use did not go further than sharing news and raising awareness about what was happening (Morozov, 2011: 15) without breaking the

vertical, elitist, and aggregative communicative logics of mainstream media. Three examples support this point.

The first example comes from observing the most important Twitter accounts of student leaders and students' unions. Those accounts aimed to reach mainstream media quickly and reliably with the expectation that the tweets would form part of the media's reports and articles. Initially, in this communicative link there was a double purpose: to attract the attention of mainstream media outlets, but most importantly, to validate the account and the leader's position through the acknowledgement of his or her voice through mainstream media.

The one who gets more followers will get more trending topics, but it is super difficult to cross that wall. So yes, social networks helped, but when Camila Vallejo and Giorgio Jackson were already relevant figures and had thousands of followers. But to think in January 2011 that you were going to get far with Twitter was the same thing as thinking that through our friends from alternative media we were going to get really far; there was no difference. Noam Titelman.

As Noam Titelman explained, only after mainstream media validated the leaders did they gain a large number of followers, and at the same time established a vertical leader-follower or top-bottom relationship. This validation from the media ran not only from mainstream media to the student leaders but also from students to the type of information that students circulated: there was a demand to have solid information, media-like information but made by the students.

Gonzalo Flores' involvement in the movement provides a primary anecdotal example of this demand. The validation of the Twitter account @movilizatechile was progressive and only under scrutiny and updated by users demanding reliable propaganda-free information. Similar to events which occurred with the control over student representatives' performance – as reviewed in Chapter 4 – when the information expectations were agreed with others, the users and activists strengthened the loyalty bond between them and the account, sharing information from those sources, testifying to the quality of the account, and demanding more content.

People following the Twitter account wanted to know about the conflict, so I began to read newspaper after newspaper. Then I selected some links and published them. People started little by little to follow the account, then to recommend the account to their friends and it started to grow. There were cultural events that needed visibility and the account served that purpose. For instance, I made a calendar with the events of the week with information that people sent me. I became an information service. People asked me, 'hey, where is the march going to be?' And I was at home! I worked – I called it work – from 9 in the morning until 7 or 8pm, then I had dinner and worked until 1am. I was connected all day. Gonzalo Flores.

Flores acted as a professional information service. He had the time and knowledge to work with computer programs and software, and that was his way of serving the movement, but he was in sole charge with no opportunity to work collaboratively with others. This isolation resulted in him taking decisions regarding what he considered was best for the movement. In this sense, he initially programmed the account to provide information to everyone posting on Twitter a word related to the movement. Flores assumed that people posting news or forwarding tweets about news might be interested in information about the movement. Progressively – with an increasing number of followers – he realized he had an informative compromise with the followers of the account, and he moved from forwarding and replying information to a more editorial role, introducing issues about the movement (through links to content from websites or through reports available online); announced relevant dates and events (such as gigs or meetings in a particular school) and published questions relating to responses from the state, thus addressing students' demands. But he was carrying out all of this out single-handedly, developing a media and communicative action that could never – with few exceptions, such as the exception to be discussed in the paragraphs following – be carried out in a concerted and collective manner.

The only occasion when Flores managed a more collaborative endeavour was through the joint action with Facebook and Twitter account managers who

escalated web actions on a national scale. This case, nonetheless, is a third example describing the aggregative communicative logics of 'likes' and 'retweets'.

There came a moment in which we communicated to each other, first through the same Twitter accounts, saying that we could do this and that. Thus we got to a point when we created a Facebook group called 'web coordination'... That space was a way to coordinate ourselves, to become a group, and we agreed to create hashtags and trending topics. Gonzalo Flores.

One of the actions conveyed by this group was to attribute the cause of a major blackout – affecting five regions of Chile on the evening of 24 September – to the power of Chilean students through the hashtag #apagonporlaeducacion (#blackoutforeducation). That night at 9pm, the idea that the students' movement had caused the power outage was greatly celebrated. Even when not being seriously considered, it was taken as a humorous event that kept the morale of activists high and maintained the focus of public discussion, on matters related to education. What is relevant in this case is that while there was peer-enabled action by a small number of highly skilled people, the participation it entailed was mostly aggregative as long as it consisted of forwarding (retweeting) the hashtag, and in some cases it included a more personal touch through tweaks of the message – as it is possible to observe in the appendix of this research.

A relevant component of this type of participation is the recent scrutiny of 'automated accounts that participate in news and information dissemination on social networking platforms' (Lokot and Diakopoulos, 2016: 683) – commonly known as 'bots' – to create, increase, and support particular messages on Twitter. Bots take the place of human intervention (Edwards et al, 2014) to make – in the case of Twitter – a topic, a person, or an event become popular through the creation of particular software. Aside from ethical considerations, the fact that the repetition of a word or sentence can become a trending topic – the 'holy grail' of Twitter, as Baker claims (2015) – is easier to automate with bots in an artificial way that looks like grassroots (Shin, Jian, Driscoll and Bar, 2016) reflects the area this communicative practice is more focused upon: accumulating a large number of similar messages via any means. And while the latter can be useful in visualising,

say, a conflict or humanitarian situation, such as in Gaza (Siapera, Hunt and Lynn, 2015), and whilst it could be useful to generate discussion around a topic, it still entails a communicative practice that is mostly aggregative and focused on an immediate outcome – as it is evident in the use of non human forms of expression – rather than in the communicative process of dialogue, collaboration, and discussion.

In summary, the informative use of the internet was important because it allowed people to be part of a shared practice and culture (Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016) and to feel that their contribution to the emergence of the movement, had an impact. However, once there was a general awareness about the movement and extended greater sense of solidarity to the claims of students, the informative character of the use of the internet appeared to reach a turning point and a point of decline. Beyond that point, the affective drive of passing information, criticizing mainstream media, uploading material to draw attention to movement issues and other similar actions, slowed down. The task was accomplished and there was no more to do on the internet regarding the management of information, other than to continue with the same strategy. There was the need for another type of relationship. Gonzalo Flores, manager of @movilizatechile, outlines this limitation:

...The thing about Twitter is that if you say 'hey, let's occupy the Congress' probably nobody will go. I can generate contents to keep that particular idea in time but I am one of those who think that we are not going to make the revolution through Twitter. I mean, if we do not get out to make something physical, creating spaces, we are just going to be there... tweeting.

From the words of Gonzalo Flores, the will and need for activists to progress from informing and increasing awareness about the movement, its reasons, actions and claims, becomes clear. But the question was how? One simple way to resolve this need for progression was through Facebook as a platform whose design was open for debate, discussion, sharing and challenging ideas. Facebook, as the media platform most used by activists, and key for the expansive and fast distribution of news, turned out to be the place in which the

collective was broken into pieces, into a myriad of identities unable to relate with others and cope with conflictual differences.

The flight to fight: confrontation over collaboration

In her book *The Flight from Conversation* (2015), Sherry Turkle uses the word 'flight' to emphasize the quick movement from face-to-face conversations, to 'chatting' through mobile phones or laptops. I have used this idea of the flight in the past section to label the affective drive of reaching others with information, news, and updates about the movement, and I saw the features of that flight and its limitations: dialogue and debate. In this section, I deal with the question about the extent to which the use of the internet promoted dialogue and debate on web platforms and social media, mainly centred on Facebook as the platform that – holding a peer relationship – allowed for a confrontational and diachronic form of participation.

As long as the mobilization wave was increasing, Facebook became a web-based arena for the encounter of a diverse group of people – from total strangers to acquaintances and friends – around topics related to the movement. But these encounters were far from a happy advertisement of free-flowing debate. Indeed, there was a strong feeling among the students involved in the 2011 mobilization about the weakness of Facebook as a place to conduct discussions. Verbal abuse, intolerance, and personal attacks turned comment threads into threads of confrontation in which the other was more an enemy than an adversary (Mouffe, 2005); therefore, some found their voice and arguments were rejected and others were bullied.

The latter relates to an important element of social media use – the stress of shaping a 'front stage' identity (Goffman, 1990) and a tendency to deal only with those who share an identity, thus avoiding potential conflict (Turkle, 2015). This was the case with the activists' use of the internet. Indeed, awareness of who was supporting the mobilization or not did not even come at the stage of exchanging messages in a particular discussion. It came earlier, due to the symbolic weight of

personal accounts and available posts that, in the case of Facebook, were – and are – more or less public, even from the profile picture showing a symbol for or against the mobilization. This display of personal identity, as well as the posting of certain types of videos, comments, images, and links, contributed to building an identity and political position traceable by everyone. As Francisca Villablanca, a high-school student in 2011, said: ‘It was growing like that, more in silence than in expressing things straightforwardly. With our classmates we knew who thought more or less similarly to us without the need of having a meeting or sharing ideas, we knew who was in favour of the mobilization and who was against it.’

When written discussions arose around a particular aspect of the mobilization, there were a group of signifiers that were already communicating the positions held by each side. Thus, at the point of written exchanges, activists tended to vehemently express their beliefs rather than listening to or reading what the other had to say. Indeed, activists regarded Facebook discussions as locations where political, social, and cultural divisions – such as the role of the market in society, the entitlement of people to rise out of the polity, or the existence of rights in a free-market society – became enlivened, encouraging people to take clear and opposing positions. In this sense, Facebook discussions turned into gatherings around a topic that was approached from multiple perspectives with the expectation that the most hard-hitting perspective would bring the greatest satisfaction to the greatest number. In the opinion of a university student – Focus Group 4, Respondent 5 – ‘there was a polarization because people preferred social networks, Facebook, instead of talking and saying ‘let’s get to an agreement or consensus’. To me it was much more important and powerful what happened to people (face to face) than what happened with social networks’. In other case – Focus Group 5, Respondent 1 – Facebook worked as the place for insulting people: ‘My day to day was to contribute diffusing information and responding to classmates who did not know about the topic (Chile’s education system) and teachers who, in some way, opposed what we were doing. I study law, so some teachers said ‘this is wrong, there are other methods’, but I contended them, I raised my voice and discussed with them. But when I got back

home I had threats and insults on my Facebook. That happened, it was natural'. Observing this of online behaviour, Hindman has expressed that what is absent in this type of discussion is 'the mutual respect that democratic deliberation requires' (2009: 138). On this sense, this kind of exchanges was harmful for the collaborative attempt of holding discussions on the web or in face-to-face interactions.

There were people not agreeing with the movement and talked a lot on Facebook. I read an endless number of people against the movement and Facebook was their platform. But in assemblies they did not speak. I never saw instances of people disagreeing with the movement that generated debate. That called my attention. I would have liked them to speak out or generate that space to speak about why they were against the movement. To reflect about that [criticism against the movement] was totally acceptable but it did not happen, I do not know if it was due a lack of motivation but I never saw strength of these groups out of the social networks. Focus Group 6, Respondent 2.

Consequently, discussions and debates on social media allowed people to identify and affiliate themselves to those whose stance towards the movement was similar to their own. With the passing of the days, weeks, and months, however, this identification was progressively leading people to pick sides from major cleavages – free or paid education – and secondary cleavages – the way to convey the mobilization – to cleavages related not only to the topics of the mobilization, but to the way in which comments were made. It was on one or the other side of these cleavages where communicative bonds were strengthened. And the interaction, once these communicative ghettos were shaped, between people with different identifications, was usually harsh, violent, and more inclined towards ending that dialogue than to pursuit of a common or respectful disagreement. Reflecting on the events of 2011, Diego Vela underlined the difference between off-line conversations and online discussions:

To meet in person was fundamental because you made a link there, for instance, with a mate thinking different than you who you only contacted by social networks. I mean, we ended declaring war, but when we had to talk and confront the other frontally, in person, you noticed that you had in common 80% of things and there was only 20% of discrepancies. So yes, I think that in human contact there is a

heavy weight of relations. And that is something that social networks still cannot incorporate. I mean, the empathy link, a more sincere dialogue. Diego Vela.

As well as the tendency for identification and self-affirmation from a political, ideological, or strategic position that meant a flight to fight others, the use of Facebook had another element linked to flying: the fast-paced engagement of Facebook discussions. As I have reviewed in Chapter 4 when talking about practices within walled intimacy, time was a crucial asset for sustaining discussions. But in the case of Facebook threads, debates and discussions were constantly outdated as new comment threads – due to a particular event, image, or news story triggering new debates – appeared with people constantly posting news and comments. Aside from all the elements that make a debate on Facebook dissimilar from the most traditional discussions in packed-room assemblies, time was one of the most important.

There was so much movement on the page [Toma PUCV] that we did not have the time to discuss. We took that decision from the beginning because in case of starting to discuss we were going to be on Facebook for hours. If we wanted to generate debates through our posts, we could do that because our account was massive, because there were opinions on the threads and because probably what you read made you think about it at home, but the next day there was another debate. Alonso Matus.

What this assessment on the performance of discussions and debates shows is the dispersion of collective action in several similar groups that were unable to work with difference. This finding contradicts contemporary insights – like that posed by Bennett and Segerberg (2013) – establishing that the use of platforms such as Facebook or Twitter as ways to individually participate in political activity, forges the strongest networks. This case portrays the web as a myriad of nodes with no connection, unable to establish collective action from similarity, unlike the case of the ‘Genkidama for Chilean Education’.

The case of this flashmob based upon Japanese animation provides material with which to observe two areas Dahlgren (2013) considers when analyzing social media and the type of participation that it entails. Both are relevant to what seems

to be the impossibility of the commons in this aspect of the research. The first of these elements is that, if communicative practices of confrontation are not usual and part of shared practices in the offline world, it should not be expected that these practices are going to happen thanks to the internet (Dahlgren, 2013). As we have seen, part of the weakness of Chilean neoliberal democracy has been precisely the denial of difference, of otherness, creating a culture of participation (Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016) that not only has a problem of locations for these encounters, but also to generate discussions that take account of difference and confrontation from an adversarial point of view. To think that debates on Facebook should run otherwise would be to fall into a deterministic view alienated from the social context in which the activists live.

A second contribution by Dahlgren is the invitation to observe participation in the web realm on the axis of conflict-oriented and consensus/solution (2013). So far I have focused on the way in which the use of Facebook leads to certain types of debate and conflict. The insight on the consensus/solution type of participation is useful to observe ways in which the internet allows collective action on web-based platforms. In doing so it is possible to escape from using a tempting generalization: that all action on the internet is individualistic and aggregative. This is precisely the generalization that Jeffrey Juris (2012) makes in his analysis of Occupy Wall Street, observing the type of engagement that social media engenders. Juris criticizes social media by asserting that it can promote logics of aggregation, so rather than mobilizing 'networks of networks', the use of Twitter and Facebook within social movements tends to generate 'crowds of individuals' (2012: 267). From the information presented in this chapter, the cases of Twitter coordination and the 'Genkidama' flashmob partially proves the point that social media can promote aggregative logics of relation and a vertical type of communication. But a warning needs to be raised on this point. It is not enough to observe the final product or outcome – which might look like a mass aggregation of people – when studying social movements, especially if the sight is put on its media and

communicative practices. The analysis needs to consider participation processes, and then to find out whether they promote logics of aggregation or not.

So whilst in both cases the outcomes look like aggregations – in the form of a trending topic, which was the number of times #apagonporlaeducacion was posted; or flashmobs, which was the sum and action of people – the participation processes were different. In the case of the coordination after the blackout, there was certainly a more vertical dynamic as long as the action consisted of a leader group creating something (the hashtag) that was later forwarded by thousands of people –and possibly non-human actions through the use of bots. And whilst the leader group was a coordination group made up of grassroots supporters, the type of participation fostered was mostly aggregative and no different to what the website www.reformaeducacional.cl did in the dawn of the mobilization. But in the case of the ‘Genkidama for Chilean Education’ it was different. It was an idea following a narrow lead that was developed from beginning to end by different sources involved in a creative action, expanding on an endeavour that was ultimately spread across different cities of the country. So while one promoted the vertical logics of acclamation democracy (the leader and the voter), the other advanced in communicative ways, nurturing a political practice where participation did not stick to a determined path:

I think what we did in the flashmob could be a mechanism of direct democracy where we could not only create collectively the demand for something but where we could create political endeavours. For instance, organizing a complete Ministry through this way. I think this action could contribute to this idea, because this logic of demanding for something keeps us in the logic of representative democracy where people are really passive and you need a third party to act on your behalf. One of the features of this type of action was that it showed how people could take decisions and manage something in an effective and collective way. Omar Astorga.

Dahlgren’s invitation to witness consensus/solution participation on the internet permits us to probe into practices in which students took part willingly, sharing ideas and also disagreements, and not in an aggregative way. As Omar Astorga claims, that may provide the first step to thinking about democratic relationships from an open invitation, to creating something collaboratively. However, what

consensus/solution online participation cannot avoid in the cases studied in this chapter is the fact that it is only possible when no major dissidence appears. And that is problematic because, as has been exhaustively stated, the political only exists when there is space for difference, disagreement and the conditions to manifest that disagreement. To participate politically involves confrontation between adversaries (Dahlgren, 2013; Mouffe, 2015). From what we have discussed in this section, that confrontation seems very unlikely if not impossible, affecting the idea of a commons as an inclusive political arena and as a growing political subject.

Conclusion

I think that social media reached its peak at some point. That moment showed that we should have made an effort in other areas of communication. Through Facebook you get to people like the young or young adults. But for a movement whose target is to make a reform on education, like a real one, this is not the type of people you need to get to. We should have had a bigger commitment in the neighbourhoods. Focus Group 4, Respondent 1.

The image of a rocket flying up high and then exploding into smithereens in the sky provides us with a good visual analogy to describe the energy and apparent cohesion of a solidary will that collapsed after an initial launch. The use of the internet had an expansive dimension at the start of the mobilization. Getting everywhere, quickly, enthusiastically, informing others of what was happening. The opportunity to have a more autonomous means of expression thanks to web platforms, and not depending entirely on the media, gave activists the chance to be purveyors of their words at differing levels. In that task the uses of the internet succeeded but also found the limitations of not breaking vertical, individualistic, and aggregative logics of communication, and could not go a step further than proffering mere information. Indeed, dialogue and debate led to an explosion of a collective will into identity ghettos. Interestingly, this explosion did not arise as a consequence of discrepancies and divergent positions around the topics of the mobilization, but as a consequence of a dialogue from a standpoint in which the subjects were not able to concede a thing to their counterparts.

Therefore, the solidary will could never get rid of its individualistic, aggregative top-to-bottom style of participation, and the engagement occurred only between those who had the same identity or stance towards the movement. This led to what Paulo Freire describes as a lack of solidarity, as long as the incumbents do not 'enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary' (1996: 31). This broken solidarity thus opens a road towards sectarianism in which, as Mouffe posits, the other cannot become anything other than an enemy (2005). From what I have discussed in this chapter, the tendency described by Freire occurred because the flow of information and general goodwill could not accommodate the other who represented a different position towards the movement. The consequence of this fractured solidarity shaped a landscape crowded by ghettos of sameness that, in Hardt and Negri's perspective, not only replicated logics of oppression, but also created an obstacle 'to manage to communicate and act in common while remaining internally different' (2004: xiv). The major outcome of this impossibility is therefore an uncommoning process that occurs precisely in a type of media that was, is, and will be, extensive amongst Chilean people.

Clearly this uncommoning process collides with deterministic views of the internet but also with critical approaches such as Matthew Hindman's conclusion that 'it may be easy to speak in cyberspace, but it remains difficult to be heard' (2009: 142). And this conclusion opens an interesting door in the context of this chapter. Hindman's research was based on the US and focused on blogs and bloggers. His conclusion pointed to the vastness and structural conditions of the web in which, he argued, those who held power in the offline world did the same in the online world. While the idea that it is difficult to be heard on the internet in spite of having the opportunity to write a blog or run a social media site, makes sense in the Chilean case as this chapter has shown, there is also a type of communicative relationship even between peers, friends, and acquaintances that does not contribute to being heard.

In this sense, the chance to facilitate dialogue, debate, discussion, and disagreement seems to not be necessarily connected to face-to-face encounters,

as some romantic visions suggest (Turkle, 2015), but more related to a culture of participation in a communicative space in which the political can be fully fledged (Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016; Dahlgren, 2013). In other words, to drastically change the communicative ecology of neoliberal democracies. The use of the internet did not change this communicative ecology. Conversely, these uses were functional to the individualistic 'do it yourself' culture of neoliberalism – closer to an idea of 'do it alone' rather than the anarchist autonomy of 'do it yourself' – and the aggregative culture of democracies much like Chile's. They lack an element present in practices covered in the previous three chapters: that of subversion. Whether fighting the atmosphere of fear within homes; dealing with different opinions; breaking the logics of neoliberal space and time at university buildings; or strategically facing a neoliberal biased media, in all of these the communicative possibility was not given – it was taken, re-signified, or strategically used through acts subverting the order of neoliberal democracy.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

‘We are the owners of Chile, the owners of capital and land; the rest is malleable and saleable mass; it does not have weight as opinion or as prestige’.
Eduardo Matte Pérez, El Pueblo newspaper, March 19th, 1892

In the last four chapters I have described and analysed different perspectives in response to the general question of this research: how communicative and media practices of the Chilean students’ movement built a commons with capacity for the political to exist in the Chilean neoliberal democracy. The answer to this question was launched through two specific inquiries. The first queried the way in which communicative and media practices contributed to the emergence of something approximating ‘the commons’ in both public spaces and mainstream media. The second questioned what types and forms of organization were involved in media and communicative practices in the creation of the commons. The answers to these questions came from the cases, insights, and observations developed in the four previous chapters. These answers signal a journey from the emergence, to the fracture and end of a momentary commons, a journey that in theoretical terms exceeds the frameworks of liberal democracy and connects ordinary culture with mediations that, on different levels and using different means, make the political possible in neoliberal contexts.

In the first part of this chapter I will make an overview of the most distinctive elements of the various media and communicative practices analyzed in the research, marking their contribution to rendering a momentary commons up until an era I have called the burst of that momentary commons. This summarized account will position this conclusion chapter to assert that the reasons for the emergence/burst of the commons relates to the subversion of neoliberal communicative logics, whilst its demise lies specifically in the inability to subvert these logics for any length of time. After this conclusion, I will set the original

contribution of this research around the theorisation of the concept of the commons in two ways. The first one signalling that normative frameworks of liberal democracy that aim to analyze contemporary relations between democracy, media and communications – like the public sphere – are outdated; and the second one providing key elements for a new progressive politics and more equal, participatory and collaborative democracy. Later on, I address the limitations of this research and also the research paths that could be opened from this research and other similar insights. In the end I give a final overview of the actual state of Chile's struggle for education reform and social changes that somehow relates to a new 'commons' spirit.

Commoning/Uncommoning through communicative practices

Commoning

A social movement emerges and grows from various realms and in different ways. In this research I have found this emergence in homes and educational buildings as locations in which conversations, discussions, and meetings were possible. In these places of walled intimacy – covered in chapter four – the malaise against the Chilean education system and the urgency of mobilizing began to be discussed in familiar encounters, in local assemblies at schools and in major meetings at occupied buildings. These were gatherings that in nodes of intimacy and trust, mediations, discussion, and questioning of the 'wrongness' of the world in which the students and Chilean people lived, took place. It was a place in which imagining a possible change out of the constraints of formal democracy was possible due to the degree of confidence and care of fellow citizens.

Intimacy and trust networks thus served as shelters for an engagement happening through students triggering conversations at home and practicing a culture of participation in school assemblies and occupied buildings. These settings nested a growing commons nurturing conversations and face-to-face discussions that signalled a comeback from the disenfranchisement of people to interfere in the political in a way that resembled the secrecy and intimacy of the oppressive era of the

1970's and 1980's under military dictatorship. This social fabric appears thus knitted by communicative practices that instead of emitting a loud primal scream (Holloway, 2002), were crafted through whispers resonating in Chilean activists covering the whole country, enacting conversations and debates with relatives, friends, and acquaintances. Along with the aforementioned protected intimacy, the comeback had a distinctive feature in the creation of time and space in opposition to the bio political conditions of neoliberalism. This subversion carried a disruption that opposed neoliberal timing, by taking as much time as needed; and space, seizing buildings and obstructing the normal day-to-day life of academic institutions. These acts meant that there was no opportunity for communicative practices to discuss common concerns without creating basic conditions to specifically allow debate and discussion.

Emboldened by this process of knitting together a common concern, people felt entitled to rise up and – as expressed in the fifth chapter – walk out of the walled intimacy of homes or occupied buildings to speak out. Set in urban spaces crossed by state and market restrictions (Borja, 2004; Stavrides, 2016) activists' established a number of different actions in places they claimed as common arenas for expression and relationships. Activists' developed a wide array of communicative and media practices for reaching out to, and being amongst, people: art interventions; marches in carnival styles; and face-to-face interactions with random subjects in the street were all part of their repertoire. On buses, in streets and corners, during daytime and through the night, cities saw the way in which people talked, debated and discussed with other people in a commoning process of engaging cohabitation (Euler, 2015).

These practices thus 'unfenced' a space that under Chile's neoliberal democracy was closed to the normal flux of daily life and the political. Activists produced a space and moment of subversion by being present in locations drained of actions connected to discussing life in common and also by giving a representation of what they were and what they were doing: a growing embodied commons subverting the daily pulse of the streets for those participating in the public demonstrations and

those observing them. This representation, however, was not only limited to the experience of those involved within marches, rallies and face-to-face interactions. It was also a representation made by others within the movement through varied means. Amongst them, mainstream media and the internet played a fundamental role. With the intention to dispute the representation media was going to put forward on a national scale, the activists decided to deal with mainstream media in a strategic way.

The sixth chapter of this thesis analysed the stance and behaviour of the movement towards mainstream media. At the beginning of chapter six, I made clear the decision of the movement to relate to mainstream media and, furthermore, have a strategy to maximise gain from that relationship. The experience garnered in previous mobilizations plus the pervasiveness and consumption of media within Chilean society, moved activists to decidedly take an approach that, conservative in its forms, was disruptive in its aims. On its formal side it was no different to what an NGO conveys through communications and media offices. Mobilized students produced press releases, press conferences, had spokespersons and monitored what the media was saying about the movement. Through these means, the movement created cleavages between those who were with the mobilization and those who opposed it; to move media's representation of protesters from vandals to valid political actors; and to create a simple story in which the movement emerged on the good side versus an evil political and economic system.

In this sense, chapter six sustains that media work disarticulated (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014) two axioms functioning as commonsense: market driven policies as the best way to sustain the national education system, and neoliberal democracy as a satisfactory mechanism of participation. Once these two axioms were tackled, the movement went on a process of re-articulation (Hall, 1985; Grossberg, 1996), in which from a limited 'us' created a bigger and extended 'us', an imagined commons validated not only as a large amount of people but most importantly as a constituent actor in the definition of the future in common. This achievement was,

however, momentary and unlikely to endure – considering the episodic condition of social movements and, most importantly, the ownership of Chilean media and its defence of right-wing policies and neoliberal guidelines. These limitations allowed me to pose some questions about the type of communicative engagement mainstream media permits to activists and the means people possess for large-scale mediation. In a general theoretical framework, I questioned how to go beyond challenging hegemonic paradigms through symbolic means – a question unaddressed by NSM scholars (Melucci, 1985, 1995, Offe, 1985) – to enhance democracy through communicative practices.

In chapter seven I addressed these questions by assessing the uses of the internet during the events of 2011. I initially pointed out the high hopes that activists had of the internet as a means to embrace major degrees of autonomy and a more direct connection to and between people, especially compared with the degrees of autonomy provided by mainstream and traditional media. Cautious of falling into political and technological determinisms, I described their uses of internet in two axes: One entailing a more vertical relationship, in which I included the uses of the web site www.reformaeducacional.cl and Twitter; and a second use holding more horizontal bonds, in which I considered the uses of Facebook.

From this description I raised two major tendencies in the uses of the internet. One tendency was a solidarity will based on the drive of activists to share information about the movement via news, pictures, and videos as quickly and widely as possible for the good of the mobilization. They felt the urge and had the autonomy to communicate the message regarding the problems of Chilean education and the need to mobilize. This was an enthusiastic action based mainly on the use of Facebook from personal and organisational accounts – such as students' unions – and on a lesser degree through the coordinated action of people managing grassroots' information accounts. The second tendency was to discuss and debate but in a way that was detrimental to the enthusiastic spirit observed in the diffusion of information. In debates and discussions, the solidarity in the thrill of informing was fractured by a marked attitude to talk rather to listen, in a flight to fights

(Turkle, 2015) in which the other was more an enemy than an adversary (Mouffe, 2005, 2013). This aggressive behaviour transformed the internet from a possible co-created commons on a large scale, into a myriad of ghettos of unconnected nodes of sameness in a network of fractured channels with a lack of solidarity.

Analyzing this burst of a possible commons, in chapter seven I reflected on the idea that talking and being heard not only depends upon the platforms or technologies activists' use, but also on the cultures of participation in which these practices are embedded. I sustain that – unlike other practices reviewed in this research – the uses of the internet did not subvert the communicative ecology of neoliberal democracies. In other words, through the internet it was possible to provide data and to get to others with information but it was not possible to go beyond diffusing news, comments, or particular feelings. When confronted with diversity, the internet held vertical, individualistic, aggregative, and aggressive logics of communication. Consequently, using the internet meant being involved in a communicative landscape surrounded by people thinking similarly and in which solidarity could not be established due the impossibility of people to enter into the situation of others (Freire, 1996) and coexist in that difference.

Up to this point, the material covered in chapters four to seven shows there were multiple ways to participate in the mobilization; most of them inviting a collective engagement in which people felt entitled – and had the means – to discuss and make decisions about the life in common (Linebaugh, 2008, 2014). It was a commoning process that involved the progressive *identization* (Melucci, 1996) around an image, representation and experience in multiple settings and a way to organise political dissent that was open-ended and dynamic (Kavada, 2015). In this sense, the commoning process based on communicative and mediated practices was both a constituent and reinforcer of the movement as long as it gave 'orientations of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place' (Melucci, 1996: 70). It was experienced in action (Melucci, 1996) so it was situated in real places and it was not static or unidirectional. As such, it was not predetermined and it moved through a

commoning process that while encouraging a political response and being a way to exert voice, also coexisted with the risk of uncommoning processes rooted in the neoliberal cultural landscape of Chile and in the way mainstream politics works.

In sum, the communicative practices of the movement possessed a collective power that permitted the involvement of activists through different identities and means – from those who engaged on an individual basis, to those who joined as a group or organisation – except for some of the uses of the internet that I covered in chapter seven. In this case the ability to deal with difference – something not alien to grassroots endeavours (Sennett, 2013) – in the construction of the commons was fragmented in a spiral of aggression and disengagement with the other that lessened a dialogical relationship and a collective endeavour, leading ultimately to the fracture of the political (Mouffe, 2005, 2013).

Let's recall, the question of this research was about how communicative and media practices of Chilean students' movement built a commons with capacity for the political to exist in the Chilean neoliberal democracy.

In general I consider that the movement managed to open up the political as a consequence of an uprising that had the fundamental elements of communicative and mediated practices to accomplish three reappropriations. In the first place the movement sought to knit and mend the social fabric in realms of trust that were necessary to make people embrace the entitlement to reclaim what they felt belonged to them as a condition of existence. Secondly, the movement intervened in the urban realm creating spaces to gather, to have a presence, to be together: a commoning act that allowed activists to reject silence and occupy a space to have a say. Thirdly, Chilean activists used voice in a strategic way to gain recognition as political actors and to create an imagined commons. A fourth and final practice expanded this presence through the internet but could not move that sense of awareness into a more permanent deliberative and collaborative engagement acknowledging the differences while acting in common. What could be the reason

for this slump of the dialogical, deliberative, and collaborative communicative practices? Some elements of the answer have been explained in chapter seven but a final remark must be further developed because it serves to shed light on questions posed by contemporary authors – like Sennett, who asks ‘how can people be open to and engaged with those who differ from them racially or ethnically?’ (2013: 128) – on matters raised by this research – such as how to move onto communicative ecologies that take the commons into a larger mass of people for a more permanent frame of time – and because it helps to project the original contribution of this research and open new paths for future research.

The commons versus a neoliberal communication

It would be unfair and inaccurate to attribute the fall of the Chilean student movement in 2011 to the uses of the internet. Social movements are waves of contention with ups and downs in which exhaustion and polarization surge among activists when certain degrees of success have not been achieved (Tarrow, 1998). The Chilean case reflects these features. After meetings with formal political authorities without major consequences for the education system – as will be explained later in this chapter – the mobilization of 2011 wound down although reappeared in permanent waves of contention with different degrees of support in later years¹⁰⁹. However, what is relevant and conclusive for this research is a reflection coming up from the field and later analysis, and pointing to the type of communication channelling the best and worst outcomes for the movement. From the perspective of this research the most beneficial outcome was to overcome the expropriation of voice as resource, placement, and entitlement to stand up, break the closures for voicing and open up the political. Tearing down the fences of neoliberal democracy showed that the commons is not given but created, and that

¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, the literature on the Chilean students’ movement (Fleet, 2011; Cabalín, 2012; Salinas and Fraser, 2012; Rifo, 2013; Valderrama, 2013; Bellei, Cabalin, and Orellana, 2014; Larrabure and Torchia, 2014) has not paid attention to the demise of the movement. This body of literature has been unable to explicitly say if the movement failed or succeeded because there is still an ongoing discussion and events unfolding even while this thesis is written. Besides, to give an answer about failure or success would depend upon the definitions one uses of success and failure to assess the mobilization.

is not only a space but also a relationship to be continuously activated. In this sense, what the Chilean movement achieved has strong connections with Elinor Ostrom's principles of the commons (2011) and Jesús Martín-Barbero's (1993) relevance of ordinary culture; but also with Ranciere's (2004) idea of disagreement; and Lechner's (1984) understanding of politics as the conflictive and unfinished construction of the desired order.

In Ostrom (2011), the commons is a realm that must be accessible and open to everyone. Unlike the appropriation of the public sphere by media or political parties, no one can claim the commons as their property (Dolcerocca and Coriat, 2015). In the commons, different perspectives – including ordinary cultures – are allowed to exist and take part as constituent agents of a permanent dialogue. As a relationship, the creation of a commons is a process ideally based on conversation, deliberation, discussion, and decisions in which no one is excluded beforehand. That is the basis of the political relationship entailed by the commons: an ongoing coexistence based on agreements and disagreements (Ranciere, 2004) that are not sealed once and forever. Quite the contrary, its political character lays heavily in its openness to develop, modify, and redirect the agreements achieved as part of a permanent revision and improvement of life conditions (Lechner, 1984). Depicted in this way, the commons represents an opposition to neoliberal culture and its individualistic, profit-driven, competitive features.

For instance, the communicative practices reviewed in chapter four had a subversive character, opening conversations about political issues in realms where conversations about these topics were not usual practice, and breaking with neoliberal rush to discuss and enter into dialogue. The occupation of streets and jumping on buses to talk about political issues was also subversive to a 24/7 lifestyle that labels as harmful anything leading to a halt in production and encourages us to be afraid of 'the others' (Reguillo 2012). The media work, while it was not subversive in its form – using similar means that NGO's use in corporate media – it was subversive in its strategy of disarticulating certain common sense notions about education and political participation and articulating the right of

equal, free, high quality education as a basic right and activists as valid political actors. From this sequence it is relevant then to ask: In what ways were the uses of the internet subversive? In what ways did they contribute to breaking a neoliberal hegemony? They did it partially by allowing participants to talk and pass information on about the movement but it also followed individualistic, aggressive and non-cooperative actions that were unable to deal with difference, leading to an *uncommoning* process that is essentially the fracture and destruction of a common dialogue 'while remaining internally different' (Hardt and Negri, 2004: xiv).

Original contribution: public sphere, popular culture and the commons

Above I mentioned that the commons represents an opposition to neoliberal culture and its individualistic, profit-driven, competitive features because the commons as a concept refers to dialogical, deliberative, and collaborative actions on equal basis, in a way that directly confronts the foundations of democracies under neoliberalism. Theorized in this way, the notion of the commons brings two contributions intersecting the field of media and communication studies, and democracy. The first contribution is the signalling of the inadequacy of observing the contemporary relationship between democracy, media and communications circumscribed to normative frameworks of liberal democracy, as in the paradigm of the public sphere. The second contribution is the foregrounding of the critical elements that are necessary to construct a progressive politics that subverts the frameworks of (a failed) liberal democracy. These are inclined towards a democracy starting with the people; with multiple places for participation; and following more horizontal, dialogical, non-sectarian and agonistic relationships. In the following paragraphs I explore further the contribution of this research on the aforementioned points.

Beyond the public sphere

When this research was nothing but a project – in the preamble and during the first weeks of the PhD – my aim was to understand the eruption of the students' movement as a successful attempt to exert an influence into a public sphere from which they were marginalized. I thought about counter public spheres or subversive public spheres that at some point dealt with a mainstream public sphere by putting their issues on the agenda and succeeding in that task. In the process of observing what the movement did, the nature of their actions, the social and political context of post dictatorship in Chile in which they were embedded, I realized that the student movement – as well as other mobilizations during those years – was demanding and embodying a different type of politics. It was a claim for a new type of relationship rather than an effort for passing a message through the structures of the public sphere to knock at the door of the institutions of liberal democracy.

As a study rooted in a specific context, this research noticed democracy had left Chilean people without a voice in a way that could not be mended through the pathways of liberal democracy. Under neoliberalism democracy failed in the task of representing a majority of people, it became less representative of the majority and more the expression of corporate interests managed by a group of technocratic politicians (Bethel, 1997). In Crouch's terms, what was happening was that while the forms of democracy were in place, politics and government were 'increasingly slipping back into the control of privileged elites in the manner characteristic of pre-democratic times' (2004:6). Therefore the notion of the public sphere, based on that liberal framework, could not hold or sustain the principles to make it meaningful as a mediation realm because, among other reasons, it had been taken up 'almost entirely with the relationship between lay individuals and professional politicians vying to win their acclaim' (Goode, 2005: 24).

In this sense, key principles of the public sphere such as the universal access to a dialogic space, the chance to intervene in the definition of the social order and the

institutional conditions to do so, did not look as features sustained, protected or enacted under liberal and neoliberal frameworks (Habermas, 1992). What occurs today actually is what Habermas stated in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* when saying that ‘a public sphere from which specific groups would be *eo ipso* excluded was less than merely incomplete; it was not a public sphere at all (Habermas, 1992: 85). Placed in the Chilean case, the public sphere has not managed to alter the exclusion of a majority of people; to create an active mediating space or to channel public opinion through media that could enlighten a ruler to follow people’s demands (Habermas, 1992). Consequently, in the light of this research it was unlikely that the openness and participative character of democracy opened by the student’s movement could have been studied from a paradigm closely related to the framework of liberal democracy. Even if political institutional actors complied with listening and acting according to people’s demands or if media achieved the task of channelling public opinion, the public sphere would still be a restricted realm for the varied, multi-placed and less delegative political action occurring today. In other words, there is the need of thinking in theoretical perspectives not constrained within liberal democratic pathways because they are not in a position to achieve their promises and because they no longer encapsulate the varied forms of political mediations.

The first original contribution of the commons is thus set in the path of signalling the expiration of the public sphere and the need to move on from frameworks depending on liberal democracy. Nonetheless, its contribution does not end at that point. Theoretically, the commons brings a second contribution by projecting political and democratic progressive alternatives to the strictures of (neo) liberal democracy in four ways: a) by considering popular culture and ordinary life as constituent of our democracies; b) by conceiving of a politics starting from the people and not denying the people in its construction; c) by acknowledging multiple spaces to take part in the political; d) and by signalling the type of communication that the commons should pursue: dialogical, collaborative, non sectarian and agonistic.

a) Popular culture and ordinary life

Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993), in a question opening this research, pointed to the disconnect between political narratives organizing daily life, and the feelings, experiences and practices of people's lives as part of those narratives. When asking 'how is it possible that what is important for my daily existence is worth so little for history if history is only important when it organizes daily life?' (1993: 57) Martín-Barbero addressed the lack of mediation between two worlds coming up as incompatible realms: one where real practices of coexistence occur, and the other providing norms and frames for coexisting. In light of this research, and following the accounts of Martín-Barbero (1993, 2004) and Raymond Williams (1993), this void presents a problem. The problem lies in the fact that popular culture and the common experience of daily life are regarded by prevalent political theories (Dahl, 1989; Larraín, 1989) and political practice as something dangerous, not valuable, or even as irrelevant to the ways in which life is organized. The consequence of the latter is that – and borrowing this idea from my undergraduate professor Rodrigo Araya – democracy becomes something constituted but without constituents. In other words, democracy does not recognize people and their ordinary culture because it is always something made by others (Escobar, 1995). If it is made by others – using the rationale of others – then what kind of sense could that democracy have for most of the people? Faced with this question, the commons appears as a paramount concept not to stitch the void between democracy and daily life, but to think in a democracy without the void, one in which daily life practices and ordinary culture are valued as constituent parts of democratic endeavours targeting the closures of neoliberalism. The question in front of this challenge is where to start?

b) Starting with the people

In the re-observation of the public sphere and the mediation between ordinary culture and democracy, the approach of people like Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993) and Raymond Williams (1993) connects with the idea of the commons sustained

by this research. What the commons (Ostrom, 1990; Schlager and Ostrom, 1992; Dardot and Laval, 2014; Euler, 2015) express is that *if democracy is about us, it has to consider us in the way it is shaped and updated*. This commons ethos appears as a foundation to observe, understand, and acknowledge people as constituent parts of democracy, rejecting the disdain towards people as *populace* whose culture has no value for the definition of collective life (Williams, 1993). The value given to ordinary culture by Williams denounces liberal thought for which democracy would be better without the people in a stance also directed towards state socialisms and left-wing endeavours comfortable with the idea of enlightened vanguards leading columns of cheering populace (Stevenson, 2016; Thompson, 2013). In overcoming this elitist perspective, the commons aims to change a political culture. Drawing on novels, poetry, and plays, Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993) uses a pertinent example depicting this elitism. He argues that ‘elitism has a secret tendency to identify good literature with seriousness and literary value with a lack of emotion. The literature liked by the common people may be most entertaining, but never true literature’ (1993: 138). The lack of recognition of the language, manners, and emotions of popular writing applies in the Chilean case to a hegemonic political culture carried out by institutional actors regarding the movement of 2011 as nothing but noise and chaos. A moment reflecting this disdain towards the movement occurred in August 2011 when the senator Carlos Larraín – president of Renovación Nacional [National Renewal Party], one of the two leading political parties supporting the government at that time – said the students were nothing but a bunch ‘of useless subversives’¹¹⁰. Different from the senator’s stance, the commons does not regard people, their ways of doing, their culture, their involvement in social and political matters, as something that needs to be left behind to discuss the life in common or something not valued for the definitions of the wished-for future. The latter involves the ways in which people talk, organize and reach others as part of the differences and resourceful practices and imaginaries displayed in the definition of collective life. Therefore, democracy must start with the people, with their real lives and landscapes, and reject

¹¹⁰ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/ideas/2011/08/the-meaning-behind-protests-in-chile>

circumscribing power in minority groups, taking politics out of their hands, making it a matter of technocrats constructing a democracy without the people.

c) Having multiple entrance points

What underlies the disdain of mainstream politicians towards activists like the ones involved in the movement of 2011 is the recognition of them not as part of the social and political landscape (Romero, 2013) but as the worst of the low, as people misguided in their claims and means, as agents that should be considered enemies and never political adversaries (Mouffe, 2005). In Martín-Barbero's words, what in this case is truly denied is the popular participation in the historic process of nations growing with differences (1993), which means that not only subjects are denied, but also their means of expression, their timing, their spaces, their method of arriving at agreement, their interests, their passion, their emotions, and the rationale of a democratic confrontation whose outcome is uncertain. The political commons, on the other hand, acknowledges the multiplicity of arenas where mediation between democracy and people occurs – beyond mainstream media – and the multiple ways of getting involved in the discussion and decision about the life in common – beyond sporadic electoral procedures in which the range of decisions people have over the life in common is reduced to issues narrowed by an economic rationale.

In a social context with so few institutional structures, the popular associations - from the self-help organisations to the neighbourhood kitchen and schools - 'knit together a social fabric that develops a new institutionalisation, strengthening civil society and providing new social relationships and collective protagonists and providing new social relationships and collective protagonists in the life of the country' (Frías and Romero, 1984: 10). The new project of democracy emerging from these movements has raised questions about the political parties' monopoly of politics, not in the sense of the necessity of such parties, but the consciousness that politics are limited to attempts to take control of and preserve the state. Seen from the perspective of the daily life of the popular classes, democracy is not merely a question of majority rule but an articulation of a diversity of sociocultural interests, a question not of quantity but of complexity and pluralism. (Martín-Barbero, 1993: 199)

d) Sustaining horizontal, dialogical, non-sectarian and agonistic relationships

A fourth way to think through a starting point for a progressive politics and democratic initiatives comes from the horizontal, dialogical, non-sectarian and agonistic features of the commons, some of them embraced by the Chilean students throughout 2011's mobilization. The horizontal features embraced in occupations and assemblies, as well as the dialogical aspects within those assemblies or in urban face-to-face encounters were shown to be effective in the rise of the movement and also in the feeling of activists of taking part in a political community in whose communicative actions they were acknowledged as constituent parts of the movement. However, the co-activity and co-obligation (Dardot and Laval, 2014) of those engaged in a common task were not easy to sustain in the long term – due to an inherited culture of verticalism (Larraín, 2001) and the alleged effectiveness of vertical relationships when decisions needed to be taken quickly. The dialogical aspects were also complex to sustain, due to the lack of conditions for allowing dialogues to happen. An example of the latter are the occupations – as a window of time and space created precisely for discussion but whose continuity was difficult to sustain – and the assemblies held in 2011 – whose dynamics and logics were not always the most satisfactory in terms of the dialogue and respect between the participants of them. Indeed, the Chilean movement was not alien to vertical relationships and lack of dialogue that ultimately ended up with sectarian behaviour. In front of this closure of dialogue, the commons implies openness and the need to work with difference. In other words, to be necessarily agonistic (Mouffe, 2013) and acknowledge the diverse, conflictual character derived from having different perspectives in human collectives without sealing those discussions once and forever.

In sum, in relation to the discussion of democracy, media and communications, this research encourages a shifting of the media theorists gaze away from prevalent paradigms like the public sphere towards those that begin not from the institutionalisation of democracy but from thinking about democracy and culture as

part of the life in common starting with the people, open to participation from different areas of society and promoting an active dialogical engagement of the people. As such, the commons ultimately provides a means to create a more equal society, tackling those conditions that undermine the principles of a common existence, like inequality, the lack of access to basic resources and the concentration of wealth. As observed in this research, the path of the commons might not be easy and will certainly be oppositional to the cultural, political and economic strangleholds of neoliberalism, but it is a departing point for the repoliticisation of life and for a more compelling democracy.

Limitations and future research

As I mentioned in the methods chapter, this research was the outcome of a process comprised of observation, surprise, doubt, questions, and decisions that frame and narrow certain phenomena attracting the attention of a particular beholder. It is a process in which the researcher's sight progressively enters narrower zones with a permanent awareness to see what is left to the side, what is missing, what would be relevant to consider. The process also provides ideas about what could have been done better and what – in the light of the findings – would be relevant to take forward as part of new research.

Limitations

Regarding the limitations of this research, these are divided in two aspects: those relating to the methodological approach; and those areas left aside that could have contributed to a deeper understanding of the relationship between social movements, media and communicative practices and the commons. In terms of the methods used, this research embraced a social constructionist position using a qualitative approach (Charmaz, 2006) aimed to deep in the way activists constructed their social reality and political action (Berger and Luckmann, 1991) in the most appropriate way. In this task, there was a factual limitation: the research was conducted years after 2011's events occurred. For research following the spirit

of ethnography (Bray, 2008), missing the immersion in time and space when the movement was actually unfolding is relevant. While this issue was dealt with in the best possible way trying to get as close as I could to the experience of 2011 (Back, 1996), I still did not grasp actions, moments, and feelings happening in the heyday of the movement. Other limitations concerning my methodological approach were the reduced research team – me – and the time to convey fieldwork, both factors that impeded this investigation to reach more people, to get to more regions of Chile, and presumably to discover new insights enriching or questioning my findings.

In terms of the areas not covered that could have been important for the aims of the research there are three of them worthy to mention, especially considering the will of this thesis for doing critical research and providing elements to subvert a political and social oppressive order. The first area is connected with the fact that this research was designed to investigate those who actually took part in the movement. There was not a deep observation on those who did not take part in the mobilization or were less inclined to do so. An insight on the commons should consider the actors and rationale of those who at a given time are non-participants, reject taking part in a social movement or simply do not share a core identity bond with the protesters (Klandermans and de Weerd, 2000). The second omission is the media coverage of the movement in mainstream media, through discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) and/or through the testimonies of media professionals and journalists (Mellado, 2010). By not doing the latter I missed the chance to analyze the representations of the movement and the ideological display against it conveyed by mainstream media. In my favour, this has been a topic largely covered by researchers regarding the Chilean mobilization of 2011 (Riffo and Saavedra, 2013; Peña, Rodríguez, Sáez, 2014; Gascón and Pacheco, 2015). A third area that would have been relevant to observe carefully relates to certain uses of the Internet. Analysis of metadata aiming to grasp people's behaviour on the web regarding certain events, like demonstrations or presidential messages on TV (Procter, Vis and Voss, 2013); or the relationship between algorithms and the

opening/narrowing of the scope of relationships in platforms like Facebook (Milan, 2015); could have contributed to an in depth understanding of the culture and mediations of commoning and uncommoning processes on the web.

Possible future research

Regarding the research paths opened by this thesis, I consider there are three areas in which my investigation could continue developing. The first is on the relationship between popular culture, communication, and democracy and how daily life culture counts for the construction of democracy. Without using her terms, in this thesis and in this conclusion in particular I have pointed to what Natalie Fenton encapsulates under the concept of *politics of being*. The *politics of being* are a way to ‘alter the terrain of power’ (2016: 7) without leaving aside affects and emotions as irrelevant items in that struggle. Following Fenton’s perspective, *being political* means to be engaged in collective actions that seek to transform actually existing (neo) liberal democracies – i.e. *Being political* extends beyond what she terms the *politics of being* – while considering emotions as constituent parts of a response to overcome conditions lessening human life. Fenton’s work (2016) finds resonance with the way the commons is understood in this research and with approaches that in the last three decades have been stressing the relevance of culture, communication, and democracy, like Martín-Barbero (1993) and Williams (1993), and also with scholars acknowledging the symbolic dispute social movements convey against the definition of politics, like Melucci (1985, 1995, 1996) and Touraine (1985). The difference in her approach, and an interesting challenge in light of movements emerging in different areas of the world in the face of flawed democracies, is the question about moving popular culture-communication-democracy from the micro level or urban tribes, social movements, neighborhood assemblies, to the macro level of the state and the economy (2016). There is a daunting amount of work to this task but, as Fenton warns, this work is urgently needed in order to inaugurate the beginning of serious insight into the question about ‘the conditions required (including the communicative conditions)

for radical political organizations and collectives to endure, build capacity, and effect social change in various places at particular moments in time' (2016: 23).

A second area opened by this thesis is connected to the question of the communicative conditions for social change, but not regarding the quickest way to distribute a tweet or to get to mainstream media due to a particular action. It relates to understanding neoliberalism not only as an economic framework, but also as a political and cultural framework defining ideal types of communication and mediation. Whilst neoliberalism has been studied in terms of its influence upon democracy (Dean, 2009; Brown, 2003, 2005) it has been less studied in terms of understanding what could be defined as neoliberal communication and its implications for the way in which people relate to each other; relate to media and the government – and viceversa. This matter is relevant for theoretical reasons but for practical reasons as well. For instance, an insight like the one proposed could add questions and inputs to current campaigns for media reform mostly focused on the ownership and administration of the media to think not only about ownership and accountability of the media but also about the expected mediation between people and the media – in terms of administration, production and contents (Araya, 2014; Benítez, 2014). In the case of social movement studies the question about a neoliberal type of communication and its implications is particularly relevant because social movements carry a prefigurative component (Della Porta, 2009) on an organizational level and also in the type of communication they allow and practice. This feature of social movements opens a third path for future research.

In their daily existence social movements give more than a glimpse about how they would act in the future in the case of achieving certain degrees of success – after dethroning a government, for instance. And it is worthwhile to question the extent to which the rejection of oppressive neoliberal policies in current social movements avoids individualistic and aggregative behaviour or, put another way, avoids falling into the paradox of attacking neoliberal democracies whilst following neoliberal logics. This fact is relevant when talking about emancipation and progressive

politics, because of the risk of falling upon what Paulo Freire (1996) diagnosed decades ago: To reproduce oppressive behaviours whilst struggling against oppression. Oppression, for Freire, was not always external, it was part of a culture of doing inherent to the practices that – without certain pedagogy – those fighting for emancipation were condemned to replicate. The problem here for social movements is that while a mobilization might achieve a target, the type of communication and relationship they reproduce could remain oppressive. A clear example of the latter is the Chilean case. After conquering democracy in the referendum of 1988, the new political establishment stopped considering grassroots organizations as an active part of the young democracy and sought to demobilize them, making democracy a matter of political technocrats (Bethel, 1997; Moulián, 1997). Taking the Chilean case and following Freire (1996), it appears that once in a situation of major power it is difficult for the formerly oppressed to subvert the communicative logics of the oppressor and create an emancipated relationship. Therefore, the third path opened by this research is to analyze to what extent social movements or other political endeavours fighting the constraints of neoliberal democracy, follow or subvert the communicative logics of neoliberalism. To inquire on this matter should shed light on the future prefigured by social movements.

2011-2016: Update on education, dialogue and the commons

On education

This research revolves around the Chilean student movement and a fair question for the reader is what was the outcome after the events of 2011. The answer must cover three aspects: The claim for a reform to the education system; an interesting communicative and political dialogical consequence; and political consequences in terms of a more 'commons' and grassroots will expressed today in Chile.

In January 2012, Giorgio Jackson, one of the leaders of the mobilisation at the time said to the news website La Nación [The Nation], 'we are not even close to the

goals we set as a movement'¹¹¹. Jackson was talking about the demand for high-quality, free public education for all and, as he says, no major changes were introduced after the movement's decline. However, pressed by the overwhelming support for the students' demand, the administration of Sebastián Piñera introduced some policies but only regarding mechanisms for assessing education institutions and students¹¹². The first of these policies was the creation of a new body to evaluate the quality of higher education following the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)¹¹³ explicitly recommendation to improve the accreditation process, after corruption scandals affecting the Comisión Nacional de Acreditación [National Accreditation Commission] (CNA)¹¹⁴.

The second policy – in the end, cancelled due to wide rejection – was to apply a 'traffic light' system to primary and high school institutions in order to classify their performance according to the results of the Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación [Quality of Education Assessment System] (SIMCE). SIMCE is a national test applied to students of different ages and Piñera's plan was to award those schools with good performance and to punish (by withdrawing funding) those schools with low results. The policy was rejected because through the years the test has shown the vast inequality between public, private with estate subsidies, and private schools. The idea of the traffic light system would have had a punitive effect on public education instead of supporting it. For the critics of Piñera, this policy was reminiscent of what the neoliberal model installed by Pinochet did with

¹¹¹ <http://www.lanacion.cl/giorgio-jackson-el-movimiento-estudiantil-logro-cambiar-el-sentido-comun/noticias/2012-01-12/140900.html>

¹¹² <http://www.latercera.com/noticia/pinera-nueva-agencia-de-acreditacion-no-sera-como-la-cna-que-no-garantizo-calidad-de-las-ues/>

¹¹³ <https://www.oecd.org/chile/Quality%20Assurance%20in%20Higher%20Education%20in%20Chile%20-%20Reviews%20of%20National%20Policies%20for%20Education.pdf>

¹¹⁴ The accusations towards the CNA claimed that private universities bribed officers of the CNA to be accredited as high-quality institutions. The investigation into the case revealed an extended web of corruption. The president of the institution, Luis Eugenio Díaz, and three former rectors of private universities were accused by the Chilean justice for the crimes of money laundering, influence peddling, disclosure of secret information, bribery and tax evasion:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130524143840274;>

[http://cipchile.cl/radar/comision-nacional-de-acreditacion-nuevos-antecedentes-tras-formalizacion-de-su-ex-presidente-y-rectores-de-universidades/;](http://cipchile.cl/radar/comision-nacional-de-acreditacion-nuevos-antecedentes-tras-formalizacion-de-su-ex-presidente-y-rectores-de-universidades/)

<http://www.latercera.com/noticia/cna-fiscalia-pide-10-anos-de-carcel-para-diaz-y-multas-millonarias-para-tres-ues/>

the education system: 'to conduct a "gradual de-estatization" of the university system and the education system in general' (Ruiz, 2012: 27).

A third policy was a mild reduction in the rates derived from the CAE – the state-guaranteed system of loans that allow students to obtain money from private banks¹¹⁵. Amongst the criticism received by the CAE for its abusive rates, the World Bank explicitly said the rates of the system were so high that 20% of students getting those loans would not be able to pay them back¹¹⁶, thus creating a heavy burden for the future of the students and their families. These policies, plus the absence of further funding for state universities, led to, at the end of his administration, the evaluation of Sebastián Piñera on education matters as having helped to deepen the poor conditions of public education and improve the conditions of the private education system (Donoso, 2014).

The presidential and parliamentary elections of 2013 emerged as a key moment for the aftermath of the movement. On one hand there were five candidates for the Deputy Chamber who were students representatives in 2010, 2011, 2012, including the most notorious leaders of the 2011 Camila Vallejo (Communist Party) and Giorgio Jackson (who ran under the newly created organization Revolución Democrática [Democratic Revolution]). Four were elected: Vallejo, Jackson, plus Karol Cariola (Communist Party) and Gabriel Boric (member of the organization Izquierda Autónoma [Autonomous Left])¹¹⁷. The presidential election of that year confronted nine candidates and went to a second round between the right-wing candidate Evelyn Matthei – who aimed to continue the policies of Sebastián Piñera – and former president Michelle Bachelet – supported by her former coalition composed by Christian democrat and socialist sectors but now including the Communist Party. With the education issue at the top of the agenda, Bachelet won the presidency promising to make a reform for free, high-quality, equal education.

¹¹⁵ <http://www.latercera.com/noticia/presidente-promulga-ley-que-disminuye-tasa-de-interes-del-cae-de-un-6-a-un-2/>

¹¹⁶ <http://ciperchile.cl/2011/12/20/cae-como-se-creo-y-opera-el-credito-que-le-deja-a-los-bancos-ganancias-por-150-mil-millones/>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-26525140>

The promise appeared to come true in May 2015. President Bachelet presented a draft law to the National Congress to give free education for university students from the poorer sectors of Chilean society, and to all primary and high school students attending public or private schools receiving state subsidies. In contrast to what was promised by Bachelet's administration during her campaign, the bill seemed mild and ambiguous, lacking a plan outlining the ways in which the changes were going to be applied¹¹⁸. The latter has carried an extended feeling of confusion and disappointment amongst "state university deans, several ruling-party lawmakers, and students"¹¹⁹, that has moved the students back to the streets again, although in fewer numbers than in 2011¹²⁰. In spite of the criticism, finally Bachelet's plans began gradually to come into fruition: In March 2016, 28% of the new students enrolled in universities accredited by the CNA became the first students not to have to pay tuition fees.

However, the criticism of Bachelet remains due to the fact that the goal of providing free education for a group of people has not been the outcome of a law discussed in Congress. It has been the result of a presidential decree that certainly applies to the students of 2016 but without guarantees or a plan to continue in subsequent years. In addition to the latter, there have been no major changes in the regulation of the education market and no change in state funding to state universities¹²¹. Rectors of state universities have expressed their concern about not seeing increased state funds. The case of Universidad de Chile, the oldest and most traditional state university of the country, reflects this point: state funds only cover 14% of its total budget¹²². Today's concern (November 2016) is that the state – funding the student directly, and not the institutions – ends up giving more financial

¹¹⁸ <http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/free-education-frustration-chiles-student-activists>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/217371/chile-gov't-to-present-controversial-education-bill>

¹²⁰ <http://en.mercopress.com/2016/05/27/chilean-students-back-in-the-streets-tired-of-waiting-for-the-education-reform>

¹²¹ <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1858921-chile-pone-en-marcha-su-extrano-sistema-de-gratuidad-universitaria>

¹²² <http://www.uchile.cl/noticias/49785/financiamiento-de-universidades-estatales>

resources to private universities than to the institutions of the state, as Ennio Vivaldi, rector of Universidad de Chile recently expressed¹²³.

On dialogue and democracy

The interesting communicative and political dialogical consequence that can be found in post-2011 Chile relates to the decision of the Chilean government led by Michelle Bachelet, to elaborate the new Constitution of the Republic based upon local, communal, and regional meetings called *cabildos*. Chile's Constitution was written in 1980 under the rule of military dictatorship. As Silva (1991) has pointed out, the 1980's constitution represented 'a landmark in the attempt of the military-technocratic alliance to institutionalize the 'new order' (396). The 'new order' meant a neoliberal economy, a technocratic administration, a strong authoritarianism, and the creation – once Pinochet left power – of a 'protected democracy' with strong restrictions (Moulián, 1997; Stern, 2010). Amongst other policies, the 1980's Constitution encouraged and protected new labour legislation, transformed social security, privatized health care (Silva, 1991), and created a tightened electoral system in which it would be almost impossible to have strong majorities¹²⁴ in Congress in a position to change the neoliberal guidelines established by Pinochet. As Jaime Guzmán – a conservative right-wing politician acknowledged as the main author of the Constitution – expressed: 'The new constitutional framework is resolutely defined by a free economic system, founded on the private ownership of the means of production and on individual initiative as the fundamental motors of the economy' (Guzmán, 2014: 473).

While in 2005 president Ricardo Lagos renewed some parts of the Constitution¹²⁵, promising to make it fully democratic, it still did not pass the test of democracy to many of its critics who argued that it just made some minor amendments to

¹²³ <http://www.uchile.cl/noticias/112476/no-puede-ser-que-el-estado-de-mas-plata-a-una-universidad-privada>

¹²⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/11/world/americas/11pinochet.html>

¹²⁵ <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2005/09/17/195634/presidente-lagos-firmo-nueva-constitucion-politica.html>

Pinochet's text¹²⁶. Well aware of the popular claim to change it entirely, Michelle Bachelet launched a plan, in 2015, to renew the Constitution through a process with local, regional, and national meetings. Held between April - August 2016, these meetings were opened to everyone wanting to give his or her opinion in dialogue and debates. Between April - June, there were 8,794 local meetings in 343 of the 346 communes around the country¹²⁷. After provincial, regional, and national meetings, the text will go to the Congress for deliberation. In 2017, as promised by Bachelet¹²⁸, there will be a national referendum to vote for the new constitution. And while it is evidently uncertain to predict what will occur in the near future, the step to create such a dialogical instance is an element that goes in line with a more deliberative and participatory democracy.

On the commons and current struggles against neoliberalism

A consequence related to a common ethos within Chilean society is a recent movement that has emerged in 2016, demanding the end of the pension system in the country. Led by grassroots organizations under the banner No+AFP (AFP are the Administradoras de Fondos de Pensiones, the Chilean pension fund administrators) this movement has carried out massive marches and rallies in the most prominent cities in the country,¹²⁹ against a key neoliberal policy inherited from Pinochet's regime. As part of his many neoliberal policies, Pinochet privatized the entire pension system (Taylor, 2013) changing a welfare system based on 'combined contributions from workers, their employers, and the state that were distributed by the government once the worker retired' (Vergara, 2002: 233), to a new one that only relies upon what the worker – through an individual effort – could save each month. In the AFP system these funds are managed by private companies that invest the funds into different businesses in Chile and in foreign markets, returning back the funds with the promise of surplus only when the

¹²⁶ <http://www.economist.com/node/3320682>

¹²⁷ <http://www.theclinic.cl/2016/06/08/proceso-constituyente-estas-son-las-comunas-que-mas-cabildos-han-realizado-en-todo-chile/>

¹²⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-34527165>

¹²⁹ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/chileans-protest-against-private-pensions-1471800885>

workers retire and only then on a monthly basis. The result of this policy has been 'providing disproportionate benefits to the pension fund managers and insufficient benefits to the retirees' as Borzutzky and Hyde (2016: 58) have expressed towards a system that 'does not fulfill the supreme objective of providing pensioners with a decent income after working life' (Sojo, 2014: 22). Indeed, the Chilean system has become an icon of what to avoid for those countries 'seeking to reduce fiscal involvement in the provision of retirement benefits because it fails to reduce both inequality and poverty' (Borzutzky and Hyde, 2016: 58).

In a similar way to that perceived by the students, those participating in the meetings and coordination of the NO+AFP movement claim for what they understand to be a social right taken by dictatorship and continued under democracy. In concrete terms, the leaders of the movement demand a new system in which workers, employers, and the state contribute with funds for pensions after retirement. This system, they propose, should be 'autonomous from other state institutions and from governments, with no intention to profit from workers funds and with legal, financial, and administrative autonomy'¹³⁰. Interestingly, in every single call to marches and rallies, the organizers have explicitly rejected the participation of mainstream parties, because they are observed as the ones who, given the chance, did not change a system accused of failing 'to deliver adequate retirement security to working families'¹³¹. So in the administration of a future system of pensions and those participating – and invited to participate – in the mobilization, the No+AFP movement gets closer to an idea of the commons as a resource and as relationship. And that struggle does not appear to be lessening anytime soon. This is because – in the context of these mobilizations – president Bachelet introduced a modification in the pension system giving those with the lowest pensions, a 10% increase on their monthly payments. This means getting 102.897 pesos (approximately £120) instead of 93.543 (£109) each month¹³². The proposal of the No+AFP demands a basic pension of 277.000 pesos

¹³⁰ <http://www.nomasafp.cl/inicio/?p=381>

¹³¹ <https://protectpensions.org/2016/08/23/chile-failure-privatized-pension-system/>

¹³² <http://www.infolatam.com/2016/11/28/presidenta-bachelet-promulga-ley-reforma-pensiones-solidarias-chile/>

(approximately £324) and a complete change of the system¹³³. The No+AFP movement is still unfolding and not much more can be said about it at present.

What can be said at the end of this chapter and research is that in the light of the student movement and recent events in Chile – and certainly in other regions – the struggle for democracy and for basic commons will not stop and will require further research for those interested in changing the current state of affairs. It is on this path where it seems more likely to break the strictures of the birdcage (Moulián, 1997) and enable a fully-fledged democracy starting from the people. The student movement gave a step ahead breaking the fences of the (neo)liberal framework and showing some elements to build on a new politics. It is not enough, certainly, but those are elements that could be developed and complemented in times when basic commons for existence are threatened and where political commons have been cancelled, shaping human landscapes of inequality, deprivation and exclusion. In this landscape, therefore, the contribution of the commons on its relation with media and communication studies could not be more necessary than now.

¹³³ <http://www.adnradio.cl/noticias/economia/noafp-presento-propuesta-que-promete-una-jubilacion-minima-de-277-mil/20161129/nota/3317665.aspx>

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Appendix

Hashtag #apagonporlaeducacion

javier rebolledo and 16 others follow

Profitador @profitador · 25 Sep 2011
El próximo #apagonporlaeducacion será en todo el territorio nacional.

Translate from Spanish

1 1

Seba_Villanueva @sebasvillas · 25 Sep 2011
Felicitaciones a los que organizaron y participaron en este monumental evento... Todo un exito el #apagonporlaeducacion #apagon

Translate from Spanish

1 17

JP Miranda-Marín @JPMirandaM · 25 Sep 2011
@Camila_Vallejo: agradecemos a los 10 millones de Chilenos que se sumaron al #ApagonPorLaEducacion. RT!

Translate from Spanish

6

Ex Oveja @ExOveja_ · 25 Sep 2011
Oye, y las compensaciones ¿se vienen supongo?, compañías de celular valen lo mismo que puente mecano #apagon #apagónporlaeducación

Translate from Spanish

Colegio Periodistas and 7 others follow

Hugo Chacón @Hugo_Chacón_ · 25 Sep 2011
Son más de 10 millones en #apagonporlaeducacion. Genial!!

Translate from Spanish

FrutillaConAlmendras @yokito1908 · 25 Sep 2011
yaaa po chicos cuenten..... Cuándo será el próximo #ApagonPorLaEducacion ?

Translate from Spanish

1

Joselyn Pérez @JossNicole · 25 Sep 2011
#Apagonporlaeducación fue todo un éxito!!!

Translate from Spanish

Prensa OPAL Chile and 14 others follow

Mariela @mariela2770 · 25 Sep 2011
Ya poh #labbestia mueva sus contactos!!, y reponga la luz!!, o disculpe, ud. Se suma al #apagonporlaeducacion

Translate from Spanish

1

@victor_maulen @victor_maulen · 25 Sep 2011
La nueva forma de manifestacion 9 millones personas en el #apagonporlaeducacion

Translate from Spanish

-  **Hugo Soiza** @hugosoiza · 25 Sep 2011
estuvo bueno el #apagonporlaeducación... ¿cuando se mandan otro?... tan creativos que son estos cabros dijo mi abuelita
-  Translate from Spanish
-   
-
-  **Roberto Moya** @cehdmoy · 25 Sep 2011
Tremendo #ApagonporlaEducación :P
-   
-
-  Diario-Radio UChile and 2 others follow
-  **Jesús Valencia** @JesuValencia · 25 Sep 2011
#ApagonPorLaEducación @Cooperativa @Tvn
-   
-
-  Eduardo Gatti and 10 others follow
-  **Eduardo** @CeferinoMachuca · 25 Sep 2011
@profitor El próximo #apagonporlaeducacion será en todo el territorio nacional//¿Incluyendo Mendoza, La Paz, Lima y Comodoro Rivadavia?
-  Translate from Spanish
-  1  
-
-  **Laura Brizuela** @burriskillas · 25 Sep 2011
que mejor que pasar el #apagonporlaeducacion que leyendole un Papelucho a mi raton a la luz de las velas #wena
-  Translate from Spanish
-   
-
-  In reply to MovilizateChile
-  **Camilo Del Canto** @Camilowyeah · 25 Sep 2011
@MovilizateChile vale por la info. Jajaja me asuste pensando que no sume. Filetee igual serviría La idea de #apagonporlaeducacion
-  Translate from Spanish
-   
-
-  Runchile.cl and 13 others follow
-  **Nelson Sepulveda** @NSepulveda_ · 25 Sep 2011
9 millones de personas participaron en el gran #ApagonporlaEducación en un país de 17 millones, uff la mayoría quiere educ. de Calidad y G
-  Translate from Spanish
-   
-
-  NoTeRindas and 3 others follow
-  **José Ortega Miranda** @joseortegam · 25 Sep 2011
Todo un éxito el #apagonporlaeducacion o pensaron que era el yeta de Piñera?
-  Translate from Spanish
-   
-
-  **karenso** @karenso32 · 25 Sep 2011
@MovilizateChile felicitaciones... Casi todo chile se sumo al #apagonporlaeducación... Otro record!!
-  Translate from Spanish
-   

In reply to Difamadores

 **Profitador** @profitador · 25 Sep 2011
 @difamadores él apoyó el #apagonporlaeducacion

 **Pablox Alejandro** @Pablox_01 · 25 Sep 2011
 #ApagonPorLaEducacion tiene al gobierno tiriton

 Translate from Spanish

 **Luis Calhueque** @LCalhueque · 25 Sep 2011
 #apagonporlaeducacion !

 CED and 14 others follow

 **Carolina** @caroiedo · 25 Sep 2011
 "@sebasvillas: Felicitaciones a los que organizaron y participaron en este monumental evento. Todo un exito el #apagonporlaeducacion"/ #eso

 Translate from Spanish

  2 

 RDemocrática and 4 others follow

 **EL COPERNICO** @El_Copernico · 25 Sep 2011
 #apagonporlaeducacion
 Todos prendemos a la misma hora
 Todas las luces
 Microonda
 Hervidor
 Aire acondicionado
 Planchas
 Etc..

Y APAGÓN HABEMUS

 Translate from Spanish

  1 

 **MAURICIO MASS** @Maurmass · 25 Sep 2011
 Mejor tuit de la noche @diputadoarenas le sigue @pboffacasas
 #apagonporlaeducacion

 Translate from Spanish

 **Victor Pincheira** @vimdepal · 25 Sep 2011
 Dicen por ahí que 9 millones de personas participaron voluntariamente del #apagonporlaeducacion... Mish!

 Translate from Spanish

 INTI-ILLIMANI follows

 **Victor Rifo Quintui** @VictorRiffoq · 25 Sep 2011
 #apagonporlaeducacion todo un éxito!

Universidad de Chile follows



Nicolash @nferrers · 25 Sep 2011

RT @marielines: ¡¡Somos caleta, exigiendo una educación laica, de excelencia y gratuita...!!! #apagónporlaeducación

Translate from Spanish



MovilizateChile and 2 others follow



FrutillaConAlmendras @yokito1908 · 25 Sep 2011

Mientras en la casa del ministro de Ed. dicen que #Bulnes, levantó los brazos y dijo "ME RINDO" ... todo gracias al #apagonporlaeducacion

Translate from Spanish



Osvaldo Aravena @Bushoon · 25 Sep 2011

9 millones adhirieron al #apagonporlaeducacion todo un éxito!Gracias Piñera,Bulnes,Lavín,Fano,y tantos + por participar en esta noble causa

Translate from Spanish



Runchile.cl and 13 others follow



Nelson Sepulveda @NSepulveda_ · 25 Sep 2011

sumate! ya fueron 9 millones... #apagonporlaeducacion

Translate from Spanish



Universidad de Chile follows



Nicolash @nferrers · 25 Sep 2011

RT @Aloferrer: RT @El_Hispano: #apagonporlaeducacion fue un éxito, se pagaron casi 10 millones de chilenos !!

Translate from Spanish



javier rebolledo and 16 others follow



Profitador @profitador · 25 Sep 2011

#apagonporlaeducacion o #blackoutforeducation??



Difamadores and 2 others follow



Pablox Alejandro @Pablox_01 · 25 Sep 2011

Le agradecemos a @camila_vallejo @Pablox_01 por la organizacion del #ApagonPorLaEducacion #Eso #xD

Translate from Spanish



Eduardo Gatti and 9 others follow



Mariela Muñoz @marielines · 25 Sep 2011

¡¡Somos caleta, exigiendo una educación laica, de excelencia y gratuita...!!! #apagónporlaeducación

Translate from Spanish





Humberto Fuentes @eslo_quehay · 25 Sep 2011

El mayor **#ApagonPorLaEducación** de la historia... #PiñeraAmpoYeta

[Translate from Spanish](#)



Lucho Stark @luchostark · 25 Sep 2011

@MovilizateChile Así con el **#apagonporlaeducacion** todo un exito jajaja xD

[Translate from Spanish](#)



[Marcelo Ig. Correa Z and 45 others follow](#)



#SinTransar @LasAracelys · 25 Sep 2011

Bueno ahora que ya paso nuestra protesta **#apagonporlaeducacion** sigamos difundiendo lunes 9 AM pza italia, Arriba los que Luchan!

[Translate from Spanish](#)



[Eduardo Gatti and 9 others follow](#)



Mariela Muñoz @marielines · 25 Sep 2011

En América somos los que pagamos mas caro por la electricidad
.**#apagónporlaeducación** #piñerampoYeta

[Translate from Spanish](#)



[Pato Cuevas follows](#)



Pata Arias @PataSmile · 25 Sep 2011

El **#apagonporlaeducacion** fue un exito, se calculan 10 millones de adherentes" // cifras oficiales dicen q fueron 500mil #tipico// #fb

[Translate from Spanish](#)



[Librería Catalonia and 4 others follow](#)



el edu @eledudice · 25 Sep 2011

#apagonporlaeducacion un exito



[Prensa OPAL Chile and 14 others follow](#)



Mariela @mariela2770 · 25 Sep 2011

@alejorquera @lachina_chile parece que fuimos las últimas en desligarnos del **#apagonporlaeducacion**

[Translate from Spanish](#)



Mariela @mariela2770 · 25 Sep 2011

@AlertaNews @biobio @BreakingNewsChi volvio la luz!!! Y firme con el apoyo al **#apagonporlaeducacion**

[Translate from Spanish](#)



[Seba Beccachece and 7 others follow](#)



David Antonio @Davus_Fugit · 25 Sep 2011

Fue un **#apagonporlaeducacion** Así todos se quedaban en casa y no carreteaban un sábado por la noche. Era cosa d ver la cara de ministros.

[Translate from Spanish](#)

