

Historical Development of Teacher Education in Chile

Facts, Policies and Issues

Beatrice Ávalos and Leonora Reyes

Emerald Studies in Teacher Preparation **in National and Global Contexts**



Historical Development of Teacher Education in Chile

Emerald Studies in Teacher Preparation in National and Global Contexts

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Historical Development of Teacher Education in Chile: Facts, Policies and Issues

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We dedicate this book to all teachers in Chile (initial education, preschool, basic and secondary) (Arts & Sciences and technical–vocational), as well as to teacher educators in teacher education departments and faculties of education.

We also dedicate the book to student and beginning teachers who will sustain the education system in the years to come.

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Foreword

This book describes the origins and development of teacher education in Chile, from the nineteenth century onwards. It is among the few of its kind written in the country, although there are many historical sources that deal with aspects of teacher education. These range from the first history of education written by Amanda Labarca (1939) to a number of books dealing with such history, including the most recent four volume *Historia de la Educación en Chile: 1810–2010*, edited by Sol Serrano, Macarena Ponce de Leon and Francisca Rengifo. The scholarship of all these authors was immensely useful in the construction of this historical account of teacher education in Chile, covering over two centuries.

The content and form of teacher education is similar over many countries not just because of current interchange of experiences and relevant research but also because of contacts between Europe, the United States and the Latin American countries from the nineteenth century onwards. Thus, Chile established its first normal school (also first in Latin America) on the basis of the French experience, and its first secondary preparation programme was marked by German Herbartian pedagogy. In the early twentieth century, John Dewey's educational thought inspired teachers proposing changes in the structure and form of teacher education, which they hoped would take the form of a single institution preparing all teachers (primary and secondary). Their ideal only materialised in the twenty-first century with the Teacher Professional Development Law (2016) that decreed that all forms of teacher education must be provided by accredited universities.

The close link between policy and teacher education provisions is the thread that runs across the book. Without clear policy commitment in the early nineteenth century, the first normal school would not have been established in 1842. Equally, without attention being paid by government to intellectuals' demand in the 1880s for the expansion and quality of secondary education, the Pedagogical Institute preparing secondary teachers would not have been established in 1889. The need to widen education coverage and foster its improvement as voiced by international organisations in the 1960s moved the Chilean government in 1965 to raise normal school teacher preparation to tertiary level. However, market policies impacting on teacher education growth in the first decade of the 2000s seriously undermined its quality. The decision to halt such growth as well as the acknowledgement that all Chileans should be educated in line with twenty-first century capacity requirements provided the ground for legislation that raised teacher education requirements both at individual and institutional level.

We hope this book will allow those who prepare for teaching and their educators to value both the institutional history and comparative studies of teacher education as a source of learning to teach in a global world.

Beatrice Ávalos and Leonora Reyes

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Introduction

Teacher education in its institutional form in Chile begins in the mid-nineteenth century with the establishment of what would be the first normal school in Latin America and second in the Americas after the United States. This book traces the historical development of teacher education from then on touching on coverage, institutions, curriculum and pedagogy. In so doing, it considers the role of government and of policy changes over time. It also highlights the contribution of individuals, such as intellectuals in the nineteenth century concerned with opening of education opportunities for the poor, as well as the role played by teacher organisations in the early twentieth century regarding teacher education's institutional form and pedagogy. Overall, it notes not a linear form of teacher education development, but an uneven set of forward and backward stages ending in the promise of an improved future. The need to have trained teachers for the growing number of school students led to the opening of normal schools in different locations of the country from 1842 onwards and towards the end of the century, to the opening of the first secondary teacher education institution. Along the process of building the education system and its institutions, Chilean authorities encouraged learning about experiences abroad, supporting travel and requiring reports on education in European countries as well as the United States. Two of the most noticeable of these reports were produced by José Abelardo Núñez and Valentin Letelier. Their views and the experience gained abroad impacted on the development of normal schools and the establishment of the first secondary teacher education institution. Through their visits and studies in Europe and the United States in the early twentieth century, a group of teachers and intellectuals were able to extract from the thinking and experience of educators such as Adolphe Ferrière and Maria Montessori and perhaps more importantly from John Dewey's pedagogy, elements that would assist in the building of Chilean teacher education. The commitment to learning from others marked not only the early development of teacher education, but would continue as education and culture became increasingly globalised.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed important, but in the end failed, efforts of the teachers' association to unite institutionally both normal schools and university-sustained secondary teacher preparation. These forms would remain as worlds apart both institutionally and socially, until the long dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet in the 1970s and 1980s demolished all

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teacher education as it had been. There would follow a complex rebuilding process throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century which would only be completed with legislation passed in 2016. This legislation located all teacher education in university institutions, set high entry conditions to its programmes and established external mechanisms of quality control. It is expected that the somewhat improved teacher working conditions and a teaching career structure established in the Teacher Professional Development Law might incite more young women and men to consider teaching as their profession.

The above sketch touches on some of the themes related to teacher education in Chile that are discussed in the book. The beginning chapter examines the historical context leading to Chile's independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century. It refers to education conditions in the first years of the new republic and the establishment in 1842 of the country's first key education institutions: the normal school preparing primary teachers and the University of Chile charged with monitoring its quality. The chapter ends with reference to the establishment of the Pedagogic Institute, the first secondary teacher education institution, towards the end of the nineteenth century. The second chapter follows policy and institutional development of teacher education leading up to the second half of the twentieth century. A number of private universities gradually take on the task of preparing teachers, and a very noticeable programme to prepare preschool educators is started at the University of Chile, thanks to initiative of Amanda Labarca, one of the great Chilean educators. The third chapter describes the most comprehensive education reform ever enacted in Chile in 1965, directed to widening of education coverage, restructuring of the education system to insure a broader and longer period of compulsory education, upgrading of primary teacher education from secondary to tertiary level and enhancement of teacher professionalism through the establishment of a specialised institution for in-service teacher education. In its second part, the chapter describes the effects over education in general and specifically over teacher education, of the military dictatorship and its introduction of neoliberal market policies. It describes the suppression of normal schools and the dismemberment of the University of Chile's secondary teacher education programmes located in several cities of the country. The chapter leads on to the process started in the 1990s directed to restoring the teacher education institutions and programmes that had been so badly hit by the military government. In this respect, it describes a five-year support and coordinating programme for teacher education, which impacted on around 80% of student teachers and that included a review of the curriculum and practicum conditions as well as the preparation of teacher educators. The chapter deals with events in the following years that led to an uncontrolled growth of teacher programmes in the context of open-market policies and which seriously affected teacher education quality. The chapter finally deals with how government takes on again the task of teacher education improvement through quality control measures and incentives and moves towards the construction of what would be the Teacher Professional Development Law passed in 2016.

In its second section, the book considers gender and ethnic inclusion in relation to teacher education. A thorough analysis of women's participation is undertaken

in the first chapter of this section. It highlights the process whereby their educational leadership takes on at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century as exemplified, among other forms, in pushing for early childhood education and relevant teacher preparation. The chapter refers to examples of women teachers who excelled in diverse fields such as literature and politics: Gabriela Mistral, Nobel Prize winner and Gladys Marin, communist party leader committed to equity and social inclusion.

The practically null recognition over time of the main indigenous people in Chile (Mapuche and Aymara), the traditional education as well as of their culture is discussed in the last chapter. The chapter refers to the 'Indigenous Law' passed in 1990 which opened the way for recognition in the education system of the indigenous cultures and languages, leading on to a policy on 'intercultural bilingual education'. The chapter refers to the effects of this policy and specifically to the only two programmes preparing teachers for Mapuche and Aymara contexts, noting the lack of a more generalised intercultural preparation in mainstream teacher education.

All in all, this book should provide readers in different national contexts with elements for examining the evolution of their own teacher education systems given how, today as yesterday, international influences interact with national education forms and institutions, in both negative and positive ways.

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Part 1
Teacher Education From Its Beginnings
to the Year 2020

Chapter 1

The Beginnings: Teacher Education in the Nineteenth Century

To understand the development of the first teacher education institutions in Chile, we first consider some historic facts that help to place education at the time of declaration of independence from Spain in 1810 and through to the establishment of the first normal school for primary teachers in 1842. Then we refer to teacher education in the second half of the century and to the education context in which this occurs, culminating with the establishment of the first secondary teacher preparation institution.

Together with most of the countries in Latin America, the opportunity to declare and struggle for independence was provided by the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808, the abdication of the king Ferdinand VII and the instalment of Napoleon's brother Joseph as king. This was taken by important groups among the population of Spanish descent in the colonies as a sign that they need not consider themselves the subjects of a ruler in Spain considered to be a usurper, and so established local forms of government labelled 'Juntas', to manage the colonies. Inspired by liberal ideas in Europe, the Chilean 'criollos', as the descendants of the Spanish colonisers were known, began drifting towards the conviction that the colony should become fully independent. Meeting in what is known as the first 'junta' on 1 September 1810, the Chilean creoles established a provisional government and called for elections of the first parliament in 1811. This was followed by the declaration of independence, enactment of a provisional constitution, creation of a national flag and shield, a national newspaper and the establishment of relationships with the United States government which sent a consul to Chile. Independence, however, would not be tolerated by the Viceroy of Peru, the authority charged with keeping Chile under Spanish rule. A state of war conducted by military officers sent from Peru led to a major military defeat of the Chilean patriots in 1814, inaugurating the period known as the Spanish Reconquest and the emigration of the top Chilean pro-independence leaders to Argentina. Here, Bernardo O'Higgins a key protagonist of military resistance in Chile between 1813 and 1814 and the Argentinian independence hero General José de San Martín organised what is known as the Liberating Expedition, which crossed the Andes Mountains winning control over the major part of the country in the battle of

Chacabuco on 12 February 1817. Full independence was declared a year after, followed by the decisive battle of Maipu (5 April 1818) that defeated the Spanish forces, although the Spaniards, supported by local ‘royalists’, remained in power in major locations south of the capital city of Santiago until 1826. Bernardo O’Higgins became Chile’s first governing authority until 1823.

1. Education towards the End of the Colonial Period and the Early Republican One

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Chile had a population of no more than 400,000 (probably excluding the indigenous people) and most were extremely poor (Salas in [Gutiérrez, 2011](#)). The very few schools at the time were in the hands of religious orders such as the Dominicans and Jesuits and barely covered reading and writing, catechism and some arithmetic, but were irrelevant in terms of preparation for productive activities and work ([Gutiérrez, 2011](#)). The *University of San Felipe*, a sort of higher education institution, was focused on theology and humanities and offered very little or rather no elements of science. The only other colonial educational institutions were a Seminary preparing priests and the Caroline School (*Convictorio Carolino*) that taught the elite Latin, Theology and Philosophy as well as basic notions of the Spanish language. The new Chilean government in 1812 commissioned a report on the state of education (Errázuriz & Vicuña as cited in [Gutiérrez, 2011](#)) showing that there were no more than seven primary schools – and two more in progress – reaching only 664 children out of an estimated target population of 50,000. The elite was mostly educated by their families and sent abroad for further studies. There was no preparation for those who taught in the few existing primary level schools.

In the context of these minimal and somewhat irrelevant education provisions, a group of Chilean intellectuals became key advisers to the new governments in the pre- and early independence period, analysing the status of education and providing suggestions for change. We refer to Manuel de Salas, Camilo Henríquez and Juan Egaña. Their ideas contributed to the opening of minds towards the need for public education and education for girls (as published in the *Aurora de Chile*, 27 August 1812, in [Gutiérrez, 2011](#)). **Manuel de Salas** (1754–1841) had graduated from the University of Saint Marcos in Lima, Perú, with a law degree (<http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-739.html>). Upon returning to Chile in the late years of the colonial period, Salas became influential in the establishment of the Academy of Saint Louis (1797), not only a school that focused on preparing for the trades, agriculture, mining and industry, but also an institution that would become politically aligned with the first independent governments and legislation abolishing slavery. **Camilo Henríquez** (1769–1825) was a rebellious clergyman educated in a Peruvian convent where he not only acquired a broad knowledge base but also strong views in favour of independence for the Latin American colonies. Back in Chile, after his studies, Henríquez became part of the struggle for