

Access to higher education in Chile: A public vs. private analysis

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Abstract This study analyzes how access to public and private institutions of higher education in Chile has changed as the post-secondary system has become increasingly privatized. It analyses access by young people to higher education from four perspectives: funding type (public/private), gender, family income level, and ethnicity. The study uses descriptive data, primarily from the CASEN and Higher Education Information System (SIES) databases. Access to higher education in Chile has exploded in recent decades, largely because of private institutions, which currently enrol two thirds of higher education students, and offer them courses that are often irrelevant and of low quality. In contrast, in the early 1980s, the private sector enrolled under 30% of students. The study also found a gradual increase in the enrolment of females, of students from the least wealthy families, and of ethnic minorities, although the inequality gap persists, especially at the more prestigious private and public universities.

Keywords Public and private higher education · Access to education · Income level · Gender · Ethnicity · Chile · Privatization of education

In this article we attempt to determine how access to public and private institutions of higher education in Chile has changed in a context of increasing privatization of the post-secondary system. We analyse young people's access to higher education from four perspectives: institutional funding type (public/private); gender; family income level; ethnicity and minorities.

Since the 1980s, higher education systems, both public and private around the world, and especially in Latin America, have changed tremendously as the result of increased demand (Albornoz 1993; Altbach 1996; Brunner 2000; González and Espinoza 2006;

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Neave and van Vught 1994) and of funding policies backed both by governments and international funding agencies including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the IMF (Espinoza 2002, 2005). These changes in higher education are reflected especially in the expansion, diversification, and privatization of the systems, and in the creation of new post-secondary institutions that try to meet the needs of society and the demands of the labour market. Ensuring that this demand is satisfied both by the state and the private sector constitutes an important challenge for governments (De Moura Castro and Navarro 1999; World Bank 2000). It should be emphasized that most societies are saturated with graduates in the more traditional career fields such as commercial engineering, agronomy, psychology, and journalism, but face a deficit of graduates in certain professional careers; in Chile these are health (nursing) and science (physics, chemistry), and some branches of engineering (mining) (Futuro Laboral 2011; González, Espinoza, and Uribe 1998).

At least three factors are associated with the expansion of higher education systems. First, contemporary societies and economies are increasingly complex and constantly demand highly qualified personnel (Espinoza 2000). Second, people from various socioeconomic groups are competing for educational credentials. Third, elite groups connected with the state are making efforts such as strengthening student aid programmes in order to attract young people who might otherwise be in the streets.

As in other societies and education systems, higher education in Chile has undergone a radical reform since the early 1980s, as part of a global liberalization policy that concluded in the military government adopting a body of legislation. Basically, the reform of the tertiary system modified its structure, coordination, and funding mechanisms. The essentially state-controlled system was transformed into a free-market system. In 1980, before this reform, approximately 120,000 young people graduated annually from secondary schools, and 30,000 went on to higher education: one out of four. At present, of the 220,000 annual graduates from secondary schools, 120,000 enter universities: nearly one in two.

The changes introduced in the early 1980s were reinforced by a system that encouraged institutions to begin self-financing, by charging tuition and enrolment fees and creating a system of loans and scholarships. These changes had a direct impact on students' access to higher education, and their survival within it, a subject we focus on here. Though one might wonder about the character of these reforms, it is undeniable that today's Chile has a massive and diversified system with increased coverage and access opportunities at various socioeconomic levels.

But access to higher education is not constrained only by economic factors. As Crossland (1976) points out, in general this access is limited by economic, social, and cultural determinants. These include lack of financial resources (socioeconomic discrimination); the long distance between young people's homes and college campuses; discrimination based on gender and on age; inadequate academic preparation at both primary and secondary levels; prejudices against certain ethnic, religious, or political minorities; culturally biased standardized entrance examinations; and physical disabilities that hamper mobility.

To be sure, the combined effect of greater demand for higher education, greater supply and diversity, and higher household incomes or borrowing capacity may explain the growth of higher education. In this regard, a classical subject of research has been the role that education plays in patterns of socioeconomic mobility in societies, social groups and individuals; for summaries, see Goldthorpe 2003 and Aldridge 2001. For a household with scant resources, the fact of "placing" one of its members in the tertiary education system

constitutes a good proxy for achieving what is known as intergenerational mobility, in this case, upwards.

However, the available studies show that access to higher education is still primarily conditioned by the socioeconomic origin of young people (Donoso and Cancino 2007; Espinoza 2002, 2008; Espinoza and González 2007). Larrañaga (2002) found a high correlation between the socioeconomic (SES) level of students and their scores on selection tests. Certainly, selection tests to measure achievement, which basically reveal the segmentation of secondary education, show that even in a context of expansion and socioeconomic diversification among the student population, finance continues to be the main obstacle to masses of lower-SES students gaining access to higher education (Bravo and Manzi 2002).

In Chile, the majority of educational policies initiated through legislation and implemented during the military regime were associated with the rhetoric of equity of access and equality of educational opportunity (Espinoza 2002). However, since democratic governments arrived in 1990, government discourses have emphasized the need to ensure equity of access and equality of opportunity for all young people, independent of their condition of origin.

It is important to point out that access to the various institutions of higher education has fared unevenly in recent decades; this may be explained in part by the profile of the institutions and by the availability of student aid in scholarship and loan programmes. In 2010, a total of 504,780 undergraduate students received some form of student aid to totally or partially finance post-secondary studies; this represents 54% of all students enrolled in the system (Mineduc 2012).

The 1981 reform

The Chilean system of higher education underwent a drastic reform with the law of 1981, in the form of DFLs no. 1, 5, and 24, of December 1980, and February and April 1981. (A DFL is a *decreto con fuerza de ley*, or decree with the force of law). It had consisted of only eight universities financed by the state: two public and six publicly funded private universities. Now it became a diversified system with four types of institutions: universities, professional institutes, technical training centres, and institutions of higher education for the armed forces.

The two state universities (Universidad de Chile and Universidad Técnica del Estado) that existed before the reform gave way to fourteen state universities after the reform, and the six private universities were converted into nine (one was divided into several parts). As a result, the Council of Chancellors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH), a group of public universities with direct state funding, came into being.

The legislation also allowed for the creation of private institutions. There are two main legal differences between civilian institutions of higher education. First, while universities may be either state owned or private, they must all be non-profit corporations. Second, all professional institutes (PIs) and technical training centres (TTCs) are private institutions and may be for-profit organizations. In the early 1980s, the TTCs were attracting as many students as the non-formal post-secondary institutes and academies (González 1988). Universities have the prerogative to grant bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in particular fields, and the regular *licenciado*, or bachelor's degree, along with professional titles that require a prior academic degree. The PIs may only grant professional titles that

do not require a prior academic degree. Finally, the TTCs may only grant technical certificates (Espinoza, González, Fecci et al. 2006).

Overall, our objective in this article is to characterize, from different perspectives, the population that accesses tertiary education in Chile, in both the public and private sectors. Our analysis focuses solely on the undergraduate level, considering the characteristics of the population that enters higher education according to the type of institution (university, TTC, and PI) and funding arrangement, along with gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

Methodology

This study is descriptive and exploratory in nature, and relies on descriptive statistics. Within this framework, we used data, mainly taken from the CASEN databases (1990, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2003, and 2006) and the Higher Education Information System (SIES) databases of the Ministry of Education (Mineduc 2010). From there, we analyzed the behaviour of the variable “access to higher education” (undergraduate level), differentiating it by type of institution (public or private) in relation to four variables: funding type, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic minority status. To do so, we used trend analysis. In addition, we analyzed several national and international technical reports and publications.

General character of the population accessing higher education

Over the past few decades, access to higher education has mushroomed. To a large extent this can be explained by the emergence of private higher education institutions (HEIs): universities, PIs, and TTCs. This growth became visible in the mid-1990s when the enrolments in private HEIs began to mirror those in public HEIs, in this case, the universities making up CRUCH. The result was a gradual rise in the percentage of professional and technical graduates trained in the new private institutions. Indeed, at the undergraduate level, the 2008 total of HEI graduates was twice that of 2000, rising from 46,706 to 104,196 (Futuro Laboral 2011). In addition, the proportion of young professionals (age 25 to 34) in certain professions rose as a proportion of the total stock of professionals entering the job market. This means that, in certain fields, an oversupply of professionals is being produced. For example, in journalism (79%), psychology (78%), computer engineering (81%), and management (64%), young professionals make up a significant portion of the total workforce. In contrast, the proportion of young people is lower in other professions, such as teachers of natural sciences (13%) and mathematics (11%) (González, Espinoza, and Uribe 2005).

In any case, the trend observed in Chile is very similar to those observed elsewhere in Latin America (CINDA 2007; OECD 2009). Therefore, we conclude that the sustained growth in Chile is nearly identical to that registered in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the universities continue to admit a privileged segment of the population, and that the great majority of students who enter the formal education system do not go on to university. As Table 1 and Fig. 1 show, out of the approximately 300,000 children entering the first year of primary (*básico*) school, only around 200,000 complete the upper secondary (*medio*) level. Of these, only 38,000 enrol at

Table 1 Trajectory of students entering first-year primary education in 1995 and their inclusion in higher education

Students' milestones	Total	Numbers graduating in 1995	Numbers graduating in previous years	% of the year's graduates	% of those who entered <i>básico</i> in 1995
Entered <i>básico</i> in 1995		308,523			100.0
Completed <i>medio</i> in 2006		223,050			72.3
Registered for PSU exam in 2006	242,155	171,591	70,564	70.86	57.0
Took PSU exam in 2006	211,261	149,068	62,193	70.56	48.3
Applied to CRUCH universities in 2007	87,617	53,626	33,991	61.21	17.4
Admitted to CRUCH university	62,188	38,366	23,822	61.69	12.4
Enrolled in university	48,913	30,008	18,905	61.35	9.8

Source: Latorre, González, and Espinoza (2009), using data from Mineduc (1995, 2000, 2006), and data from DEMRE (2007)

Notes: Because we identified each student by means of his/her identity card, we cannot compare these numbers with those for other Latin American countries, as equivalent data are not available. PSU stands for college entrance exam.

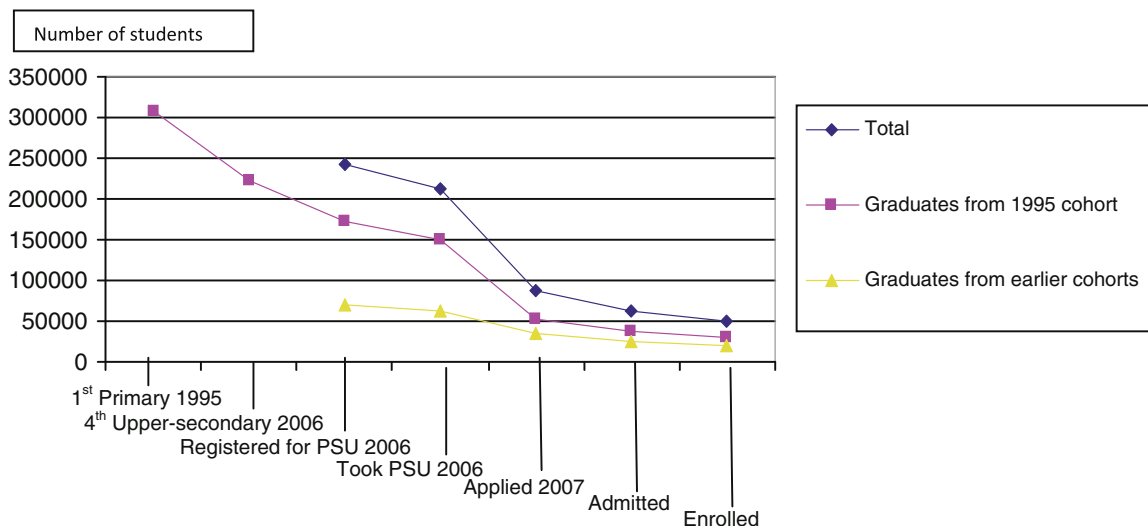


Fig. 1 Trajectory of students entering the first year of primary school in 1995 and their inclusion in higher education

Source: Latorre, González, and Espinoza (2009), using data from Mineduc (1995, 2000, 2006), and from DEMRE (2007)

CRUCH universities: the equivalent of 10% of those who begin primary school. To this figure we must add the 45,000 young persons of the 1995 cohort who enrolled in other third-level institutions, including the new private universities, PIs, and TTCs. This

indicates that of the total number of children entering the school system in 1995, approximately 25% succeeded in accessing one or another kind of HEI in the officially stipulated time. This number also reflects the continuing high rate of repetition and dropout.

To a large extent then, access to higher education is conditioned by students' previous educational opportunities. Hence it is vital to visualize and describe patterns in the first-year enrolment in CRUCH universities and to identify the relationship between these patterns and the type of institution that prepared the young people who enter the university system. We look specifically at those entering CRUCH universities, since data is available only for this segment of the system.

Table 2 makes it possible to look at these patterns. It shows that students from private subsidized secondary schools (43%) predominate in the first-year enrolment at CRUCH universities, followed by students who completed their secondary education in municipal schools (35%). However, it should be noted that students from private, fully-paid schools who entered CRUCH universities during the 2005/2006 admission period were clearly over-represented, at 22% of the total, as they make up only 8% of the total secondary school population. Meanwhile, students graduating from municipal schools appear to be under-represented among CRUCH enrolees.

The private sector has had another important impact on access through the arrival of several international consortia that control Chilean universities. These include UNIACC (Apollo Group), the Universidad Internacional SEK, the Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello, the Universidad de las Américas, and the Universidad de Viña del Mar. Laureate International Universities, a North American entity, controls the latter three, along with two professional institutes: Campus and AIEP [Academia de Idiomas y Estudios Profesionales] (see Espinoza 2005; Ginsburg, Espinoza, Popa, and Terrano 2003; González 2003). Taken together, these universities and institutes currently account for around 20% of third-level enrolments. Given the recent student protests against profit in higher education, it is possible that future agencies that establish the quality of higher education will adopt more stringent measures with regard to these consortia; a draft is currently being discussed in the National Congress.

Access to higher education by type of institution

As Table 3 shows, in 2009, a total of over 835,000 undergraduate students were enrolled in all three types of institutions: universities, PIs, and TTCs. As the table shows, enrolments

Table 2 Percentage of students enrolling in CRUCH universities, by type of secondary school attended, 2005–2006 admissions period

Type of secondary school	Took PSU exam	Applied to CRUCH university	Enrolled in CRUCH university
Municipal	41%	34%	35%
Private subsidized	44%	44%	43%
Paid private	15%	22%	22%
Total percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total individuals	122,014	51,811	28,906

Source: Valdivieso, Antivilo, and Barrios (2006)

Table 3 Undergraduate enrolment by type of institution, 1983–2009

Type of institution	1983	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Universities	110,133	127,628	223,889	302,572	444,893	535,643
CRUCH	107,425	108,119	154,885	201,186	237,545	276,683
Private	2,708	19,509	69,004	101,386	207,348	258,960
PIs	25,415	40,006	40,980	79,904	114,546	189,597
TTCs	39,702	77,774	72,735	53,184	63,104	110,007
Total	175,250	245,408	337,604	435,660	622,543	835,247

Source: Mineduc (2010)

Note: Figures for 1983 and 1990 include two establishments receiving direct state support.

are mainly concentrated in universities and are almost equally divided between the CRUCH universities and the new private ones. Thus we see that, in the past 25 years, university enrolment has practically quintupled and that the new private universities have experienced significant growth, from 3,000 students in the early 1980s to over 250,000 at present.

Enrolment in PIs has also increased in the past 25 years, but more moderately, representing at present around one fifth of total enrolments in the system. Meanwhile, enrolment in TTCs has behaved more erratically over the last three decades, reaching its lowest point at the beginning of the current decade and picking up in recent years; this is explained by the creation in 2001 of the New Millennium Scholarship (BNM) programme that aimed to facilitate access by disadvantaged young people.

Access to higher education by institutional funding type

In contrast to the situation described above, a different picture emerges when we group enrolments into two categories: institutions that receive direct state support (the public HEIs) and those that do not (the private HEIs). Analyzing these data, we found that in 1983, 71.5% of enrolment was concentrated in public institutions (CRUCH universities and two PIs), but by 2009 the landscape had changed substantially, with CRUCH universities (currently the only public entities) accounting for only 33% of total enrolment in higher education. The remaining 67% of students are enrolled in private HEIs—those that were created in the wake of the 1981 reform and that do not receive direct state support. These are all either PIs or TTCs (see Table 4).

Table 4 Undergraduate enrolment by institutional funding type, 1983–2009

Type of school	1983	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Public HEIs (CRUCH universities)	125,316	114,591	154,885	201,186	237,545	276,683
Private HEIs	49,934	130,817	182,719	234,474	384,998	558,564
Total	175,250	245,408	337,604	435,660	622,543	835,247

Source: Mineduc (2010)

Notes: Public HEIs include all CRUCH universities; private HEIs include the new private universities, TTCs, and PIs.

Access to HEIs by gender

As Table 5 shows, for the period 1984–2009, the female undergraduate population grew at 1.6 times the rate for male enrolments (480% versus 298%); this coincides with the more active role women have been assuming in all spheres of social life.

Our analysis of access to tertiary education by type of institution and by gender shows that for the period 1984–2009, the male population doubled in both CRUCH universities (115%) and the TTCs (123%); meanwhile the PIs and new private universities experienced an extremely significant increase in enrolment (758% and 4,540%, respectively). In the same period, as the table shows, the enrolment of women increased by 163% in the TTCs, 790% in PIs, 12,385% in new private universities, and 240% in the CRUCH universities.

However, if we analyze individual years, we find that in 1984 practically half of the women (50.3%) enrolled in an HEI attended a CRUCH university; 28% attended a TTC, 13% a lower-level PI, and a mere 0.14% were at a new private university. In contrast, by 2009, women's enrolments at these types of institutions had changed considerably. The largest enrolment is seen at the new private universities (33%) and CRUCH universities (31.9%), followed by PIs (21.3%) and TTCs (13.7%). Meanwhile, the proportion of males enrolled at TTCs dropped by half between 1984 and 2009, and by 40% at CRUCH universities and 20% at the new private universities (see Table 5).

A disaggregated analysis by the institution's funding type and gender reveals that, between 1984 and 2009, female enrolment in private HEIs rose by 765% compared to 240% at public institutions. For males, it rose proportionately: by 621% at private institutions and 115% at public institutions (CRUCH universities) (see Table 6).

Access to HEI by family income

The National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) records the socioeconomic composition of students at Chile's HEIs. If we measure inequity by comparing the percentages of people in various social groups who access higher education, our analysis of the data in the CASEN surveys of 1990 to 2006 indicates some reduction in the problem, but it continues to exist with regard to access to and survival in HEIs. While students in the first (lowest income) quintile nearly quadrupled their participation in this period (from 4.4% to 17.3%), those in the fifth (highest income) quintile nearly doubled theirs, from 40.7% to 80.0%, as seen in Table 7. Thus the inequity in access to the system continues, despite the relative improvement in all quintiles. Hence, higher education graduates from the poorest quintile are outnumbered four to one by graduates from the wealthiest quintile, making it harder for them to enter the job market.

The index of dispersion between the extreme income quintiles is a useful instrument for interpreting the phenomenon of inequity in access. For 2006, this index was 4.6. This means that a young person from a family in the fifth (wealthiest) quintile had nearly five times as high a chance of entering higher education as a young person in the first (poorest) quintile. Still, progress has been achieved: in 1990, a young person in the fifth quintile had nine times as high a chance of accessing higher education as one in the first quintile (see Table 7).

If we limit this analysis to enrolment by the type of institution, we can observe that over half of the students in HEIs, whether or not they receive direct state funding, are from the fourth and fifth (wealthiest) quintiles, according to the CASEN survey of 2006 (see Table 8). It should be noted that a higher percentage of students from the fifth quintile enrol in private universities (33.4%) than in CRUCH universities (25.8%).

Table 5 Evolution of undergraduate higher education enrolment by specific type of institution and gender, 1984–2009

Type of institution	1984		1990		1995		2000		2005		2009		Growth in the period 1984–2009	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
TTC	23,331	22,055	40,542	37,232	38,627	34,108	25,414	27,229	31,870	31,306	51,945	58,062	28,614 (123%)	36,007 (163%)
PI	11,600	10,117	19,558	20,448	21,521	19,459	48,843	31,750	69,498	45,048	99,490	90,107	87,890 (758%)	79,990 (790%)
Private univ.	2,566	1,120	12,153	7,356	36,617	32,387	50,229	51,157	97,957	109,139	119,117	139,843	116,551 (4,542%)	138,723 (12,385%)
CRUCH univ.	66,024	39,558	63,419	44,853	86,469	68,517	106,618	94,644	123,404	113,905	141,975	134,708	75,951 (115%)	95,150 (240%)
Overall total	103,521	72,850	135,672	109,889	183,234	154,471	231,104	204,780	322,729	299,398	412,527	422,720	309,006 (298%)	349,870 (480%)

Source: Mineduc (2010)

Table 6 Evolution of undergraduate higher education enrolment by institution's funding type and gender, 1984–2009

Institution's funding type	1984		2009		Growth in the period 1984–2009	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Private HEI	37,497	33,292	270,552	288,012	233,055 (621%)	254,720 (765%)
Public HEI (CRUCH univ.)	66,024	39,558	141,975	134,708	75,951 (115%)	95,150 (240%)
Overall total	103,521	72,850	412,527	422,720	309,006 (298%)	349,870 (480%)

Source: Mineduc (2010)

Table 7 Percentage of population age 18 to 24 enrolled in higher education by income quintile, 1990–2006

Quintile	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2003	2006
I	4.4	7.9	9.1	8.8	8.7	14.7	17.3
II	7.7	9.8	10.2	15.4	13.3	21.4	22.4
III	12.4	13.0	17.4	21.5	23.2	33.1	31.7
IV	22.0	23.9	32.1	35.2	38.9	46.9	49.6
V	40.7	41.2	54.8	60.0	65.4	73.6	80.0
Total percentages	16.2	17.8	24.1	28.2	29.4	37.6	38.3
Dispersion index	9.3	5.2	6.0	6.8	7.5	5.0	4.6

Source: Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN), Social Division, CASEN surveys for the respective years

Notes: These figures exclude live-in domestic employees and their families.

The dispersion index is calculated by dividing numbers in Quintile V by those in Quintile I.

Table 8 Percentage of students 18 to 24 enrolled in HEIs by institution funding type and income quintile, 1990–2006

Quintile	1990		1996		1998		2003		2006	
	Public HEIs	Private HEIs	Public HEIs	Private HEIs	Public HEIs	Private HEIs	Public HEIs	Private HEIs	Public HEIs	Private HEIs
I	7.4	5.6	9.2	7.8	8.4	7.1	7.9	7.9	11.7	8.4
II	11.9	13.2	14.2	12.1	13.9	13.7	15.4	11.1	15.3	12.9
III	19.8	21.9	19.3	17.2	18.6	20.3	19.1	18.4	19.9	18.4
IV	24.6	26.6	24.1	29.4	28.1	26.2	28.2	26.7	27.4	26.8
V	36.3	32.7	33.2	33.5	31.0	32.7	29.4	35.9	25.8	33.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: For 1990, 1996 and 1998, compiled by Espinoza (2002) using CASEN survey data. For 2003 and 2006, compiled by both authors (See CASEN 2003, 2006)

Notes: Public HEIs include only the CRUCH universities. Private HEIs include the new private universities, the TTCs, and the PIs.

In addition, student enrolment in private HEIs does not vary much in either Quintile I (from 5.6% to 8.4% between 1990 and 2006) or in Quintile V (from 32.7% to 33.4%). However, the share of these students in public HEIs did shift: in 1990, 7.4% of students in public HEIs were from Quintile I but in 2006, this proportion rose to 11.7%, while the

percentage of those from Quintile V dropped from 36.3% to 25.8%. In contrast, over that same period, the percentage of those from Quintile I enrolling in private institutions rose by three points, from 5.6% to 8.4%, while the enrolment of those in Quintile V increased very slightly, from 32.7% to 33.4% (see Table 8).

Another way of analyzing access is to look at the type of HEI that students from the various social groups attend. For Quintile I (lowest income), enrolment in CRUCH universities rose from 7% to 11% between 2003 and 2006, while in Quintile V, it dropped from 33.3% to 30.0%. On the other hand, in the same period, in the new private universities, the percentage of enrollees from Quintile I rose from 4.9% to 6.0% and that for Quintile V dropped from 51% to 44%. In the PIs, meanwhile, the enrolment of those from Quintile I rose from 6.3% to 8.0%, but it dropped from 28.2% to 25.0% for those in Quintile V. The TTCs show the most significant change in the period 2003–06 in comparison to the other HEIS: here, enrolment among students in Quintile I fell from 16% to 10% but it rose from 17.2% to 25% among those in Quintile V (see Table 9).

Access to HEIs by members of ethnic minority groups

Certainly, one of the areas least often explored is the access that various indigenous groups have to higher education, and to the education system in general. One explanation is the small percentage these groups represent in the overall population; another is the fact that governments have not designed systematic policies to support this segment of the population. Clearly, over time, ethnic minorities in the country are gradually becoming more invisible, even though they constitute a player that on no account should be ignored.

According to the 2003 CASEN data, 26.3% of indigenous people aged 18 to 24 enrolled in HEIs in 2003; this is significantly below the overall enrolment for the same age group at the national level (37.6%). Other minorities are no less important; for example, among religious minorities such as Protestants, enrolment in HEIs has decreased markedly (Corvalán 2009).

As Table 10 shows, members of indigenous groups generally enrol at universities in low numbers, especially at private universities (2.8%). This percentage is also well below the percentage of indigenous peoples in the national population, which is 8% according to CASEN figures for 2003.

Several factors explain why aboriginal students do not attend private universities in high numbers, including the group's low SES, the high cost of studying at a private university, and the group's greater identification with public universities. In addition, some public

Table 9 Distribution of enrolment in HEIs by type of institution and income quintile (%), 2003–2006

Type of institution	2003						2006					
	I	II	III	IV	V	Total	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
CRUCH U.	7.0	13.6	19.3	26.8	33.3	100	11.0	14.0	18	27	30	100
New Private U.	4.9	5.9	13.2	25.0	51.0	100	6.0	9.0	13	28	44	100
PIs	6.3	12.8	22.4	30.4	28.2	100	8.0	15.0	24	28	25	100
TTCs	16.0	22.5	26.9	17.1	17.2	100	10.0	17.0	23	24	25	100

Source: CASEN (2003, 2006)

Table 10 Enrolment of students from ethnic groups in HEIs by university funding type, 2003

Of ethnic origin	Public universities (CRUCH)	New private universities
No	94.9%	97.2%
Yes	5.1%	2.8%
Total %	100%	100%
Total individuals	2,857	1,514

Source: Donoso and Cancino (2007), who drew on data from CASEN (2003)

institutions have special admission policies to encourage such students to enrol, such as the Universidad de la Frontera's affirmative action programme (RUPU).

Concluding remarks

The privatization of higher education throughout the world, especially in Latin America and Chile, has intensified in the last two decades. Many elements in the case of Chile clearly show that privatizing education does not necessarily mean improving it. Indeed, after three decades of implementing deregulation policies, Chile has succeeded in substantially broadening the coverage of its higher education system, mainly because of the new private institutions created after 1981 and the increased enrolment of women, but it is also true that this progress has not gone hand in hand with the quality of offerings, with all that implies in educational terms. At present, Chile has a very broad and diversified supply of educational opportunities at the undergraduate level, and a large part of it is of dubious quality. For example, the 25 universities that are part of CRUCH are accredited for an average of 4.6 years out of a maximum of 7. In contrast, of the 35 new private universities, 31 are accredited for an average of 4 years, but 57% of them are accredited for less than three years. Of the ten highest-ranking universities in Chile, nine are part of CRUCH.

The picture of quality for the PIs and TTCs, all of them private, is rather discouraging, given that few of them have applied for accreditation; this could be interpreted as a lack of interest or lack of the mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure quality teaching. Moreover, in 2010 around 50% of the career programmes offered by PIs were in the process of being closed (Espinoza and González 2012).

Of all undergraduate programmes accredited as of 2008, approximately 90% were offered by CRUCH universities, while 8% were offered by new private universities and just over 1% by PIs. This demonstrates the enormous imbalance in the level of certification among various institutions.

Towards the end of 2008, 84% of the master's programmes and 87% of the doctorates offered by CRUCH universities were accredited. In contrast, among new private universities, only 59% of master's programmes and 21% of doctorates were accredited (CNED 2009).

Another aspect that calls into question the quality assurance system and the quality of the supply associated with a significant number of new private institutions is the inadequate monitoring of some of their branches. Indeed, in 2007 there were 595 branches of HEIs, of which 141 had not been formally declared to the National Accreditation Commission (CNAP 2003; Rodríguez 2009). These branches were identified by monitoring the

advertisements that the institutions ran about their programmes. The vast majority of these branches belong to private institutions.

The quality of an institution can also be measured by the makeup of its faculty. Here, it should be noted that 80% of the professors in private universities are working part time. This is not consistent with the university spirit, since this kind of contractual relationship results in poor professor-student interaction, low productivity (measured in terms of publications and research projects financed through competitive grants), and minimum commitment to the institution; all these factors inevitably impact the quality of teaching. In addition, the majority of private universities do not have highly selective admissions processes. Moreover, a significant portion of the students attending HEIs have little cultural capital, in the form of high quality secondary preparation, given the very low admissions standards that prevail at some private institutions; indeed some are so eager to enrol students that they have no admissions standards at all.

We organized this study around four objectives. The first was to describe the population that accesses higher education according to the type of institution (universities, TTCs, and PIs) and type of institutional funding (public or private). Although private institutions have generated a significant supply of educational opportunities, 60% of Chile's young people aged 18 to 24 still are not entering the system. The improved access preferentially benefits young people who attended private, fee-paying secondary schools.

We discovered a marked preference among young people to enrol in professional programmes at university rather than short degree programmes, which are less attractive. This has to do with the private rate of return from professional studies compared to technical programmes. Accordingly, it can be concluded that access to the private university sector has undergone phenomenal, sustained growth, equal to that at CRUCH universities. This growth was considerably lower among PIs and variable at the TTCs, both of which are private. With regard to the latter, the growth in student numbers in the last five years might be attributable to the creation of the New Millennium Grant programme designed for students in technical programmes.

With regard to our second objective—to characterize access by gender—we conclude that the most significant change involves the gradual and constant growth in female enrolment over the last decade, surpassing the increase in male enrolment. This growth is especially noticeable in private universities where nearly three times as many women as men enrol. As a result, at present, women surpass men in enrolment in private universities and practically equal them in public universities.

Our third objective was to characterize the population accessing tertiary education by family income level. We conclude that private universities attract more students from the wealthiest quintile, and fewer students from the poorest quintiles. Nevertheless, our comparison of the two types of institution shows that the enrolment gap between higher and lower income students is smaller in public universities than in the new private ones.

Finally, we looked at access available to members of ethnic minority groups, and found that indigenous peoples are under-represented in HEIs, compared to their proportion in the total population.

This study shed light on the subject of access to both public and private post-secondary educational institutions. We approached the discussion from various perspectives including gender, type of institution, institution funding type, and ethnicity. However, questions undoubtedly remain for future investigations to clarify. For example, how do the admissions requirements of various undergraduate institutions and programmes condition access to the different institutions? And how do the costs associated with study programmes

(tuition and enrolment fees) and the available student aid (scholarships and loans) constrain or foster access to the HEIs?

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