

Chilean management education: rhetoric of pragmatism, consumerism, individualism and elitism

Educação em gestão chilena: retórica de pragmatismo, consumerismo, individualismo e elitismo

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to understand the character and the role of higher education in business in relation to the wider institutional and structural contexts within which they function. Being loyal to that widespread background, business schools in Chile have become efficient providers of appropriate goods and services for their respective clients and consumers, behaving more like corporations and businesses rather than educational institutions. From this perspective, business education's alignment with the wider political and socio-economic shifts associated with the developments of market economies and economic globalization is a necessary reflection. In this paper we will provide an account of our problematization of management education practices in Chile. This practice was pictured as one of the main characters at the forefront of the Chilean neo-liberal revolution during the final years of the last century.

In particular, we will unravel more closely the chain of signifiers articulating the meaning of Chilean higher business education. This articulation is recuperated mainly around how those involved in the management education practice talk about (our)themselves. As well as specialised press writings, some academic accounts and fragments from our own 'ethnographic' involvement are used for this purpose. Particular attention is paid to the social, political and fantasmatic logics (GLYNOS; HOWARTH, 2007) as key elements of our own explanation of this practice, which in turn informs our critical standpoint.

Keywords: *business education, discourse theor, logics, critical explanation.*

Resumo

O objetivo do presente artigo é compreender o caráter e o papel do Ensino Superior nos negócios, em relação aos diversos contextos institucionais e estruturais em que estão inseridos. Sendo fiéis a este histórico generalizado, escolas de negócios no Chile tornaram-se fornecedores eficientes de bens e serviços adequados para seus respectivos clientes e consumidores, comportando-se mais como corporações e empresas, do que como instituições educacionais. Sob essa perspectiva, o alinhamento da educação empresarial com as mudanças políticas e socioeconômicas mais amplas, associado à evolução das economias de mercado e da globalização econômica torna-se uma reflexão necessária. Neste artigo presta-se conta da problematização pessoal da prática de gestão da educação no Chile. Esta prática foi retratada como um dos principais personagens na vanguarda da revolução neoliberal do Chile durante os últimos anos do século anterior.

Especificamente, irá se desvendar mais detalhadamente a cadeia de significantes, articulando o sentido da Educação Superior empresarial no Chile. Essa articulação é recuperada, principalmente, em torno de como as pessoas envolvidas na prática de ensino de gestão falam de si próprias. Além de artigos da imprensa especializada, alguns relatos acadêmicos e fragmentos da participação "etnográfica" pessoal são utilizados para apoiar essa articulação. Uma atenção especial é dada às lógicas políticas, sociais e fantasmáticas (GLYNOS; HOWARTH, 2007) como elementos-chave da explicação particular dessa prática, que por sua vez, mostrará o ponto de vista crítico do autor.

Palavras-chave: educação em negócios; teor do discurso, lógica, explicação crítica

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Welcoming words

The focus of our analysis is oriented towards exploring what is given as the objective reality of what management education in Chile is and how it is organised and delivered. This endeavour means to engage in a dialogue with this particular discursive formation in which different signifiers (management, education, critical, student, school of business, etc) are articulated in signified chains, which constitute these terms as obvious and evident objects (identities) of a wider (social) reality; in turn posing what reality itself is. We question how the signifier “management education” is fixed as the materialisation of a new and particular aim of higher education sheltered by the social transformations that the country has undergone since the beginnings of the 1970s in Chile. We put into question how the signifier ‘management education’ is articulated as a ‘natural’ embodiment of the new social order in Chile, particularly the unquestioned practice which produces and reproduces the values that currently hegemonize our societal life and support our participation in the so called globalization.

Welcome to the world

The world is changing very fast, not only in relation to the advancement of science, technological convergence or communication development. The most profound change is related to the way in which business is understood and done.

We can not deny the power of new organizations any more. It will not be possible to dismiss science and technology within our business decisions. We can not avoid regarding the world as our operational instrumental panel any more.

Current scientists are strongly connected with the impact of their researches; particularly with the commercial value of them. We, as business men, have to understand this reality; we have to be willing to learn this new language and make contact with sciences and its managers. Otherwise, our Latin American region will not be part of the great business leagues of 21st century. (MBA programme Director Chilean University)

These are the Programme Director’s ‘welcoming words’ published in a MBA brochure of one of three most important business schools in Chile. The way in which he is inviting future applicants for their postgraduate course, evidences how management practice is being understood here and what is its relation/dependence with business education. These ‘welcoming words’ present business practice as the core of our current world’s evolution; specifically what he is implying is a worldwide social practice that offers to all of us a (compulsory) new sense of Being and a new social order strongly embedded in it. Within this context business is explicitly connected with science - meaning technology development informed by commercial values. This coupling embodies the current representation of reality, which has been successfully disseminated by neo-liberal economics across the world and hereafter externally imposed on Latin America as on any other Third World geopolitics. Thus, the re-production of mainstream management education is perceived as the entry ticket to the ‘business leagues of the 21st century’. As we will see through this paper this is the general tone that characterizes management education articulation in Chile: ‘welcoming words’ or ‘welcome to the world’?

The Chilean miracle: conditions of (im)possibility

The military coup of September 11th 1973, brought to Chile the end of the most durable and progressive democracy in Latin America and at the same time, the beginning of one of “*the most prolonged and reactionary dictatorship*” (DRAKE; JACKSIC, 1999). Many social analysts have regarded the sociological process that led to those severe events as a great crisis of order in which all of our institutions, traditions, and values were under threat. (BRUNNER, 1981; TIRONI, 1985). That process had started a long time before, producing many changes in our political, social and economic context. Moreover, it was the period of the Unidad Popular government (UP), headed by Salvador Allende (1970 - 1973), which could be regarded as the definitive and final stage of that crisis. His political attempt tried to continue, even further, with the socialist tendencies initiated by the former Eduardo Frei’s Christian Democratic government, the so-called “Revolution

in Freedom". Those efforts were strongly countered by the dominant groups of society as soon as they perceived its hegemonic dominance compromised with the risk of becoming a subordinate class if the Popular Government achieved their aims. In other words, the crisis was the expression of the cultural organization's incapability to cope with the demands of all social sectors. The needs of society overwhelmed its own ability to respond, opening the door to a major social fragmentation characterized by a conflict between the most relevant social forces (BRUNNER 1981).

Traditional bourgeois, neo-liberal intellectuals and entrepreneurs, all of them being part of the dominant social group, developed a successful rebellion against the UP government. They were strongly concerned with the Marxist turn of our society and particularly with the subsequent changes in our economy. Their struggle was oriented to keeping their preponderant participation within the State as well as their relevant role within the cultural issues of the country. By supporting the military insurrection they assured their connection with power. The military coup was the successful end of their insurgence. The consequences of our September 11th 1973 were violent and harsh. After that generalized national identity crisis, a process of re-structuring appeared necessary. Our fragmented society needed new meanings, and they were indeed offered.

The capitalist revolution

Once this dominant group had seized the power, they addressed a major re-organization of the culture. These attempts were oriented to overcoming the former model of *commitment* (Brunner, 1981), which had been developed under State dependant capitalism and consequently, focused in a capitalist-revolution-type project (BRUNNER, 1981; MOULIAN, 2002, TIRONI, 1985). Maybe the most relevant decision made by this dominant group was to put aside the alternative of a social *restoration* (MOULIAN, 2002; TIRONI, 1985). This option implied the opportunity to save some valuable aspects of the previous history in trying to re-position them in a new endeavour. On the other hand, the drastic election of a coup, as the way to face the cultural crisis, opened space for a total transformation of the prevalent order. Moulian (2002) clearly states that the very first explicit decision of this new dominant group was to install a new ideological system.

The Chilean experience was one of the foundational examples of what Naomi Klein (2007) has labelled as 'shock doctrine', the pervasive strategy that extreme neo-liberals have used in order to install their ideology all over the world. According to Klein, the Chilean dictatorship – inspired by Milton Friedman's legacy – decided to impose a rapid-fire transformation of the economy (tax cuts, free trade, privatized services, cuts in social spending and deregulation) taking advantage of the state of shock that the violent coup had produced among the Chilean population. The expectation was that the speed, suddenness and scope of the economic shifts would provoke psychological reactions in the public that would 'facilitate the adjustment'. In Klein's words: "*It was the most extreme capitalist makeover ever attempted anywhere*" (Ibid, p 7). The military government also facilitated the adjustment with its own shock treatments; these were performed in the Regime's many torture cells, disappearances, imprisonments and exiles, inflicted on all those deemed to resist the way of the capitalist transformation. Authoritarianism was an essential element of the new model, aimed at making possible a social re-organization based upon its disciplinary culture.

According to Brunner (1981) the social reorganization in Chile was feasible because the dominant group developed a disciplinary-based approach to face this challenge. These circumstances gave this dominant group a position of total control of every social process, subjugating all other social agents to a position of 'second-class citizen', and demanding from them their maximum obedience and their utilitarian participation in the economic development (Brunner 1981). Brunner regarded this two-fold phenomenon of functioning of social behaviours - namely obedience and usefulness - as a phenomenon of *social disciplining*. The author explains that the authoritarian organization of society is based on a disciplinary experience, different from the former culture which had had the political experience as its central nucleus.

Most capitalist-authoritarian revolutions begin by trespassing to bourgeois technical and intellectual elite economic control (BRUNNER, 1981). The first step of that strategy was to 're-organize' the economy by assuring capital concentration enhancing the privatization of the former State economic activities; replacing the State's regulatory role within the market and finally opening the Chilean economy to foreign international investments. As an authoritarian capitalism, the formation of obedience and conformist motivations were

obtained by a hierarchical structuration of society. That structure shaped the possibilities of identification for every single person by defining their social position by an asymmetrical relation with others. Thus, every subject's position corresponds to a differential social horizon defined by its market access. In that way, the market was constructed as a natural, neutral and automatic mechanism, which had the self-contained ability to control and distribute social opportunities. Therefore, the disciplinary experience is constituted around three main areas: it is an eminently individual experience; it is an experience of hierarchical positioning, and it is a market of unequal access experience. All of these disciplinary attempts finally created a social order in which the individuals (literally) have lost their social connections. The new order left in any single pair of hands the responsibility for their life; any collective way to cope with vital demands was disdained.

Individuality was not alone; there was another phenomenon which helped to develop this individualistic and hierarchical way of living; passivity (Brunner 1981). This passivity is built around a cultural world based on the principle of authority, which in turn is ideologically favoured by the support of a technological knowledge raised within the scientific paradigm assumed by those in power. A kind of superior culture was created, which generated narrowing creative opportunities for anyone who is not part of the dominant groups. To participate in this superior culture was finally performed as a prerogative and a powerful tool of particular dominant class among society. Following this rationality, the whole educational system underwent a big change. It was re-arranged in order to address the future occupational destiny of the students, which was established mainly in accordance with their social origin. Brunner (1981 p 34) explained it clearly: "In that way, the educational system becomes an inequality reproduction mechanism based on the ideological assumption of a performance competence."

Elementary education was reinforced in order to satisfy massive occupational demands. Moreover, its outcomes were specifically differentiated. Children from the lower class could find in this stage the required knowledge to perform elemental labour positions, and therefore, a subordinate and a passive role among the social division of labour was stressed. On the other hand, children from more privileged classes found, in the private elementary education, the preliminary steps towards higher education, within which business education was acquiring increasing demand. The most relevant consequence of that scenario was the way in which the system was preventing the formation of intellectuals from subordinate classes, keeping this as the prerogative dominant groups. This situation left the majority out of any ideological perspectives playing a passive conformist role, which finally stretched the opportunities for collective learning. Subordinate groups were pushed to learn how to express themselves within a dominated world (BRUNNER 1981).

Although that social order was the main characteristic of our authoritarian period, its tentacles even reached the democratic stage inaugurated after the 1988s plebiscite. Power groups were even successful even then in trespassing democratic barriers and positioning a disciplinary world beyond dictatorial government.

Management education in Chile: lack of problematization.

Mainstream writings on management and faculty representatives have constructed the problem of management education largely in terms of adjusting and reforming their respective institutions to respond rationally and reasonably to the challenges within the constraints of the new regime in Chile. Change, and then management, appears as something inescapable that is necessary to face and even utilise in order to achieve success. People belonging to business schools tend to support and sustain that understanding conceiving their work as natural gears of that well-oiled machine. These descriptions participate in elaborating and circulating discourses that offer points of identification to those involved in the management practice. In so doing, they are actually producing a hegemonic articulation on what is the identity of a manager, and what are the demands for a management education practice.

This rationale is underpinned by an understanding of the character and the role of higher education in business in relation to the wider institutional and structural contexts within which they function. From this perspective, their alignment with the wider political and socio-economic shifts associated with the developments of market economies and economic globalization is a necessary response. Being loyal to that background, business

schools in Chile have become efficient providers of appropriate goods and services for their respective clients and consumers behaving more like corporations and businesses.

Those understandings suggest that the phenomena under consideration are governed by causal laws, implying that the changes are akin to natural processes beyond social and political control. Its main implication is the little questioning of the supposed inevitability and over-powering force of socio-economic development itself, and no room for alternative conceptions of the business higher education in neo-liberal societies.

Although formal business education voices have supported and accommodated themselves to the market approach, this research has shown that surrounding academics have tended to be more skeptical about its benefits. By 'surrounding academics' we mean the scholars belonging to Social Science departments and/or the faculty in charge of the 'soft skills side' within business schools. Most of them are sociologists or psychologists; their participation within that educational practice is being responsible for teaching organizational theory, organizational behaviour, as well as delivering the tools to develop the so called soft skills to manage - leadership, communication, teamwork, decision making, etc – all of them grouped under the label 'Human Resources'. Their marginality is sustained mainly on the 'second class' status of their subjects in comparison with the relevant ones, meaning any topic that is closer to money making, such as finance, economics, accountability or marketing. Though this category is by no means homogeneous it is possible to say that they have focused their critical gaze on the way the managerialist discourse has obscured their social glance subordinating it to the profit making aims.

In this general context, an apparent issue has emerged concerning the lack of problematization of the status of business education by our academics. In spite of some declared dissatisfaction with the primacy of technical, functional and monetary approach of their teaching contents and practice, there appears to be no effective or publicly articulated critique of business education rationality. The social, political and fantasmatic logics approach of our research allows picking up and even developing this problem into a problematization: why scholars are collaborating, even sustaining the rationale and performances that some of them recognize to be problematic? Why there aren't challenging dominant discourses apart from their personal and private complaining?

Our main motivation to face the challenge of this research was the complete absence of those questions within local management education practice. Our query has shown that this absence remains untouched. This kind of questioning would be far beyond the scope of mainstream supporters, and on the other hand, all those who are quite skeptical would remain trapped within the tentacles of the frustrating paradigm. However, this is just a superficial and overly homogeneous picture that tends to reinforce a 'causal law' paradigm. To overemphasize the absence of effective resistance is, at the same time, a way to virtually exclude any other type of response, as well as smoothing over the unevenness within that academic field. In the attempt to deploy a different eye our standpoint aspires to challenge this simple picture by focusing more closely on the full scope of representatives' self-interpretations. These interpretations not only highlight the varied terrain of local management education, but they also caution against the dichotomist alternatives relied upon by both supporters and detractors of managerialist discourse.

Contextualized self-interpretations are crucial in connecting this problematization to a range of related questions: Where did this regime of practices come from, and how and why has it been installed? Where there is discontent among academics, why does this rarely translate into effective political resistance? How can we account for the way in which these embedded discourses have managed to grip subjects, especially when they are opposed to them? The following moment of our analysis involves identifying the relevant social, political and fantasmatic logics which characterize the practice under investigation.

Social logics

The following paragraphs are devoted to presenting the assemblage of social logics that are currently installed in Chilean business schools. We will start by positing the operation of four such logics – pragmatism,

consumerism, individualism and elitism- which when articulated together allow us to characterize the current regime of management education practices.

Logic of pragmatism

The rules of many practices linked to the managerial regime are governed by logic of pragmatism, which in our view shape the goals and aims of every attempt at social agency. Pragmatism appears as a standpoint that overemphasized consequences as the way to value the real meaning of any endeavor. Pragmatism is in that way synonymous of utility and practicalness. That logic captures the way in which business schools, qua producers of knowledge and skill commodities, struggle to render its deliveries on tangible success indicators for both, its students and the companies; the way students demand technical tools that facilitate their future professional practice and status achievement; and the way the market emphasizes quantitative indicators as the measure of results.

The Commerce Secretary of the USA, Carlos Gutierrez, stated yesterday that right wing, left wing or centre ideologies “do not care anymore”. He mentioned Chile as the example to follow, because they have stepped to a fundamental issue for countries’ development: ‘the pragmatism’. (Chile is the example of pragmatism. El Mercurio de Valparaiso, p. 17 19th August, 2008)

One of our current demands is to manage knowledge like an efficient tool. An ever-present drive for that practice is the question of *what is this for?* The identification and interpretation of that logic of pragmatism have a clear resemblance on the self-interpretation of subjects. Some extracts from our interviews help to illustrate it:

[...] people (students) are very practical, they want practical things that come are useful and quick. For that reason we have to quickly feed ourselves with what companies need, we have to test contents all time. (ACADEMIC COORDINATOR BUSINESS SCHOOL 2)

[...] the executives (postgraduate students) could feel quite frustrated if you don’t teach them how to do things” “...they are rough diamonds needing managerial skills, without those skills, in spite of their intelligence or their knowledge, they won’t arrive that far. (Postgraduate Director Business School 3)

This logic of pragmatism is triggered in contexts of business education by means of making tangible and self-evident the applicability of their contents, which should easily connect what is being exposed in a class with the practical demands of a managerial job. In other words, the potentially intrinsic qualities of teaching and research is their instrumental or exchange value, whether from the point of view of academics or students.

The tendency that I perceive here in Chile deals with how people could contribute to effectiveness. The educational endeavour is related to disclose the value of theories, value in terms of figures. (Academic Business School 2)

In sum, the underlying drive of the logic of pragmatism is to render all things functional, which in turn tends to feed and reinforce logics of consumerism and individualism, as well as, the prevalent elitism of our local business practice.

Logics of consumerism

The second logic constructed here could be said describes patterns of discursive articulation that equate personal satisfaction with the acquisition of goods and services. The logic of the market has developed a particular desired model of consumerism throughout the 20th century. Then, as this model is individual rather than social, so consumption increasingly becomes private (BOTTERY, 2005). Consumerism implies never-ending relations of possession stimulated by the permanent obsolescence of products and services and its quick replacements. The logic of the economics of capitalism demands that if production is to continue to expand, consumption will need to be the vehicle that fuels this process.

In 1981, the military government dictated a series of ‘Decrees with force of law’ which were called *New Law for Universities*. Funding to universities was dramatically cut pushing them to compete in a higher education

market (BRUNNER, 1997; COX 1996; SANTOS, 2005). Its main propositions stated that higher educational institutions should be self-sufficient trusting mainly on its student's fees. Removing State funding, universities were compelled to compete in order to recruit students/clients and therefore secure their economical support. The so called new system for higher education intended to improve higher education provision

[...] introducing the competitive factor within universities, this is possible through two main ways, facilitating the creation of new universities as well as the higher education financial system modification...The idea is that no university can rely on a secure budget anymore³.

As a consequence, Chilean universities became completely dependant on market context introjecting postulates like efficiency, competition and profit. Fund-raising is now the first priority, thus those 'academic' activities that could be offered as well paid 'products' to the market were privileged, among others the main academic activity fitting with that purpose was 'teaching'. The fees paid by university students became the key source of funding; as 'target group' they are from now its fundamental 'consumers'.

Those situations have shaped Chilean higher teaching activities, firstly, to be able to 'offer products that potential consumers are willing to purchase'. Decisions about what programmes to be delivered will have the support of market research that clearly shows 'public preferences'. Those preferences were crisscrossed with costs analysis rendering in the massive opening of 'chalk and blackboard' programmes such as Law and Business (SANTOS, 2006). With the intention to gain customers, Chilean universities deploy huge marketing campaigns every year. From October to January, television, radios, newspapers, internet and public spaces are lined with creative slogans, attractive pictures and even economic offers that compete to 'catch' those applicants. Chilean universities do their best to show what potential clients are looking for: quick qualifications, attractive facilities or international exchanges.

*The Chilean University sector has rendered in one of the most competitive industries, in both competitors' number and aggressive actions (University marketing **Financial Newspaper**, August 2005.)*

The logic of consumerism operates in such a way as to downplay qualities of teaching in favour of their market visibility. Adequate academics should be provided in order to satisfy the consumerism demands. They are identified and selected according to their closeness with latest topics and the visibility of their degree. Most of them are partially hired in charge of just one course avoiding permanent contracts. Full time faculty are less of a reality than in the past and those sporadic ties with institutions transform academics into 'services sellers' which are purchased by universities in order to be offered to their students. In that way, 'taxi' teachers arose, like pilgrims running between different universities across the city. Therefore, academics are compelled to create an attractive teaching 'product' that demands the attention of universities in detriment of their research interest and work stability.

The best thing of our MBA is that it really has a great seduction power, therefore people that stand before teachers are good. This is a relevant demand for those teachers, they already know that they cannot repeat themselves, they have to be permanently updated (Academic Coordinator Business School 2)

On the other hand, within this logic of consumerism, students' subjectivities are colonized by their attributes as clients. Because of the fact that being a consumer is to buy is as much is decided by the dictates of the market as by what consumers' want, consumption increasingly becomes a passive experience; consumerism, not political involvement, is the best expression of personal freedom. In that way, educational activity – from the policies through to implementation – should begin from a consideration of the needs, abilities and interests of the individual student. Their opinion expressed through the 'teaching evaluations' after every single course could determine the continuity of the course as such, even the permanence of the teacher within that particular institution. Furthermore, those decisions are closer to the level of satisfaction of those 'consumers' rather than

³ Military Government's Home Office Secretary Sergio Fernandez "The Secretaries answer 25 questions" El Mercurio, 11th march, 1981, quoted in Santos 2006: 3.

the quality of teaching activities (SANTOS, 2006). Thus, study curricula should be 'attractive', teachers 'enjoyable' and facilities 'stunning'.

Honestly speaking, I've always been between those two Business Schools; they are the best, which is what all people are saying. I've never wondered about contents or methodologies; actually, between these two I've made my decision just by practical issues: timetable and location. (MBA student Business School 2)

Chilean current consumerism's value is embodied by the wrapper, the packages, and the product decorations. Those attributes help on construct individual subjectivities, isolated identities called to struggle with the world by their own, the logic of individualism.

Logic of individualism

Our third social logic embraces all discursive attempts that constitute subjects as isolated entities, neglecting the social or structural aspects of success and failure in the self-understanding of persons and institutions, leaving them to view themselves as individually responsible for their success and failure.

Work conditions have changed a lot; I mean the responsibility for your career development is no longer in companies' hands any more. There is no company establishing an upward career path for you. In the past, companies were in charge of that, but not any more. Nowadays every single person has to be in charge of their own career, they have to develop a personal project. (Head Hunter)

The stress on personal projects enhances individualistic and asocial endeavours centred on the realization of the self and dismissive of larger societal projects. Business Schools are understood as the vehicle to materialising that expectation through formal professional qualifications. Those qualifications promise to equip individuals with the necessary strengths to cope with the needs of 'employability'. This concept implies the ability to obtain and keep a job, the ability to be in tune with the job market and the capacity to find or change a job without difficulty. In other words "employability" means to have that required disposition to cope with changing and competitive economic environments. For both, academics and future managers, what is required is their development and self-management formation through. In the past, the responsibility for human resources training was in hands of companies and the state, but now the notion of employability states that process is an individual duty.

Among our Business Schools the idea of a heroic manager and unipersonal leadership predominates. A man or a woman that individually embodies all those persuasive skills. (Academic Business School 3)

Individualism is a new way of (non)relating with others and with one self, including the body, the world and the time. Chile's last years have been characterized by the replacing of social interests by personal ones. Chilean people have now less group referents where their social interests lie. The social solidarity is experienced as a kind of marginality, a folk remaining embedded in isolated and far away places, in the peasant communities and in the low classes. Individuality, on the contrary, is closer to elitism.

Logic of elitism

This logic operates around the attitude that implicitly maintains that determined opportunities and/or benefits are prerogative of certain groups among society. Consequently, elitism assumes that those individuals who are considered members of the elite are those whose views on a matter are to be taken the most seriously or carry the most weight; whose views and/or actions are most likely to be constructive to society as a whole; or whose extraordinary skills, abilities or wisdom render them especially fit to govern.

Within the context of management education the logic of elitism endorses the nurturing of a selected group of students in order to equip them for their future privileged work positions. Elitism here is articulated through the (self)selection of particular 'good' students as well as the support that the 'name' of certain schools gives to their alumni. The logic tends to downplay the public discourse of meritocracy leaving in class, economic and lineage attributes the key factors for privileging. Elitism is an attribute that is unevenly distributed among

Chilean business schools because not all of them sustain the same status. This situation results in a variable professional reality for all those graduates. In other words, the single acquisition of academic credentials is not enough for succeeding. That is to say, in order to belong to the core management, the different issues of the Chilean elite are more relevant.

Javier Núñez, an academic of University of Chile's Business School, published in 2004 his research about the relationship between salaries and socioeconomic level within Chilean market. His study addressed one of the gaps that were present in economic literature on labour discrimination, namely wage discrimination based on socioeconomic level. In his words (Ibid p. 5):

There is a wider consensus sustaining that our inequality is one of a special nature because it is originated from an excessive breach; particularly excessive between the 5 or 10 per cent richer and the rest. Under these circumstances it is natural (sic) to expect that in Chile social class distinctions are particularly emphasized.

His quantitative study approached the impact of socioeconomic origin over working incomes. He defined socioeconomic origin using three variables: social status of surnames, income average of place of origin, and socioeconomic status of secondary school. According to his description the status of surnames is a key issue in Chile due to the strong link between Basque-European (not Spanish) surnames with the traditional economic and political Chilean elite. From his findings it is worth quoting (Ibid p. 7):

Estimated incomes show that a mediocre performance student coming from a place and school of high socioeconomic level and gifted with a superior origin socioeconomic ascendance would have a statistically higher income than a high performance student coming from a poor place and a public school without an ascendancy linked to the high socioeconomic level.....That evidence suggests that meritocracy degree of labor market in Chile is limited.

The same study concludes:

It is easy to demonstrate that the most of Commercial Engineers students (Chilean business degree name) of the country's best universities come from the richest five per cent of the population, which is strongly linked with the local unequal access to higher education. That information indicates that students coming from lower socioeconomic levels constitute the 'successful' examples of their families, schools and places. Moreover, they will obtain lower incomes than their peers despite their similar academic merits. (Ibid. p. 7)

Chilean management school practice, as it was suggested by that study, is one of the most evident enclaves of that elitism unevenly recognized by their actors. Assuming that some privileges are in place, some representatives constitute them as academic or working performance differences:

The so called successful Business Schools are seeking to enroll the best ones from the market. I mean we want to take them and take care of their career. We want to identify those stars which are around, no matter what their university of origin, because they already have a successful career...and that is achieved by our selection process (Academic Coordinator Business School)

Moreover, that elitism is not just circumscribed to an academic background, their privileged prerogatives reach even their right to govern organizations:

I think that certain groups are looking for their executives to perpetuate certain value contexts...non in an explicit way, but everybody knows what they are talking about. It is quite elitist, but it is good, because at least there is someone concerned about who is making decisions and in what way. Maybe it is not a general ethic, but at least there is one. (Head Hunter)

The four logics developed here are informing the practices of the current management education in Chile. The underlying drive of the logics of pragmatism is to render all attempts measurable and functional, which in turns tend to feed and reinforce the logics of consumerism and individualism which shape the very nature of that practice rendering academic activities into commodities deserving individual administration and profitability. Finally, the logic of elitism draws a veil of exclusivity which collaborates on reproducing embedded power privileges among its social actors.

Nevertheless, having gone some way to establishing what the logics structuring the business education practices, we can also ask why and how they come about and continue to be sustained. This turns our attention to the operation of political and fantasmatic logics.

Political and fantasmatic logics

In order to account for the installation and grip of the management practices in Chilean universities – the logic of its emergence and radical institution, and the way in which it recruits, grips and govern subjects – it is necessary to approach the distinction between regimes and practices suggested by Glynos and Howarth (2007). For the purposes of the present research we situate the notion of regime at the level of the macro historical vicissitudes undergone by Chile during the last decades of the past century, and management practices at the level of higher education. Following the above mentioned authors' setting we focus our analysis both on the role of the neo-liberal dictatorship project in challenging and restructuring the Chilean political crisis after 1973 in which management education was but one element in an overall hegemonic project designed to install a new political settlement, and on the micro-dynamics by which these new ideas and practices were installed in the business schools themselves.

The capitalist revolution as a context

Chilean 'capitalist revolution' (MOULIAN, 2002) involved a form of populist politics that successfully divided the existing social order into two camps: those supporting the 'new project' confronting those who were against a non-democratic installation of new social enclaves. The balance between both competing forces was drastically eradicated by the military component of the new hegemony and its philosophy of 'internal security of the state' which cornered the resistance to clandestine and ever threatening attempts.

Military dictatorship intended a re-composition of the relationships between the State and the society privileging the market, dismantling the state and eliminating politics (GARRETON, 2007). In that context, political logics manifested themselves in the very formation and constitution of neo-liberal revolution practices, as well as their sedimentation and naturalization. Their construction was engineered by constituting the ruling bloc around the personalized military leadership (General A. Pinochet) and a team of technocrats (the Chicago Boys). This authoritarian tendency posed itself against a civilian restoring initiative supported by the more moderate elements which favored a return to the pre-1973 democratic system. The disproportionate level of violence carried out by the military against its enemies, the traumatic symbolism of the bombing of the presidential palace and intensity of the repression which followed could only be legitimized and justified by the need of a radical social change. Thus, the authoritarian faction gave tragedy a 'meaning' with the social and political manifestation of the neo-liberal model as an *inevitable* revolution (MOULIAN, 2002; POLLACK, 1995). But it also involved a sharpening of the frontier between the emergent forces of neo-liberals and the traditional Chilean Left wing in which the proponents of the capitalist revolution presented the latter as the supporters of the failed communist takeover of the country. The spectre of communism was used to demonize those who were opposed to neo-liberalism as enemies of the homeland. Against the morally desirable nationalism of the authoritarian bloc, there were the unacceptable discourses of socialism and populist democracy which were articulated around the *Unidad Popular* former government supporters. Therefore, the neo-liberal project involved the intensification of the divisions between market supporters and any leftist, in which the latter were presented as a dangerous other who would endanger the interests of the right wing especially neo-liberals. Hereafter, the new ruling bloc, namely military, Chicago Boys and right-wings struggled to sediment these new divisions by domesticating otherness in the name of legitimate capitalist modernization. Indeed, these 'authentic' forms of modernization were sedimented by the strong link between

military force and economist thinkers, and their ability to present economic changes as technical and scientific approaches able to sustain and inspire any social restoration while preventing any resistance by force and a constitutional exclusion. As Moulian (2002 p. 28) has pointed out “the success of revolutionary dictatorships come from the alignment between normative and legal power (law), power over the bodies (terror) and power over the minds (knowledge)”.

The opposition between neo-liberal and leftist supporters was articulated through an equivalential link with the, also discursively proposed, antagonism between pragmatism and politics. This discursive movement enhanced the syntagmatic pole of equivalential chains equating neo-liberals with pragmatists and technocrats against leftists, politicians and ideology proponents. Pragmatism through its articulation by technical rationality was strictly opposed to politics understood as the sustaining of utopian ideologies. The aspiration of replacing the confrontational side of politics concluded in the implantation of the administration as the ideal form of government. Thus, politics and its supporters were equated with fruitless and harmful attempts to recover the social order replacing them with the technocratic advocates of a desirable order which admits no questioning. Political parties were abolished, civil rights were eliminated and ideological discussions were excluded from every public and educational practice. More precisely, the new power bloc articulated a series of demands in different sites of the social – demands for economic reforms, material improvements, international participation in globalization, individualistic entrepreneurship and market regulations – by presenting the political endeavors, particularly leftist ones, as a common enemy that denied freedom and national self-determination. It thus simplified the entire national social space by transforming it into two hostile camps.

This knowledge in constitution, instrument of a revolution, was imposed annulling the expressive possibility of other knowledge and instituting orthodoxy, a protection system of its integrity as emergent knowledge. To an extent, it was made excluding other thinking systems due to them constituting no-knowledge and particularly excluding one of the most potent ones from the former stage – Marxism – due to its constituted anti-knowledge. (MOULIAN, 2002: 187)

Many institutions and groups were made equivalent and targeted by this new project: political parties, trade unions, public sector workers, left wings supporters, higher education and social sciences university departments in particular. Again, it was the educational reform of 1981 which drastically erased any trace of our former higher education system transforming it into another branch of the market model. In those times that new system was expected to solve all higher educational problems. The Home Secretary Sergio Fernandez diagnosed⁴ : “The system is a closed and virtually monopolist one with a great damage to university and to all national communities that finances higher education with their taxes and do not receive in compensation a good university return.”

It is possible to discern here the logic of fantasy at work in his words: a bad-business feature attributed to the university system which does not make profit for their stakeholders. This official view of the university system operates organizing subjects’ own mode of enjoyment by imagining how citizens enjoy themselves as market supporters. Here academics and state-funded students were regarded as obstacles to the desirable economic competitiveness and consumer accountability. The Secretary continues: “*The reform is an historical step within Chile’s advance to a truly free society, modern and just.*” The neo-liberal intervention among universities was functioning as a utopian solution leading higher education to freedom, modernity and justice (SANTOS, 2005).

Academics and universities, targeted as an outmoded and inefficient obstacle to realizing the ideals of market competition, lower public spending, and greater consumer accountability, were pushed to conform to those ideals. Consequently they were ripe for ‘neo-liberal solutions’ requiring the implementation of market competition, greater transparency and consumer accountability. As an echo of the Friedman’s model, ‘a-political studies’ were a dictatorship motto. A feature of the educational model was its technical-vocational orientation instantiated by the curricula structure and what students sought in their higher studies. In this context, curricula rendered itself in a form of goods willing to constitute themselves according to market demands, as well as in a purchase available to all in position to pay for it (AUSTIN, 2004).

⁴ Ibid page 12

As many commentators have emphasized (BRUNNER, 1981; GARRETON, 2007; MOULIAN, 2002) Chilean transition democracy reached consensus on the economic mindset remaining. Moreover, it is possible to say that Concertation⁵ governments have striven to extend many aspects of the Neo-liberal programme. Post-dictatorial ruling coalition actors appear to still be held captive by a fantasy in which the market is the only one way to solve all difficulties through pragmatism and consumerism.

Business education: the managerialist ground

Moving on into the micro analysis, now the focus will be on the way in which those market principles were instituted at the level of business schools. In the main one it could be argued that business schools have complied with the structures of the neo-liberal programme and market practices in a variety of ways.

Starting with students, both graduates and postgraduates, they coincide in considering higher education in business as the main tool to access professional opportunities. On the one hand they identified with the idea that business schools needed to prepare them in order to succeed within an increasingly competitive global market and that closer links with business and industry were necessary to train future managers. They also have employed a variety of means to 'complement' what has been regarded as the 'too theoretical emphases' of some courses. Business students' unions among many universities stressed the 'contact with real businesses' by carrying out visits to companies, talks with well-known managers or entrepreneurs, as well as running their activities with the economical support of companies.

In order to bridge the gap between our syllabus and the business context we are organizing visits to local companies. The aim is to contact our alumni and receive from them some clues about the real professional practice (Business Student Union web page. Business School 7)⁶

International links with foreign institutions are always encouraged expecting from possible interchanges or foreign visitors a taste of an international experience. On their terms the main contribution of a business school is the delivering of an appropriate language as the passport for wider business practice. Thus, neo-liberal discourses of competition and profitability within business schools have been deployed to articulate the differences between 'useful' and 'useless' courses; to justify individual struggles on affording high fees labeled as an 'investment'; to support the status of well-known 'brand names' among business schools against those which have 'no brand name' impact; and the relevance of creating future 'networks' from classmates. Those 'aligned students' have constructed a series of equivalences in order to establish political frontiers that make possible the perpetuation of neo-liberal approaches among business education. Thus, it is possible to perceive the ideological construction of 'useful' versus 'useless'; 'individual investment' versus compulsory high fees; 'brand name' schools versus 'no brand name' and 'networks' versus classmates, and so forth.

Business School certification validates your involvement in certain conversations. Other managers will support you as a valid speaker independently of your working experience (MBA Student Business School 3)

Paying attention to business academics we can point out the various ways in which they embrace the dictates of the neo-liberal project. In general terms, they strongly validate the hegemonic understanding of a business school, assuming and supporting the key role of market in social articulation. It is the market that establishes their priorities; as a consequence, they are constantly paying attention to its demands and turning their back on the academic institution that supports them.

Our university does not have a brand name, maybe because it has a public institution history and consequently it does not have closeness with the private market. This is my weakness before my competitors, so I discovered that some managers' market sector is looking for specialization. Now our MBA offers specialization (Postgraduate Director Business School 3)

⁵ The centre and socialists Chilean political parties' coalition in power since 1989.

⁶http://www.icom.usm.cl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=2

Upon uncritically accepting market pressures they articulate their practice as a permanent struggle against its competitors; which means that their endeavors are mainly focused on what they call “to bring companies into the university”. That ideal is instantiated through more and better practical connections with companies rendering their academic and pedagogical labour a payable service oriented to solve problems. Within this context, teachers are better valued if they have personal practical experience; students should be equipped with tangible competences and tools which consequently shape contents and pedagogical strategies; their institutions should invest in their brand stressing their presence within the rankings and their international accreditations. The best value academic is that which comes from foreign avant-garde through holders of Northern PhDs, especially those from the USA, and the use of foreign texts; they pay special attention to their alumni which embody schools’ work as products, metaphors like ‘uncut diamonds’ and ‘airplanes’ serve to label their students. Their managerialist language within which words like ‘market’, ‘production’, ‘competition’, ‘demands’, ‘to add value’, ‘consumerism’, ‘productivity’, ‘entrepreneurship’, and so forth predominate, used to describe their practice, establishing ideological equivalences between business schools and economic markets.

Thus, and at the same time, academics opposed their labour against the traditional understanding of the academy. Historical university tasks are understood as opposed to market demands emphasizing that ‘research for its own sake lacks utility’, ‘education is a tool that allows to be updated’, ‘management is responding to economic systems’, ‘PhDs are just a way to be updated’, ‘to hold a PhD. without practical experience is useless’, ‘it is necessary to add substance to theory’, among others.

Furthermore, not all responses perfectly fit within that framework. There are some instances of questioning that do not achieve the form of a resistance. Those statements could be grouped around one academic’s words: “*the market is not ruling everything, there is a gap: the social*” (Academic Business School 4). He was pointing to the neglect of social consequences of managerial practices which, in his terms, are not addressed within formal content. He articulates business practices as a matter of social equity contribution as long as it considers people’s emotions and interdependence. For him, teaching at a business school puts too much pressure on results and practical achievements giving no room for further reflections. His isolated endeavor attempts to raise some questionings in order to go beyond narrow frameworks. Moreover, he realized that these kinds of efforts “crash with reality”. Similarly, other teachers mentioned the need to incorporate more social science courses within undergraduate syllabus, privilege pedagogical ends against profit limiting the students’ places, as well as more emphasis on our local context rather than foreign influences. The question here is whether these propositions pointed to challenge sedimented rationales or, on the contrary, co-opted with them looking for the competitive differentiation through pedagogical innovations.

More dissident voices arise from faculty grouped around the field of social science. Most of them belong to different schools among the same universities; others are sociologists or psychologists in charge of ‘soft skills’ courses within business schools. Their discontent is evident through our interviews but, as they recognize, it is not reflected in practices. The fact that Chilean universities are self funded institutions is the main difficulty for them. As a consequence, schools must ‘sell’ their ‘services’ to those ‘passive clients who just seek prestige and social mobility’. In that way pragmatism and consumerism within academic practice are ‘unavoidable evils’ to work with. Recognizing that there has been a material improvement among Chilean society, they struggle against being ‘absorbed’ by the system within which teaching could mean a personal ‘renouncement to values’. They openly criticize neo-liberalism and the ‘hyper-pragmatism’ of our society and the lack of questioning within academic practice. From their point of view, academics’ career pressures on researching and publishing narrow their practice due to the fact that funding and recognition are being oriented to technical contribution to the mainstream. Opting to raise some criticism within their teaching they face the risk of being devalued by students and colleagues as well as of contributing to the marginalization of their students once they have to ‘compete’ for job positions.

I am feeling like an island, not one of my colleagues share my statements. I think that I am regarded as an extravagance, my students complain about the lack of ‘products’ within my courses. (Sociologist Academic Business School 3)

I've been talking with my students. They perceived the risk of being excluded from jobs due to their critical attitude. So I wonder what I am doing as a teacher (Academic Psychology School 1)

Those who are part of business schools tend to 'adapt' their teaching to students requirements trying to disseminate the relevance of advancing technologies supported by 'responsibility and shared criteria'. In other words, they try to enhance the focus on people well-being sustained by their fields as a compensation of the wide relevance of functional approaches. Moreover, from their point of view, business students normally disdain 'soft skills' courses regarding them as commonplace approaches. Talking from social science schools, academics recognize that they are in a better position to criticize, but an evident lack of articulation of radical standpoints within a capitalist society leave them without strategies:

Any vision against neo-liberalism is unapproachable (Psychologist Academic Business School 2)

Criticism looks 'nice' but no-one is willing to adopt it (Academic Psychology School 1)

Progressive approaches are defeated due to their apparent lack of concern about management (Vice Chancellor Social Science School)

This widespread frustration among social science academics is articulated around the evident triumphalism of neo-liberal approaches among Chilean society and particularly by the 'transformism' of educational practices following a discourse that successfully hides its historical conditions of (im)possibility positioning itself as 'the only way of doing things'.

The lack of an articulated resistance: one swallow doesn't make a summer

Now we are in position to tackle our previous questions. What about the reproduction and maintenance of these practices in the face of evident discontent? Why is there no political resistance at all? There are a number of factors that can help to address these questions avoiding commonplaces like 'lawlike forces' or passivity. Furthermore, there is no point in neglecting the relevance of pressures imposed on academic and students through coercion or enforced compliance. Putting pressure on 'devalued' academics, money/support restriction for 'alternative' approaches courses, difficulties on their leading positions applications within schools, lack of facilities in terms of reduced alternative bibliography, or no funding for visiting teachers as well as the second class status of some business schools in comparison with others which strongly focus their endeavors on market demands means that those sporadic and isolated teachers' alternative frameworks followed by few students, which normally do not trespass the boundaries of classrooms, are seen as the only means of (pseudo)resistance. Unfortunately *one swallow doesn't make a summer*.

All these elements of explanation acquire sense and significance against the backdrop of the social logics of pragmatism, consumerism, individualism and elitism. And these, in turn are integrally connected to the perpetuation of neo-liberal paradigms in which they are operative, especially the way these social practices and logics render significant number of academics and students complicit with their dominating aspects.

On the one hand we can hypothesize that the grip of these social logics is linked to the fact that they resonate strongly with the primacy of functionality and effectiveness and the fantasmatic logic that underpins them. The fantasies of effectiveness, of being able to show profitability and competitive advantages against other business schools, strongly resonate with the broader social context in which they operate. In other words, given a wider discursive context in which a culture of instrumentalist consumption and exchange dominates, signifiers which exhibit a clearly positive valence for subjects like 'quality', 'professionalism', 'education', 'knowledge' or 'excellence' are suitably rearticulated to better resonate with the market ethos. Thus 'functionality' and 'knowledge' are no longer presented as different, antithetical, or simply autonomous in this discourse of consumer ideals or individual contributions. Lecturers and students do tend to see themselves predominantly as sellers of labour or purchasers of products, in which the value of their skills and talents is taken to be a product of their individual efforts and virtues.

We have also identified a logic of elitism as capturing those discursive patterns which, in the self-interpretations of actors, reinforce specific forms of social privilege and differentiation. They are logics which are not simply reflected in university settings, but also in labour markets. These elitist logics of social hierarchy and privilege tend to reinforce and exacerbate existing class, socioeconomic and networking patterns among society. It is not surprising, then, that social science academics often bear an ambivalent and complicitous relation to that market conditioning. They have been traditionally related to relegating and bringing into disdain political *qua* leftists understanding of academia, so their attempts at critiquing could give rise to feelings of frustration and resentment which, in turn acts as a blockage on their intention to resist. By drastically erasing any trace of our former social organization and demonizing democratic, collectivist and political standpoints as leftists enemies of modernization, neo-liberals supporters among business academia facilitate the process by which those mentioned key signifiers were detached from their former signified and rearticulated to reinforce market-friendly equivalences. Moreover, that social scientists' dislocation before the political frontiers established by logics of equivalence allows key terms to acquire the status of floating signifiers – signifiers that for relevant subjects are no longer fixed to a particular meaning. Once detached their identity is just partially stabilized by hegemonic attempts allowing the establishment of a chain of differences.

As soon as social logics are at the forefront dominating the social space of business educational practices its reproduction runs without any trace of public contestation. Dislocations mentioned earlier have been processed privately and informally through the 'off the records' complaints from social science academics involved in those practices. Alternatively, some of them have 'coped' alone with dislocation by including some critical standpoints within their courses which don't go beyond the boundaries of their classrooms. Fantasmatic logics surrounding business educations keep political dimensions at bay obscuring the radical contingency of social reality. Assertions like '*any vision against neo-liberalism is unapproachable*' or '*the critique does not pay attention to reality*' come from by these social science academics complicit in the *there is no alternative* fantasy sustaining the natural primacy of market as social regulator. Therefore, their dislocatory complaining has been operating just in the interstices of these official institutions.

Some words about an ethical critique

The ethical aspect of critique is closely linked with the notion of radical contingency. It focuses on the way in which subjects identify with a practice or regime, whether new or old. Within a logic of explanation two dimensions could be contrasted, namely the ethical and the ideological dimensions of a practice or regime, where the former relates to its constitutive openness to the radical contingency of things, and the latter to a complicity in concealing the lack at the heart of social relations (GLYNNOS; HOWARTH 2007). Coming back to our discussion of the neo-liberal attempts in Chile, a relevant question before this project is related to the way in which its proponents and supporters dogmatically identify with the free market as the *only* solution to that entire social and political crisis. Consequently, the demands for a 'free market' became an ideological panacea – invoking the logic of fantasy – for structuring university and business education practices which arguably resist this form of social organization.

Being loyal to the ethos of logic of a critical explanation as such, we have to forefront that the ethical dimension has a lexical priority over the normative one. This means that our normative stances are always relative to the ultimate contingency of social relations and practices, in other words, the norms and ideals that we project into the objects of study are intrinsically contingent, contestable and revisable (see GLYNOS; HOWARTH 2007).

Our previous developments in this paper point out the apparent lack of resistance to the neo-liberal approach of management education as a way of illustrating the role of logic in generating explanations. Starting from the logic of pragmatism presented as the triumph of functionality and effectiveness over political approaches implies that the very recourse to critique is rendered less likely.

It is about a very aseptic thought, and please don't involve political aspects, this is a technical/economic rationality with no consideration for its implications. Well, to just enter into that field is risky, I am not willing to include it within my teaching; just because I have talked about emotions I've received bad evaluations from my students. (Sociologist Academic Business School 3)

As we have developed above some complaints do emerge, but the forums and structures for constructing and expressing them are less than weak. For example, academics may feel that the purposes of universities are changing, especially under the influence of wider market discourses in which the logics of pragmatism and consumerism are prominent. In that way, the logic of individualism in which one self chooses and is responsible for her own career path appears to be making professional life difficult for those who resist its underlying drives. For their point of view, effectiveness and measurability imperatives generate anti-political tendencies marginalizing the qualitative and contestable dimensions of social science research and teaching within management education. Thus, political logics of equivalence and difference have been deployed in order to draw strict frontiers between managerialistic approaches to business education and social science standpoints, which at the same time stress the resemblances between pragmatism and consumerism with higher education.

Fantasies of success and failure, triumph and defeat, are also important by offering reasons why it may be difficult to destabilize established social logics. In other words, neo-liberal supporters would embody the pride of being responsible for the country's recovery through its relevant insertion within the global concert, against the old-fashioned leftist social scientists who are insisting on outmoded political attempts to problems that just require practical solutions. This vision is even reinforced by the sociopolitical situation of the country in which post-dictatorial governments lead by centre and socialists' politicians have complied in maintaining the economical model in spite of some other political changes (AUSTIN, 2004; MOULIAN, 2002). Therefore, as general view neo-liberal paradigms are still the best solutions in place. Once this assemblage of logics has managed to become sedimented firmly in the academic arena, it requires complex counter-hegemonic work to experience something different. Without major dislocatory events this will be the perfect shelter for those who support and sustain the hegemonic power.

The ethical aspect of critique is revealed here through the voices that intend to raise the historical conditions of (im)possibility of neo-liberal project for higher education highlighting that this set of solutions was just one within others that were crushed by the dictatorship's powers. Before a discourse that is busy 'telling us how to do things', a counter-logic would seek to articulate the need for 'listening' to the other, and particularly to 'the other' that inhabits within us. Articulated differently, to stop 'repeating' what others say and to start listening to our own voice.

It is my impression that it is necessary to create rooms for listening, among workers for example. There are no listening rooms, actually it is forbidden. Training interventions have attractive names, but they are not reflexive at all. Even here at the University, any time that undergraduate students try to state critical contents they hit against the 'tigers' of the mediocre postgraduate', who privilege market options. (Director Psychology School 3)

I think that we have to listen again, to listen to our silenced history. Maybe it could empower critical organization practices (Male Academic Psychology School 1)

Conclusions

Chile has undergone a major social transformation since 1973. The military coup that put Augusto Pinochet in power was the beginning of a wide capitalist revolution. This process was characterized by its harsh way of domination and the exacerbation of free market values. Our current democracy inherited this social order. The market has achieved a naturalized position as a social regulator and consequently, our society has been constructed as a place for individual and a-critical development.

Management education in Chile was born within that historical process, constituting, and being constituted by it. That educational practice contributes to re-producing neo-liberal values for the indoctrination of generations of new managers ensuring the survival of that disseminated social regime.

The general theme of this paper has been our articulation of the assemblage of social, political and fantasmatic logics and their underlying theoretical framework which addressed the neo-liberal project deployed in Chile

since 1973 and its ideological transformation of local higher management education. This involved a drastic change from a publicly base system to a market-driven one entailing the managerial understanding of both its contents and its delivering. Our involvement with that practice, through the vicissitudes of our research, allowed us the articulation of the already developed social, political and fantasmatic logics as an explanatory framework for it.

What was problematized here was the apparent lack of political resistance to that managerialist understanding of business education. Our proposition articulated a set of explanatory hypotheses by the assemblage of social logics of pragmatism, consumerism, individualism and elitism social logics, as well as the description of political and fantasmatic logics sustaining their primacy and the prevention of critique.

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