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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE RADICAL FLANK EFFECT IN THE CASE OF *EL
ESTALLIDO SOCIAL* IN CHILE**

By

ANA ROIG

**SUMBITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FUFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE
OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

SENIOR THESIS IN POLITICS

**PROFESSOR THOMAS KIM
PROFESSOR MARK GOLUB**

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Abstract

There has been limited research on the radical flank effect (RFE) in social movements, however, the research done provides a foundation for understanding the dimensions that influence the outcome of the RFE. Caveat. This paper applies the previously established RFE research framework in the case study of *El Estallido Social* (the Social Outbreak) in Chile to evaluate the RFE outcome on the movement. I hypothesize that the RFE outcome in *El Estallido Social* was positive. Based on observational data, news articles, and secondary data including polls and statistics, the I establish the existence of a RFE, and then examine the different dimensions that explain why the RFE outcome occurred the way it did in my analysis. By evaluating the dimensions that explain RFE outcomes, the analysis reveals the positive RFE outcome on the movement overall. The paper then suggests another dimension to expand the RFE framework and applies it to *El Estallido Social*. In the conclusion, I reflect on the RFE outcome and how *El Estallido Social* changed Chilean society.

Introduction

In almost all social movements, there is the existence of “moderate” and “radical” factions. However, minimal research has been conducted on the dynamics between the different factions and how those dynamics impact the overall social movement. Coined by Herbert Haines, the radical flank effect (RFE) is the effect of the existence of a radical faction and their tactics on the moderate faction and the movement¹. This paper aims to demonstrate the capacity of the previously established framework of RFEs as an analytical tool of social movements. To do this, it applies the framework to the case of the 2019 social movement in Chile, *El Estallido*

¹ Haines, H. H. 1984. “Black Radicalization and the Funding of Civil Rights: 1957-1970.” *Social Problems*, 32(1), 31–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800260>

Social (the Social Outbreak) to answer the question of whether there was a RFE and if there was, then what was the outcome of the RFE. I hypothesize that the actions and tactics of the radical flank, advanced the position of the moderates and aid the movement overall, thus creating a positive RFE. The analysis utilizes observational data, news articles, and secondary data including polls and statistics to evaluate the different dimensions that explain the RFE outcome in Chile. As mentioned, the case study examined in this paper is the *El Estallido Social*, which erupted throughout Chile, starting in the capital city of Santiago. In response to a spike in the subway fare prices, massive protests, which turned violent at times, broke out in the country. These protests did not only begin because of the subway fare price increase, but also because of almost 30 years of structural inequality.

The paper begins with a short history of Chilean politics after 1970 to provide context as to why the massive demonstrations broke out in the way they did. Following, is an overview and description of the protest events. I then review the previous literature that presents the research framework for examining RFEs, and the literature addressing the relationship between protests behaviors and state response. Before the analysis, I explain my methods and establish the existence of the RFE in the case of *El Estallido Social*. The first part of the analysis evaluates the dimensions of how the tactics of the radical faction influenced the public awareness and perception of the moderates, the ability of the moderates to gather resources from outside the movement, and the moderate's access to decisionmakers. The conditions that impacted these conditions help to begin understanding the RFE outcome. In the second part of the analysis, I discuss the different dimensions established by Gupta: how moderates signal their differences from radicals, the vulnerability of the movement target, and the cost of conceding for the target. I combine this analysis with Ellefsen's temporal dimension as the conditions that influenced these

dimensions changes overtime. I also use the findings of Klein and Regan to show how protest behaviors determined the response from the state, which in turn contributed to the RFE outcome. I then suggest a new dimension to expand the RFE framework and apply it to *El Estallido Social*. In the conclusion, I reflect on the outcome of the movement on Chilean society as a whole.

Historical Context of the Protests

In 1970, Salvador Allende was the first Marxist president elected in Latin America. He promised a “Chilean road to socialism,” and wanted to restructure Chilean society, which only further divided the right and left political groups². Allende wanted to reform healthcare and education, as well as nationalizing businesses³. To address income inequality, he approved large wage increases and froze prices. These reforms seemed to be successful, however, Chile was entering a period of uncertainty. Chile was suffering from stagnant production, rising inflation, decreased exports, widespread strikes, and food shortages⁴. Because of these issues, demonstrations and strikes that crippled Chile broke out from 1971 to 1973⁵. Then, on the morning of September 11, 1973, the Chilean military committed a coup against the government of Allende⁶. The military brought tanks into the streets of Santiago to attack the presidential palace and took over the radio stations to call for Allende to resign from office. Instead of stepping down, Allende joined in the defense of the presidential palace. However, once it became clear that the military was going to successfully enter the palace, Allende committed

² Piscopo, J. M. & Siavelis, P. M. 2021. “Chile’s Constitutional Moment.” *Current History*, 120(823), 43–49. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2021.120.823.43>

³ Office of the Historian. “The Allende Years and the Pinochet Coup, 1969–1973.” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/allende>

⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica. 2022. “Salvador Allende.” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Salvador-Allende>.

⁵ Office of the Historian, 2.

⁶ Drake, P., Caviedes, C., Johnson, J. and Carmagnani, M. "Chile". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Chile>.

suicide. It was eventually revealed that army commander in chief Augusto Pinochet had planned and executed the coup. On September 13, Pinochet was named President of Chile, and the 46-year democratic government in Chile was eliminated, as he dismantled congress and outlawed leftist political parties⁷. His time as President marks one of the most brutal and violent periods in Chilean history. Pinochet and his government were responsible for the jailing, disappearance, torture, and executions of thousands of people. Those subjected to this repression were often leftists or anyone who criticized the government and worked against it. Eventually, Pinochet was removed from office when he lost a 1988 referendum posing the question of if he should stay in power or not⁸.

In 1980, Pinochet and his regime wrote a new constitution, which would continue to influence Chilean society through modern times. Politically, the new constitution did several things. First it implemented a political system that was disguised as a democracy but in reality, limited popular sovereignty and made it harder to implement policy change. Aspects of this new system included concentrating policy making powers to the president, with Congress having little power to check the president. Second, the constitution established the binomial electoral system. This would require that the winning party would have to win by double the votes gained by the second-place party in order to secure both seats in a district. This would make it harder for one party to completely sweep the seats in a district⁹. The binomial electoral system allowed the right to become overrepresented in Congress and hold high levels of political power. Lastly, the military and armed forces were protected. The constitution denied presidents the ability to hire, promote, or fire military leaders. Furthermore, it gave armed forces the ability to appoint 9

⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica. 2022. "Salvador Allende." <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Salvador-Allende>.

⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica. 2022. "Augusto Pinochet." <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Augusto-Pinochet>.

⁹ Piscopo & Siavelis, 2.

senators. These aspects created barriers that would make achieving social change incredibly difficult¹⁰. Pinochet also established economic changes that although actually helped grow the Chilean economy, eventually led to inequality that still affects modern Chile. Pinochet's economic changes were reflected in the new neoliberal socio-economic model that was designed by a group of University of Chicago economists and several people at the Catholic University of Chile. The model emphasized free markets and deregulation¹¹. The new constitution also protected private property, which allowed for the privatization of several services and resources. Thus, Pinochet's economic policies led to a privatized pension system and lower-quality public services, such as education and healthcare, for lower class citizens¹². These policies did improve Chile's economic situation, but only in the sense that "the rich got richer."

The economic and political legacies of Pinochet's 1980 constitution help to explain why the 2019 protests erupted in the way it did and the grievances of the protesters. Gains were made in terms of rectifying some of Pinochet's political decisions once he was removed from power, but there was still a monopoly in the political arena as the interests of large businesses and outside political actors were heavily represented¹³. After Pinochet lost the 1988 referendum, the central-left took control of the government for the following decades. Pinochet appointees were slowly replaced, presidents regained the ability to make decisions on military leadership, and the binomial electoral system was replaced¹⁴. Although changes had been made to change policies created by Pinochet, citizens still distrusted the government that had become increasingly elitist

¹⁰ Piscopo & Siavelis, 3.

¹¹ Piscopo & Siavelis, 4.

¹² Somma, N. M., Bargsted, M., Pavlic, R. D., & Medel, R. M. 2021. "No water in the oasis: the Chilean Spring of 2019-2020." *Social Movement Studies*, 20(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1727737>

¹³ Garcés, M. 2019. "October 2019: Social Uprising in Neoliberal Chile." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 28(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569325.2019.1696289>.

¹⁴ Piscopo & Siavelis, 5.

and detached from Chilean society¹⁵. These political gains, however, did not help rectify the economic and societal inequality in Chile created by the neoliberal economic model. By the time the protests began, the inequality had become unbearable for most citizens as basic services and resources were underfunded or too expensive¹⁶. There was large income inequality, and the cost of living was rising. Another explanation for the 2019 protests, besides the legacy of Pinochet era policies, is cultural and societal change in Chile. Increasingly, traditional social hierarchies based on things such as sexual orientation and gender are being challenged, particularly by Chilean youth. Moreover, indigenous, feminist, and LGBTQ groups have increased mobilization and demonstrations in the country¹⁷. Over the course of 30 years, the inequality created by Pinochet's policies fostered anger amongst Chilean citizens. The spike in fare price was just “the final nail in the coffin” that sent Chile over the edge.

Protest Timeline

In early October of 2019, the panel in charge of setting the fare of the Metropolitan Public Transit Network in the Chilean capital city Santiago decided to raise the subway fare from USD 1.12 to USD 1.16¹⁸. Implemented two days after the panel decision, the increased subway fare angered many Chilean citizens, but particularly students. Starting on October 7th high school students from Instituto Nacional, a well-known public school, began hopping turnstiles to avoid paying the new fare¹⁹. The *Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes* or ACES, a forum of student individuals, groups, and unions, also called for turnstile evasion and to rectify the

¹⁵ Somma, 2.

¹⁶ Garcés, 2.

¹⁷ Somma, 3.

¹⁸ Gonzalez, R. & Le Foulon Morán, C. 2020. “The 2019–2020 Chilean protests: A first look at their causes and participants.” *International Journal of Sociology*, 50(3), 227-235.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00207659.2020.1752499>

¹⁹ Gonzalez & Le Foulon Morán, 2.

increased fare price²⁰. Over the course of the following week, evasions of turnstiles intensified as more students joined demonstrations and targeted specific stations. Due to the intensification, the subway authority decided to close some of those stations and kept others open with a heavily increased police presence of the *Carabineros de Fuerzas Especiales* (militarized police)²¹. The increased police presence only led to non-students joining the fare evasions and clashes with the police.

The escalation of confrontations between protesters and police began to hit a boiling point on October 17th when violent clashes broke out amongst protesters attacking subway facilities and turnstiles and the Carabineros²². On October 18th, protesters occupied and vandalized several stations, leading to the closure of the subway system. This disrupted the entire transportation system and left approximately 2.5 million people unable to use the subway, who clogged the streets in order to get home²³. The government threatened to enact the Law of Internal State Security in response to the increasingly overwhelmed police, which would essentially criminalize protest²⁴. The government's strategy of repression only angered citizens and protesters more, leading to increased mobilization. That night, the conflict escalated dramatically. Throughout neighborhoods in the city of Santiago, pots and pans being banged could be heard as protesters began gathering at several subway stations. Eventually, violence ensued. In the span of an hour, seven subway stations were burned down in arson attacks, and the looting of supermarkets, warehouses, and stores began²⁵. As violence erupted throughout the

²⁰ Palacios-Valladares, I. 2020. "Chile 2019: the October protests and the student movement, historical moment of change?" *Political Science Journal*, 40 (2), 215–234. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-090X2020005000106>

²¹ Garcés, 3.

²² Garcés, 4.

²³ Gonzalez & Le Foulon Morán, 3.

²⁴ Garcés, 5.

²⁵ Gonzalez & Le Foulon Morán, 4.

city, the government held an emergency meeting at La Moneda, and announced shortly after midnight on October 19th a “state of emergency” in Santiago²⁶. The “state of emergency” would last 15 days, imposed a curfew and allowed the military into the city²⁷. President Sebastián Piñera also announced a stricter anti-looting law and increased penalties for protesters.

However, the announcement of the “state of emergency” did not quell the protests. Citizens continued expressing their grievances by pot-banging and gathering in public spaces to demonstrate against the government. Protests spread across the country, including to the other large cities in Chile, Valparaiso and Concepción²⁸. Looting of supermarkets and stores, as well as violent clashes continued. In a move that further upset protesters, Piñera justified the declaration of the state of emergency by stating that “we are at war against a powerful enemy, who is willing to use violence without any limits” during a televised address, while commenting on the events of the protests so far and justifying the declaration of the state of emergency²⁹. Around 20,000 police and military were deployed into the street, and used excessive force, by throwing tear gas and using water cannons, to repress the protests³⁰. By this point the movement had evolved. Not only were citizens upset about the subway fare price spike, but they were protesting against the lack of a solid social safety net in Chile and the years of inequality. The establishment of the state of emergency also reminded Chileans of the violence of the Pinochet era, which further angered them. Coalitions including *Mesa de Unidad Social* and *asambleas territoriales* also organized towards achieving a constitutional assembly.

²⁶ Garcés, 6.

²⁷ Palacios-Valladares, 2.

²⁸ Garcés, 7.

²⁹ Aljazeera. 2019. “We are at war’: Chile’s Pinera extends state of emergency.”

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/21/we-are-at-war-chiles-pinera-extends-state-of-emergency>

³⁰ The France 24 Observers. 2019. “Over a million protesters demand Chile president’s resignation.”

<https://www.france24.com/en/20191026-over-a-million-protesters-demand-chile-president-s-resignation>.

Unable to stop the protests and rioting, the government signed a new law suspending the increased subway fare on October 21st. The following day, President Piñera announced new future reforms. These included improvements to pensions and healthcare, increased taxes for the top income brackets, an increase in the minimum wage and other policies³¹. Although he announced future reforms, protests did not stop, and violent clashes continued between protesters and the military. On October 25th, almost 1.2 million people gathered in Santiago's Plaza Baquedano to peacefully protest, with similar protests also occurring in Chile's other major cities. This was the largest demonstration in Chilean history. They were demanding institutional reforms to address inequality and called on Piñera to resign from office³². After these protests, Piñera announced the end of the state of emergency and asked for the resignation of his Cabinet members³³.

Violence continued between protesters and Carabineros even after the end of the State of Emergency. Citizens wanted real change and reforms through a constitutional assembly. Eventually the government conceded to the demands of protesters for a constitutional assembly, and on November 15th, the government signed the *Acuerdo por la Paz* (Agreement for Peace), which was backed by mostly all political parties. This agreement scheduled a referendum on April 26, 2020, on the topic of a new Constitution and whether a mixed convention or constituent convention would be used in the drafting process³⁴. A mixed convention is composed of members of Congress and citizens elected to participate while a constituent convention is made up of only citizens elected.

³¹ Palacios-Valladares, 3.

³² The France Observers, 2.

³³ Garnham, J., & Alonso, N. 2019. "Why Chile's Massive Protests Started with a Subway Fare Hike." Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-26/why-chile-s-protests-started-with-the-metro>

³⁴ Gonzalez & Le Foulon Morán, 5.

Economic Damages and Human Rights Abuses

Throughout the weeks that protests ensued, the use of violence created severe economic and structural damages. Within six weeks, Chile's Construction Chamber of Commerce estimated that the protesters had caused \$4.5 billion in damages, including \$2.3 billion in damages to public infrastructure. At least 118 subway stations were smashed or set on fire, with almost \$380 million in damage sustained by the subway system³⁵. Demonstrators looted more than 600 businesses and caused Chilean businesses to lose around \$1.4 billion³⁶. Excessive use of force by the military, and human rights abuses also occurred during the protests and violent clashes. The Human Rights Watch reports that between October 18th and November 20th, nearly 11,000 people were injured and 15,000 had been detained³⁷. 26 people had been killed had been killed in the clashes and about 350 individuals suffered eye injuries from rubber pellets fired by the police. Furthermore, a report released by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in December of 2019 documented 133 acts of torture and 24 cases of sexual violence³⁸.

³⁵ Selman, C. 2021. "Protests and terrorism in Chile: Examining the data and what to expect in the coming year." S&P Global. <https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/mi/research-analysis/protests-and-terrorism-in-chile-examining-data-forecast.html>

³⁶ Sherwood, D., & Cambero, F. 2019. "'So much damage': Chile protests flare back up as reforms fall short." Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chile-protests/so-much-damage-chile-protests-flare-back-up-as-reforms-fall-short-idUSKBN1X81N4>

³⁷ Human Rights Watch. "Chile: Events of 2020." <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/chile#:~:text=Chile's%20national%20police—the%20Carabineros.brutal%20beatings%20and%20sexual%20abuse.>

³⁸ Cuffe, S. 2019. "Chile police committed serious human rights abuses: UN report." Aljazeera. [https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/13/chile-police-committed-serious-human-rights-abuses-un-report.](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/13/chile-police-committed-serious-human-rights-abuses-un-report)

Theoretical Framework Review

Radical Flank Effect

Herbert Haines³⁹ was the first to use the term radical flank effects. Previously, scholarship on social movements lacked analysis on factionalism within a movement and its impact on the responses from outside actors. Within a movement, there are usually two factions, moderates (also known as reformers) and radicals. When there is a faction of a movement that is more radical in its approach and tactics to achieving the goals of the movement, the outcomes of those actions on the more moderate faction of the movement are known as radical flank effects. Some argue that the actions of radicals in a social movement actually harm the position of the moderates. More radical action negatively impacts the overall activities and goals of the movement while also undermining the position of the moderates. Haines describes this as *negative radical flank effect* when the actions of radicals harm the moderate faction of the movement. Conversely, other scholars find that the bargaining position of moderates is strengthened by the actions and presence of a more radical faction. Radical action, such as a more militant approach, makes moderate strategies and demands seem more reasonable to those not involved in the movement. Radicals can also create different crises in which the resolution actually aids the moderate faction. This is described as a *positive radical flank effect*. In his analysis of the United States civil rights movement of the 1960's, as well as the organizations that were involved in the movement, Haines focuses on three different dimensions of radical flank effects. One, how radical factions may increase or decrease public awareness of moderate groups along with how they may alter public "definitions" (in other words public perception of the moderate faction as more or less reasonable and extreme). Secondly, how radicals could

³⁹ Haines, 2.

impact the access of the moderate factions to decisionmakers. Lastly, how the radical flank could influence the ability of moderates to gain resources from those outside the movement.

Haines's insight on the civil rights movements and radical flank effects provided a solid basis for other scholars to build upon. His research focused on the relationship between negative radical flank effects and positive as one where the benefit of one faction always comes at the expense of another. Devashree Gupta⁴⁰ adds to the scholarship on the analytical approach by adding two other outcomes to RFE. That is that RFEs could positively impact both the radicals and the moderates, as well as negatively impact both. Thus, RFEs do not just benefit or harm one group, it could do the same for both. Essentially, Gupta adds a way to analyze RFEs impact on the movement as a whole, not just one faction. Gupta aids in the scholarship by introducing two different variables as preconditions for radical flank effects to occur, fragmentation and framing. In this sense, fragmentation being the existence of different groups, organizations, and individuals. Framing being actors outside of the movement placing the different factions on a radical-moderate spectrum. Gupta also introduces three variables that help predict outcomes of the social movements in terms of RFEs: the vulnerability of movement targets, the cost of conceding for those targets, and how moderate groups define themselves against radicals.

Rune Ellefsen⁴¹ continues the scholarship on RFEs by adding onto Gupta's and Haine's insights. Ellefsen asserts that there are gaps in RFE scholarship as previous writing ignores how RFEs may change over time and produce different outcomes across societal arenas. To fill these gaps, Ellefsen argues for extending the RFE framework to include temporal and arena

⁴⁰ Gupta, D. 2002. "Radical flank effects: The effect of radical-moderate splits in regional nationalist movements." Working paper, presented at the Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, IL, March 14–16.

⁴¹ Ellefsen, R. 2018. "Deepening the Explanation of Radical Flank Effects: Tracing Contingent Outcomes of Destructive Capacity." *Qualitative Sociology*, 41, 111–133. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9373-3>

dimensions. Ellefsen utilizes this new analytical approach to study the case of the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign in the United Kingdom and investigates SHACs involvement in corporate and state arenas during a 15-year period. The analysis first identifies the ways in which SHAC obtained its destructive capacity which led to overall campaign success in the short term. It then explains the factors in the different arenas that led to a negative outcome in the long term. Ellefsen's analysis compares the short- and long-term outcomes while also explaining why those outcomes changed. Adding the temporal and arena dimensions allows for a better explanation of the conditions under which RFEs occur, as well as how they change in different arenas over time. For example, an RFE could impact the private sector in the corporate arena, and a government department in the state arena at the same time, which could lead to different perceptions of the movement as a whole. RFEs could also influence outcomes and perceptions differently in the short and long term. By including the temporal dimension and adding it with the arena dimensions, this allows the overall movement outcome to be determined by comparing the different arena outcomes during the varying points in time and thus adds to the analysis of RFEs.

Protest Behavior and State Response

The way the government responds to protest behaviors and tactics, also plays a factor in the outcome of the RFE, and thus should be addressed. The dynamics between protest behaviors and responses by the state is explored by Graig Klein and Patrick Regan⁴². They evaluate whether protest behaviors influence how a state reacts to those behaviors through the framework of concession costs and disruption costs. Concession costs are defined as the actual or anticipated

⁴² Klein, G. R., & Regan, P. M. 2018. "Dynamics of Political Protests." *International Organization*, 72(2), 485–521. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818318000061>

political costs for the government to concede to the protester's demands. These costs are influenced by the demands of the protester's, the use of violence, and the recurrence of the demands. Disruption costs are then defined as the actual or anticipated economic damages and harm to public order created by the protests. Creation of these costs are influenced by the location of protests, how long they last, and their size. To address the questions of if protest behaviors influence the way the government responds and how they do, Klein and Regan analyze data on protests in 161 countries over the 25-year time period from 1990 to 2014. Through this process, they identify that when protesters generate high disruption costs, the government is more likely to accommodate the protesters' demands. Contrarily, the government reacts in a repressive and coercive manner when protesters create high concession costs. As it relates to RFE, if the radical faction generates higher concession costs, then the government is likely to respond with repression. This could impact the position of the moderates and hurt the overall movement. If the radical faction generates higher disruption costs, due to their protest tactics, then the government will accommodate the demands, thus strengthening the ability of the moderates and the movement overall to achieve their goals.

Methods and Definitions

In order to test the hypothesis, the analysis relies upon the observational data established in the overview of the protests. It also utilizes news articles, as well as secondary data in the form of polls and statistics to evaluate the outcome of the RFE. In order to answer the question of whether there was the existence of a RFE that had an impact on the outcome of *El Estallido Social* and whether the RFE was negative or positive, the different factions within the movement need to be defined, along with the overall goal of the movement. Moreover, the two conditions provided by Gupta for RFE occurrence, fragmentation and framing need to be met. At first, the

movement was organized with the goal of getting the government to repeal the spike in fare price. Original government reaction to the evasion campaign and years of growing grievances concerning social inequality transformed the movement. Now, they were not only demonstrating against the subway fare, but also demanding economic and political reforms be made in to fix inequality in the country. To achieve these broad demands for reform, several coalitions worked towards the tactical goal of getting a constitutional assembly. Through a constitutional assembly, Chileans could draft a new constitution that would include institutional reforms to reverse the societal inequality created by the 1980 Pinochet Constitution. In this sense, the constitutional assembly was a tactical mean to achieve the larger goals of the movement.

What makes the 2019 protests interesting is that many demonstrations happened spontaneously and sometimes with little coordination. This, however, can make it difficult to identify specific factions. Nevertheless, it can still be seen that different organizations and groups existed within the larger movement and utilized different tactics. The presence of a diversity of organizations and groups meets the fragmentation precondition of RFE occurrence. On the moderate side of the movement, there were several unions and coalitions that sought to express their grievances with the government through peaceful demonstrations and civil resistance tactics. Mentioned previously, the *Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes* (ACES) is a forum of student individuals and groups nation-wide. They were the first to call for a fare evasion campaign when the new fare hike was implemented. There were also organizations in Santiago that called for neighborhood meetings known as *asambleas territoriales*. These were open to anyone who wanted to join and gathered different individuals working at the grassroots level. They organized protests against the government, discussed ways to deal with violence, and worked towards achieving a constituent assembly. Arguably the most organized coalition, and

capable of large mobilization, is the *Mesa de Unidad Social*. It was created when major federations reached out to student, feminist, and indigenous movements to help demand investigation of human rights abuses during the protests and a constituent assembly to rewrite the 1980 Pinochet constitution. *Mesa de Unidad Social* was able to coordinate facilitation amongst different *asambleas territoriales*, as well as organizing large demonstrations. They were responsible for the largest demonstration in Chilean history on October 25th and for the November 12th general strike that rallied almost two million people⁴³. The radical faction of the movement included clans of the *Primera Linea* (Front Line). The *Primera Linea* worked to protect the peaceful demonstrations from the police and military by engaging with them on the edges of protests. They were able to coordinate different defense and attacking tasks for individuals to complete in order to prepare for the clash with police. Some would gather stones, prepare Molotov cocktails to throw at police, or use laser pointers to obstruct the view of police and police tanks. Others put up barricades, handcrafted shields to make a defense line, and created a mix of water and baking soda to aid those impacted by teargas. Moreover, there were medical volunteers stationed to help the wounded demonstrators⁴⁴. The radical faction also included loosely organized groups that coordinated looting of specific targets, and those individuals that aided in burning down several subway stations.

The other precondition that needs to be met is framing. That is, how actors outside the movement placed the factions on the radical-moderate spectrum. Chileans and the government defined the *Primera Linea* as more radical because of their use of violent tactics. Many accused

⁴³ Palacios-Valladares, 4.

⁴⁴ Claude, M. 2020. "Portrait of a Frontline Clan." Ciper Chile. <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/01/06/retrato-de-un-clan-de-la-primera-linea/>.

them of being too aggressive and saw them as the force behind the looting⁴⁵. Piñera even went as far to declare that Chile was at war with a powerful and violent enemy. On the other hand, demonstrations and protests organized by ACES and *Mesa de Unidad Social*, were defined as more moderate and legitimate. Piñera stated that he understood the reasons they were protesting and called on them to “demonstrate peacefully” rather than using violence⁴⁶. With the framing from outside actors, and the existence of a diversity of organizations, it can be assumed that there was the presence of an RFE.

Evaluation of the RFE Outcome

The analysis consists of two different parts that help explain the RFE outcome in Chile. In the first part, I apply the framework provided by Haines to evaluate how the tactics of the radical faction influenced the public awareness and perception of the moderates, the ability of the moderates to gather resources from outside the movement, and the moderates access to decisionmakers. How the radicals impacted these dimensions provides a starting point to understanding the conditions that led to the RFE outcome. In the second part, I discuss the conditions that influenced the different dimensions established by Gupta: how moderates signal their differences from radicals, the vulnerability of the movement target, and the cost of conceding for the target. However, because the vulnerability of the target and the cost of conceding changed overtime in the case of *El Estallido Social*, I combine my analysis of those dimensions with the temporal dimension presented by Ellefsen. This part analyzes the events of the protest cycle that begun with the fare evasion campaigns on October 7th and ended on

⁴⁵ Attia, S. 2020. “Front-line activists 'Primera Linea' protect Chile's protesters, but some criticize their methods.” The France 24 Observers. <https://observers.france24.com/en/20200103-frontline-activists-primera-linea-protecting-protesters-chile-santiago-super-heroes>.

⁴⁶ Aljazeera. (2019?), 2.

November 15th, when the *Acuerdo por la Paz* was signed by the Chilean government. I also apply the findings of Klein and Regan to explain how protest behaviors determined the state response, which in turn influenced the RFE outcome. The temporal analysis of these dimensions adds onto the previous section by providing a more in-depth explanation of the conditions that led to the overall RFE outcome. By doing this, I show how the RFE research framework is a helpful analytical tool in understanding the outcome of a social movement.

At the end of the analysis, I suggest the addition of a new dimension to be used in the analysis of RFEs and apply it to the case of *El Estallido Social*. Previously under researched is the question of what the relevancy of a RFE is once a social movement becomes institutionalized. Institutionalized meaning when a social movement transitions from streets protests and grassroots work to working within a governance process to achieve their goals. When the *Acuerdo por la Paz* was passed, the national referendum agreed to use a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. This institutionalized *El Estallido Social*, as the movement was now trying to establish reforms through a governance process.

Awareness, Perception, Resources, and Access to Decisionmakers

If only applying Haines' explanation of RFEs to *El Estallido Social*, then there can only be two outcomes. Either the existence and the strategies of the *Primera Linea* had a negative RFE by harming the ability of organizations like *Mesa de Unidad Social* to achieve their goals or they had a positive RFE and strengthened the bargaining position of moderate groups. Although not entirely comprehensive, analyzing the different dimensions provided by Haines does provide a starting point in explaining the conditions that led to the positive RFE outcome on the movement overall. In the case of *El Estallido Social*, the actions of the radical faction can be

seen to have helped the position of the moderate groups. There were several conditions, influenced by the use of violence, that explain the positive RFE outcome for *El Estallido Social*.

Through the use of violent tactics, such as arson and looting, the radical faction created a national crisis. The government could not ignore what was happening and would have to engage with the protesters and their demands in some manner. Piñera and the government decided to establish a state of emergency, sending the military into the street to repress the movement, leading to violent clashes. These violent clashes increased the awareness of the overall movement and what reforms the moderate groups were fighting for, as the media heavily covered the events of the protests and violence⁴⁷. The attention garnered by the media was a resource to further expand the movement and support further mobilization. 85.8% of the population supported the movement because the demands for reform resonated with citizens, and thus more individuals decided to join the protests and demonstrations⁴⁸. The use of violence increased awareness of the movement, but it also influenced how citizens viewed the protests. The majority of Chileans are moderate, or centrist in their politics. Although most of the population supported demands for reform, there were many that did not support the use of violence, even describing the *Primera Linea* as hooligans being too aggressive⁴⁹. So, at the start of the protests and with increased violence breaking out, the majority of Chileans (55%) initially agreed with Piñera's decision to declare a curfew, and 49% agreed with the declaration of a state of emergency⁵⁰. Because many citizens did not endorse the use of violence, the protests and

⁴⁷ Bunyan, R. 2019. "18 Killed as Hundreds of Thousands of Protestors Take to the Streets in Chile. Here's What to Know." Time. <https://time.com/5710268/chile-protests/>.

⁴⁸ Universidad de Chile. 2019. "Study by the University of Chile reveals broad support for the current social movement and the idea of a new Constitution." <https://www.uchile.cl/noticias/158897/estudio-revela-apoyo-al-actual-movimiento-social-y-nueva-constitucion>

⁴⁹ Attia, 2.

⁵⁰ Reynhout, S. A. 2019. "Public polling from 25 October on the 2019 Chilean protests." <https://www.scottareynhout.com/blog/2019/10/28/public-polling-from-25-october-on-the-2019-chilean-protests>

demands of the moderate groups were perceived as less extreme, which in turn led to further support. Even Piñera eventually stated that there were good reasons to demonstrate but called on citizens to do it peacefully⁵¹.

However, ineffective government repression and documented human rights abuses committed by the military changed the perception of the use of violence. Support for the *Primera Linea* increased amongst the population because they worked to protect the peaceful protests from police violence. The violent repression by the government and protection from the *Primera Linea* created more public support for the overall movement, which is a resource in achieving any sort of reform. Their continued violent clashes with the police and the creation of a national crisis eventually aided in the movement getting access to decisionmakers. Although more people supported and understood the work of the *Primera Linea*, many were fatigued with the weeks of violence. To end the violence, 80.3% of Chileans agreed with working towards a new constitution⁵². Moreover, the unrest had caused significant economic and structural damages so, the government did not want violent clashes between police and citizens to continue. This led to the government conceding and agreeing to hold a referendum on a constitutional assembly. Through the constitutional assembly, the movement would now have access to decisionmakers and the ability to attempt to achieve the reforms they sought through the government process. The national crisis created by the radicals was “resolved” once the government agreed to the referendum on the constitutional assembly, the main goal of the moderate organizations of the movement. Thus, the actions of the radicals created a positive RFE by strengthening the ability of the moderates to achieve their goals through increased movement awareness, changing

⁵¹ Aljazeera, 3.

⁵² Universidad de Chile, 2.

perceptions of the public to view the moderates as reasonable, garnering resources through further support, and eventually gaining access to the government.

How Protest Behaviors Influenced Differentiation, Vulnerability, and Concession Overtime

Although analyzing the dimensions of RFEs provided by Haines is useful in beginning to understand what actually happened in Chile, there are still other conditions and factors that need to be addressed in order to wholly conceptualize the outcome of the RFE. Once again, in order to prove that a RFE actually occurred during the *Estallido Social*, Gupta's two preconditions for occurrence need to be met. As previously stated, there was a clearly defined diversity of groups and individuals, meeting the precondition of fragmentation within a movement. Groups like *Mesa de Unidad Social* or ACES as the more moderate, and the *Primera Linea* as the more radical. The condition of framing was also met, as outside actors designated those descriptions of radical and moderate to the different groups. Gupta's addition of three dimensions (target vulnerability, cost of target concession, moderates signaling differences from radicals) allows for a more in-depth explanation of the RFE. Investigating these dimensions in the context of *Estallido Social*, helps explain the conditions that led to the positive RFE outcome.

When the fare evasion campaign began, the students used the protest "evadir, no pagar, otra forma de luchar," (evading and not paying is another way of fighting), signaling their more moderate approach by using civil resistance tactics to try to get the government to repeal the fare price spike⁵³. ACES, *Mesa de Unidad Social*, and *asambleas territoriales* continued to demonstrate peacefully and organize protests once the movement and its demands grew. By using civil resistance tactics, the moderates were able to differentiate themselves from the radical factions using violence. This in turn made them seem more reasonable and their movement

⁵³ Garnham, J., & Alonso, N., 2.

demands legitimate. Being perceived as more legitimate by outside actors, allowed them to gather more support, but also gave them the opportunity to negotiate with the government. Eventually the government conceded to the movements main demand of a referendum for a constitutional assembly. Thus, moderates differentiating themselves as more reasonable and legitimate than the radicals helps explain the positive RFE outcome.

The target during *El Estallido Social* was the Chilean government and President Piñera. It is usually not easy to get a government to concede because they are not a vulnerable target. The government and Piñera have power over the military, the ability to create legislation, and the monetary ability to access resources needed. All of this gives them the ability to repress movements they are working against. Given the invulnerability of the government, it would be reasonable to predict that the outcome of the RFE would be negative. Piñera and the government condemned the use of violent tactics and labeled the radical faction as criminals. The burning of subway stations and looting was seen as a valid reason by the government to declare a state of emergency and deploy the military into the streets. Piñera said that “democracy not only has the right, it has the obligation to defend itself using all the instruments that democracy itself provides, and the rule of law to combat those who want to destroy it.”⁵⁴ By deploying the military, the government sought to repress the movement, and theoretically they should have been able to if the *Primera Linea* had not been organized to protect protests.

The vulnerability of the target is also connected to the costs of the target conceding. The cost of conceding for the government and Piñera changed overtime, thus requiring paying attention to the temporal dimension of RFEs proposed by Ellefsen, but also to the framing of the relationship between protest behaviors and responses of the state presented by Klein and Regan.

⁵⁴ Aljazeera, 4.

El Estallido Social only occurred in the political arena, so this dimension will not be given attention. During the first half of the protest cycle, which started on October 7th with the ACES fare evasion campaign and ended when Piñera declared a state of emergency on October 19th, there was a negative RFE outcome. The cost of conceding was too high for the government because they had just implemented the new subway fare, and protesters had not generated enough disruption costs. Just the evasion of turnstiles, did not produce enough economic damage or disruption to public order for the government to repeal the newly implemented fare price spike. The government responded in a coercive manner by increasing the presence of *Carabineros* at subway stations in an attempt to repress the movement and stop fare evasion. In this case, government repression through the form of policing was ineffective. It only encouraged larger mobilization and use of other protest tactics. During the day on October 18th, protesters vandalized and occupied several subway stations. At this point, the cost of concession was still too high for the government, and they threatened to essentially criminalize protest by enacting the Law of Internal State Security. Conceding to violence makes the government look weak, so at that point it was not an option. That threat only further angered protesters and led to the eruption of violence that night. Protesters burned down several subway stations and began looting businesses, leading the government to announce the state of emergency. This would send the military into the streets in another attempt to repress the movement. Again, at this point the RFE was negative, as the existence of the radical faction and their tactics made the government respond coercively by declaring a state of emergency to repress the overall movement, which could then hurt the movement's ability to achieve their goals. The growth of the movements demands to include broad reforms, and calling for political resignations, created high concession costs for Piñera and the government. They did not want to concede to the demands of the

movement because the protesters had used violence, and it would be a massive undertaking to institute the reforms wanted by the movement. Also, they did not want to lose their political power by having to resign. Furthermore, protesters had not generated enough disruption costs to offset the cost of concession for the government.

The RFE outcome began to change after the state of emergency was announced. By this point the movement had transformed from just grievances about the metro fare, to demanding a constitutional assembly and reforms to help solve inequality. The state of emergency did not stop groups from continuing to demonstrate and engaging in violent protest behaviors. Piñera's declaration of war as a justification for the state of emergency only angered protesters more. Over the course of the next few days, the military and government were rendered unable to repress the protests. Moderate organizations continued to organize demonstrations and protest in the streets and the *Primera Linea* was able to successfully defend the peaceful protesters by engaging in violent clashes with the military. Due to the continued rioting and violence, the government announced the suspension of the increased subway fare two days after the state of emergency was announced and the following day Piñera announced future reforms for pensions, healthcare, taxes, and minimum wage. These announcements signaled that the disruptions costs being generated by the continuance of protests and violence were starting to outweigh the concession costs for the government to concede to the demands of the movement. Although calls for resignation were still a political threat to Piñera and his government, protesters were creating high disruption costs. Through arson, violence, and looting in major cities, the radical faction created significant economic and structural damages, as well as disruption to public order. This in turn led the government to accommodate the movements demands on the subway fare price and other reforms, but they continued the state of emergency. Thus, the continuance of violence

by the radical flank began to produce a positive RFE since the overall movement's demands were being met, and the position of the moderates was being strengthened.

Nevertheless, these concessions did not quell the violence or put an end to the demonstrations, the people wanted to establish lasting change by rewriting the Pinochet constitution. The state of emergency was still being ignored as violent clashes with the military continued, and demonstrations were still being organized. On October 25th, the largest demonstration in Chilean history occurred when 1.2 million people gathered in Plaza Baquedano to protest. A demonstration of that size could not be ignored by the government and protesters were still generating high disruption costs. The government has an interest in protecting public safety and order, so, they wanted to see an end to the violence. They also did not want further economic and structural damages that were harming the country. This led them to concede on even more of the movement's demands. Piñera announced the end of the state of emergency and asked for the resignation of his cabinet members. Protests and violence dwindled but continued, so, eventually the government gave the movement what they wanted, and agreed to hold a referendum on a constitutional assembly. The government had become vulnerable as the movement grew and defended itself, and the disruption costs created by the movement outweighed the concession costs. The radicals were able to create huge economic losses and continuously threatened public order. The cost of concession was still high for Piñera and the government, but in order to protect public safety and try to end the violence, they had to concede to the movement's demands.

Findings

In summary, the actions of the radical faction, including the *Primera Linea* and those rioting, produced a positive RFE for the movement overall. It is reasonable to say that the outcome of radical action on each of the outlined dimensions was positive, thus leading to the positive RFE. As shown, at first, by utilizing violent tactics, the radical faction produced a negative RFE because the government was invulnerable, and the use of these tactics made the government respond coercively by trying to repress the movement. The demands of the movement, as well as the use of violence, generated high concession costs for Piñera and the government, thus explaining the coercive response. However, the continuance of violence eventually created a positive RFE because the disruption costs being generated by the radical factions outweighed the concession costs for the government and because Piñera and the government had become vulnerable. The economic losses and structural damages, as well as the continued threat to public order, forced the government to concede to the movements demands. Thus, there was a positive RFE outcome because the behaviors of the radical flank generated disruption costs that outweighed concession costs. This advanced the position of the moderates and helped the movement achieve their goal of a constitutional assembly. The way the moderates distinguished themselves as more reasonable and legitimate also contributed to the positive RFE outcome. Furthermore, the use of violent tactics by the radical faction created a national crisis, which generated a lot of media coverage and more awareness of the movement. The increased media coverage was then a resource that allowed the moderates to expand the movement and increase mobilization. As the protests were covered more, the public's perception of the movement also shifted. At first, the majority of Chileans did not support the violence of the radical groups, but after excessive use of force by the police and military, the general public

supported the social movement. Lastly, the continuance of violence forced the government to concede to the movements demands, but most importantly agree to hold a referendum to hold a constitutional assembly. Through the assembly, moderates would not have access to decisionmakers and the opportunity to achieve their reforms through the governance process. The actions of the radical faction in relation to these last four dimensions all contributed to the positive RFE on the movement overall.

Point of Departure

As explained, the RFE in the case of *El Estallido Social* during the defined time period was positive. The actions of the radical groups aided in getting the government to agree to a referendum on drafting a new constitution with the *Acuerdo por la Paz*, thus meeting the tactical goal of *Mesa de Unidad Social* and *asambleas territoriales*. However, it is interesting to think about what happened after the *Acuerdo por la Paz* was signed in terms of the RFE outcome. One dimension that has not been explicitly explored in previous literature concerning the radical flank effect is what is the relevancy of the RFE once a social movement has become institutionalized? Again, institutionalized meaning when a social movement moves from grassroots work to working within a government process.

In the *Acuerdo por la Paz*, the government agreed to hold the referendum on the constitutional assembly on April 26, 2020, but, because of COVID-19, the referendum was eventually held during the same year on October 25th. Citizens approved the drafting of a new constitution and voted to have a constituent convention. However, the draft produced by the constituent convention was not approved during the national plebiscite on September 4, 2022, and the entire process has to start again. To many Chileans, the document was perceived as strange and unrealistically utopian as it included far-left ideas to rights of “digital disconnection”

or “nature.”⁵⁵ Although members of the constituent convention were positive that voters would approve the draft, it was not considered that the majority of Chilean voters identify as moderate or centrist. There was worry that the draft would reverse the economic achievements made in Chile throughout the last few decades. Most voters likely agreed with the progressive tone of the document, but its vagueness and the legal ramifications it would produce, led to the draft being rejected⁵⁶.

After the constituent assembly was elected, *El Estallido Social* became institutionalized because it moved from the grassroots space to working within the government process to achieve its goals. Once institutionalized, the RFE could disappear, as the tactics employed by the radical faction, such as the use of violence, are no longer used. Protesting and demonstrating in the streets to achieve a certain goal is very different from working through democratic government channels. Democracy breaks down when violence is implored by the state and protesters, however, it is then restored when citizens can use the government process as a space for peaceful negotiations regarding the movements demands. In *El Estallido Social*, democracy was restored when through the constitutional assembly, citizens had the opportunity to engage with the government process in order to achieve reforms. At this point, it would be in the hands of the moderates and the general Chilean population to continue working towards the movement’s goals, thus, the radical flank could not produce RFEs. However, in the case of Chile, although the use of violence was no longer being used, the radical ideology held by the factions of the movements stayed relevant and created an RFE. The democratic process requires negotiation and

⁵⁵ Scott, M. 2022. “Chile's rejection of populism is an example for the world.” Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/393de88b-c9f8-48cc-af33-d9fe86ee40d9>

⁵⁶ Stuenkel, O. 2022. “Chile's Rejection of the New Constitution Is a Sign of Democratic Maturity.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/09/08/chile-s-rejection-of-new-constitution-is-sign-of-democratic-maturity-pub-87879>

concession, meaning far-left radicals would not be able to get everything they wanted in terms of reforms. Getting the government to concede to a referendum on drafting a new constitution was the tactical goal of *Mesa de Unidad Social* and *asambleas territoriales*. Writing a new constitution would then give them the ability to attempt achieving the broader goal of bettering the social safety net by passing reforms. However, the existence of radical ideology produced a negative RFE because the far left, more radical ideas embedded in the draft, led to it being rejected by the Chilean people. Now, the process for drafting the new constitution would have to start all over again.

Reflections

Although the outcome of the RFE was negative once the movement became institutionalized, it could also be argued that the work of radicals and the far left produced a positive RFE because they changed the political landscape in Chile. After the protests broke out and the constituent convention was agreed to, the political conversation in Chile included ideas and reforms that were not previously discussed. In this case, new political leaders that emerged from the movement were able to create strong ties among the popular demands and political parties. This produced a credible face to carry on the movement's demands once engaging with decisionmakers⁵⁷. For example, former leader of the student movement and leftist Gabriel Boric was elected President of Chile in 2021⁵⁸. His winning of the election can be attributed to the change in Chilean public opinion as a result of *El Estallido Social*. The actions of the radicals

⁵⁷ Costa, B. D. 2021. "Chile Offers a Blueprint for Effectively Channeling Outrage." Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/11/chile-offers-a-blueprint-for-effectively-channeling-outrage-protests-latin-america/>

⁵⁸ Suarez, K., Romo, R., Regan, H., & Humayun, H. 2021. "Leftist Gabriel Boric, 35, wins Chile's presidential election." CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/19/americas/chile-election-gabriel-boric-intl-nk/index.html>

pushed the movement to be more confrontational but also made the moderates seem more legitimate. Boric was then able to play the role of a more moderate leader, even though he had established ties with the student movement and supported the demands of the movement, thus creating a positive RFE.

Conclusion

By applying the RFE research framework to the case of *El Estallido Social*, this paper aimed to demonstrate how the framework is a beneficial analytical tool in being to understand the outcomes of social movements. I hypothesized that for *El Estallido Social*, the RFE would be positive. To test this, I evaluated the dimensions of how the tactics of the radical faction influenced the public awareness and perception of the moderates, the ability of the moderates to gather resources from outside the movement, the moderate's access to decisionmakers, and the way moderates differentiate themselves from radicals. I then analyzed how protest behaviors and state responses explain how the RFE influenced the vulnerability of the government, and the cost of conceding overtime. The findings of the analysis showed that the *Primera Linea* and the radical factions advanced the position of moderate groups like *Mesa de Unidad Social* and *asambleas territoriales*, but also helped the overall movement achieve its goals. Thus, it is reasonable to say that there was a positive RFE in *El Estallido Social*.

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