



The Chilean Spring

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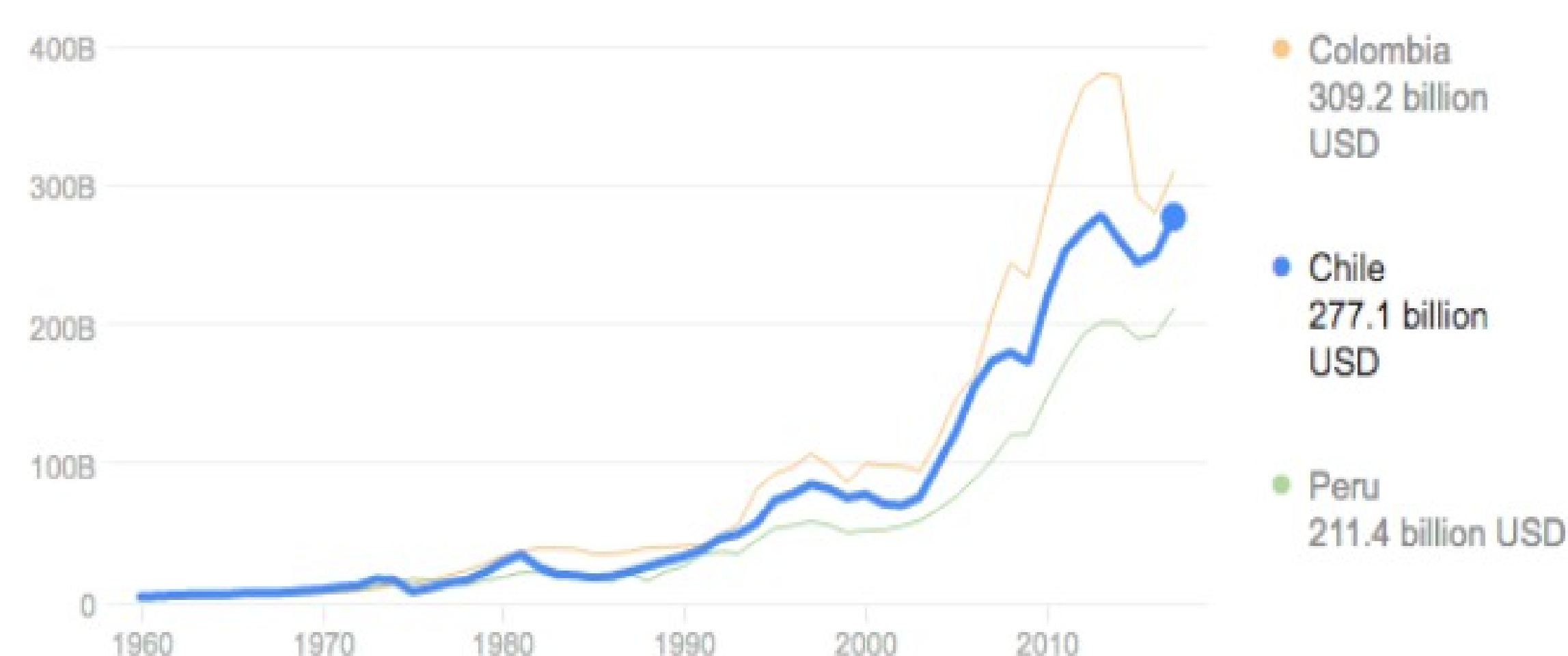
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Hypothesis

A neoliberal economy, while increasing overall economic growth and national GDP, increases class cementation and promotes inequity, forcing people to live in poverty. Regardless of the national budget increase, complete focus on national economic power will result in the de-emphasis and disenfranchisement of citizens living under a neoliberal system.

Gross Domestic Product of Chile compared to Colombia and Peru
277.1 billion USD (2017)



Abstract

The research presented explores the effects, both adverse and beneficial, of the implementation of neoliberal policy and administration. Reference and cross-examination from the progression of neoliberalism paired with the regression of socioeconomic equity in contemporary Chile will serve to present the effects of the political system. Utilizing sociological theory, culturally anthropological research, and political science, we have developed a collection of resources and theories that support and challenge our argument, that neoliberalism is damaging to the people of Chile.

Conclusions

Within a sociological context, we focused primarily on the theories of social stratification, and the social effects of the consumer identity. When applied to neoliberalism in Chile, we found that social stratification could be attached and attributed to much of the wealth gap found in the country. As for the societal protests of neoliberalism, we can see the degrading effects of individuals identifying and serving strictly as consumers and producers.

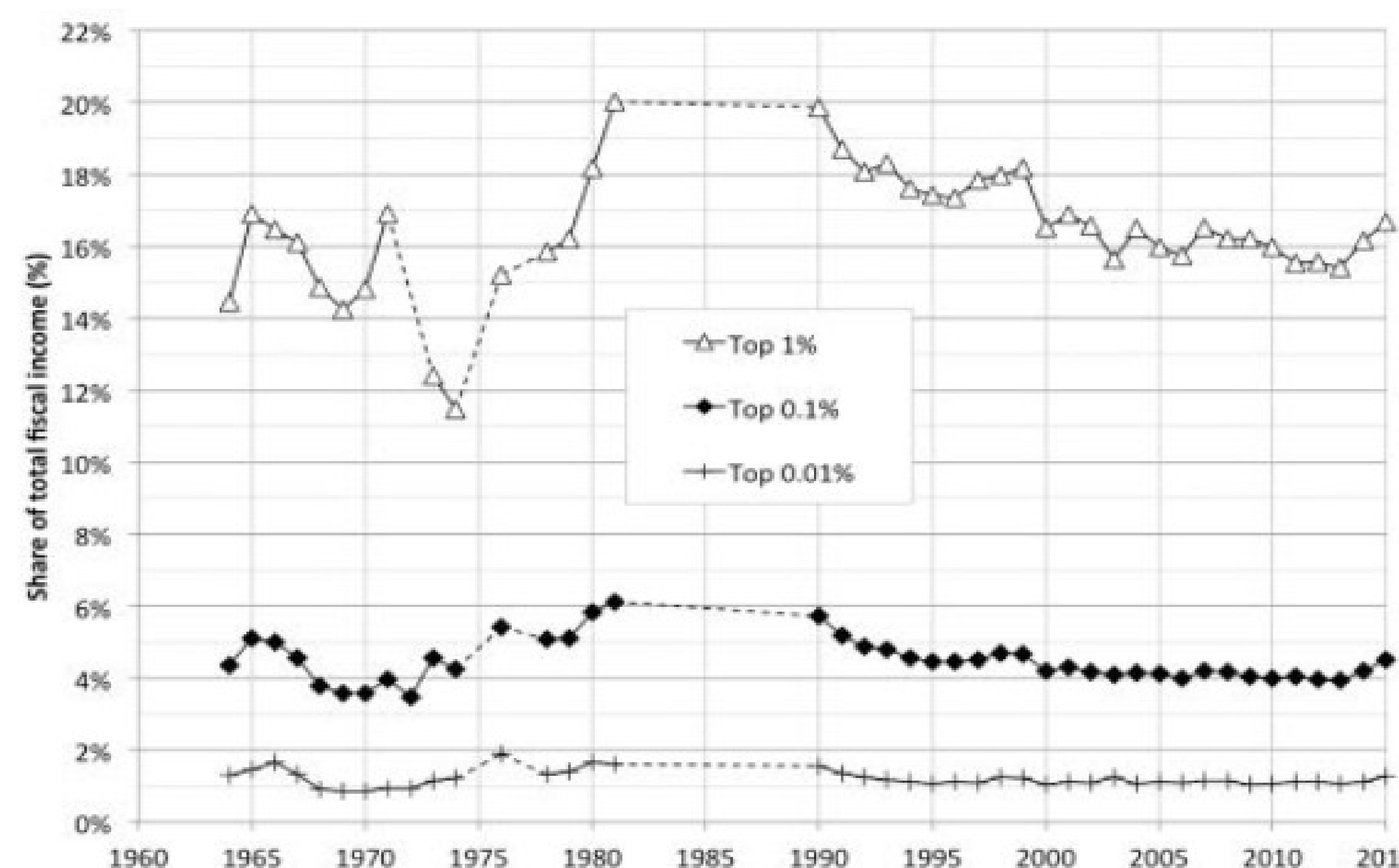
Looking at Chile's Neoliberalism from the perspective of a political scientist means analyzing a struggle between people and power. Neoliberalism was installed under a military dictatorship with no input from the general population of Chile. Today, Chile is forced to choose between maintaining its current economic system or listening the voice of the people.

The significance of the Chilean spring in relation to an international studies lens is one great concern for the global community. The world must become aware of great disregard for human life not just in developing countries but also those we regard as developed, an international proactive of prioritizing profit over people, globalization over communalism.

Methods and Research

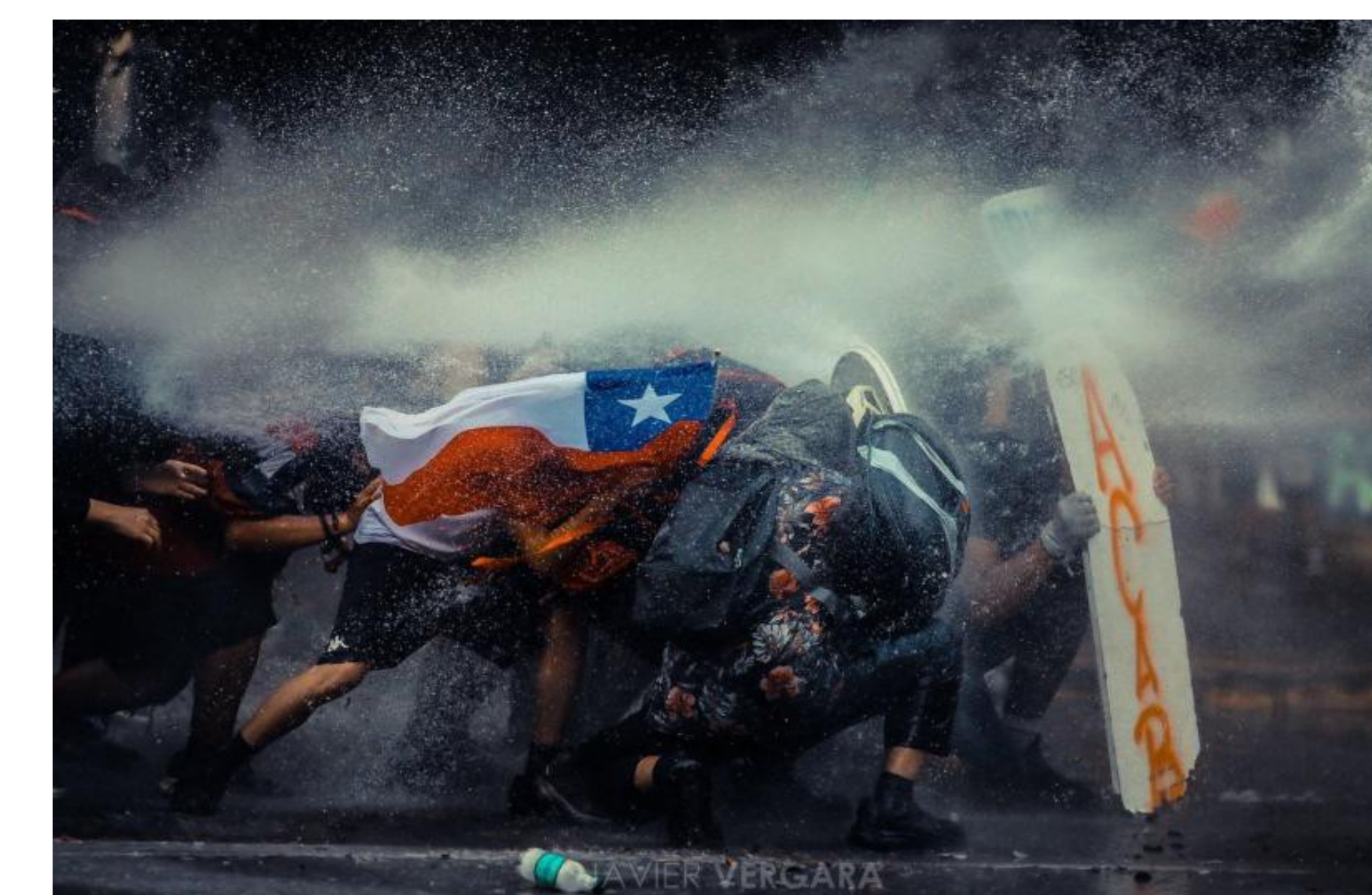
Our research had us contrasting the grand economic success with on-the-ground Chilean experience with economic success and attempting to weigh the merits of both arguments. Understanding this topic from a purely economic position Chile is thriving. Its GDP has skyrocketed, businesses are booming with the country's natural resources, and more people are out of extreme poverty and going to school. However, severe inequality was rampant beneath the final success of the country. The unofficial national motto of the supposed Chilean meritocracy had become "You're poor, because you haven't tried hard enough." These injustices bubbled beneath the surface until the government's final attack on the working class and the country boiled over in protest, citizens could stand the failings no longer.

Top 1%, 0.1% and 0.01% Shares of Fiscal Income (1964-2015)



Detonation Effect

Chile was largely out of the international press up until the eruption of anti-government protests in October 2019, which began as coordinated metro fare evasion by students. The protests escalated as citizens began vandalizing and destroying government infrastructure. The Chilean president, Sebastián Piñera deployed the army to Santiago, the nation's capital. In the days that followed, riots expanded across the Chilean state. The protests are ongoing, but as of December 28, 2019, 29 people have been killed, 2,500 injured, and nearly 3,000 arrested. Human rights organizations also report violations of torture, sexual abuse, and assault by Chilean armed forces. The reason for these bloody protests seems mundane on surface examination but stands as the detonation effect that broke the will of the Chilean citizens. The start of the protests was a small metro fare increase, yes, but that increase was built on the foundation of social injustices and inequality that had been boiling for decades.



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