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Comparing Graduate Student Civic Engagement Outcomes in Chile Among Private For-Profit and Public Universities

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Abstract

This mixed-methods research examined civic engagement in Chilean public and private for-profit universities and its representation among study volunteers. Focus groups of graduate students along with in-person interviews with university administrators were conducted. The study also used an online survey, which was completed by 202 participants who had at minimum completed their *título* (first university degree). The mean age of participants was 32.5 with a standard deviation of 7.1 years. The theoretical framework in this study, spiral dynamic theory (SDT), helped guide the research as data was organized by worldview categories. Findings were that civic engagement, broadly conceptualized, was not well integrated into the Chilean higher education mission. Additionally, the key civic engagement study variables were statistically lower among the participants within the for-profit university environments. Participants also evidenced more higher order thinking and individualism at the for-profit universities based on the SDT memetic indicator classifications.

Keywords: Adult education, civic engagement, Chile, international for-profit graduate education, memetics, spiral dynamic theory

Introduction

What long-term implications and purposes undergird the pursuit of 21st-century civic engagement learning in for-profit higher education? Can any international metrics *(NCES, 2012)* that capture such learning be applied in the United States? Are there means to predict possible civic engagement outcomes resulting from entrepreneurial for-profit graduate education? The purpose of this research was to answer those questions and more, taking into account formal university approaches to student civic engagement learning as foundational core curriculum. This research focused on individuals who had been primarily educated in Chile and had completed their *título*, or first university degree. In Chile, holders of a university degree are called *post-graduado* or, in English, *postgraduates*, and that term is used

for these individuals throughout this article. Examples of the civic engagement activities examined in this research included participation in political demonstrations or protests, voting in student elections, engagement in community volunteering, and discussing politics with family members.

Historical Background of For-Profit Higher Education in Chile

Universities in Chile are looking to the United States as a model in their plans to integrate civic engagement and service-learning more formally into their higher education curricula *(Appe, Rubaii, Líppez-De Castro, & Capobianco, 2017; Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco, & Swanson, 2016; Saltmarsh, 1996; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011)*. However, given Chile's over-40-year history in the implementation and operation of for-profit universities—via the national privatization of its education systems as constitutional law under Dictator Augusto Pinochet—the proliferation of private for-profit higher education in the United States gives ample room for benefits from assessment of benchmarks within the Chilean system. More specifically, research on graduate student civic engagement within the context of for-profit higher education in Chile is crucial to the identification of probable civic consciousness development among the U.S. matriculates enrolled in public and private for-profit university study. Therefore, in this research, Chile served as a prototype case of a nation negotiating the challenges and complexities of market-based universities and was well positioned to offer insights into the long-term civic engagement outcomes of graduate students who had attended for-profit institutions of higher education.

In March of 1990, the Pinochet dictatorship introduced the Constitutional Organic Law on Education (LOCE), which opened the door to free-market education policies more generally, but especially to the emergence of private for-profit universities *(Bernasconi, 2005; Pérez, 2012; Valverde, 2004)*. In Chile, it is illegal for universities that obtain direct public funding from the state to operate as profiteering educational institutions *(UNESCO, 2014)*. Nevertheless, there was mounting concern among Chilean citizenry—especially university students—that privatized universities in Chile had in fact engaged in profiteering *(Gibney, 2012)*, and such practices served as the catalyst for the emergence of the anti-for-profit-education student protest movement dubbed in 2011 the *Chilean Winter (Villalobos-Ruminott, 2012)*.

Due to the rising cost of university study, the majority of Chile's middle- to low-income students finance their higher education through private loans *(André, 2012; Gambi & González, 2013)*. More than 85% of the total higher education cost is borne by Chilean families *(André, 2012)*. Government-subsidized loans and private bank loans introduce resources for financing university study, which the private for-profit educational institutions find attractive. Educational loans cover 75% of the monthly tuition payments, and families are left to make up the difference, which many find burdensome. Moreover, some 40% of Chileans fail to complete their degrees, and those who do graduate struggle to repay loans whose interest rates at private banks can exceed 8% *(André, 2012)*.

The conceptual model (Figure 1) developed for this research displays the financing structure and the role the Chilean government plays (alongside private banks) as a student educational loan provider. It also offers a visual depiction of the proposition that government funding mediates factors of student protests and that being either a public or private for-profit university influences civic engagement outcomes. The conceptual model also indicates that specific spiral dynamic theory (SDT) worldviews served to influence the graduate students' thinking and that such worldviews were being culturally transferred as memes (i.e., human imitations; *Brown, 2016*). All of these variables combine to produce the civic engagement outcomes of graduate students in the Chilean entrepreneurial higher education context.

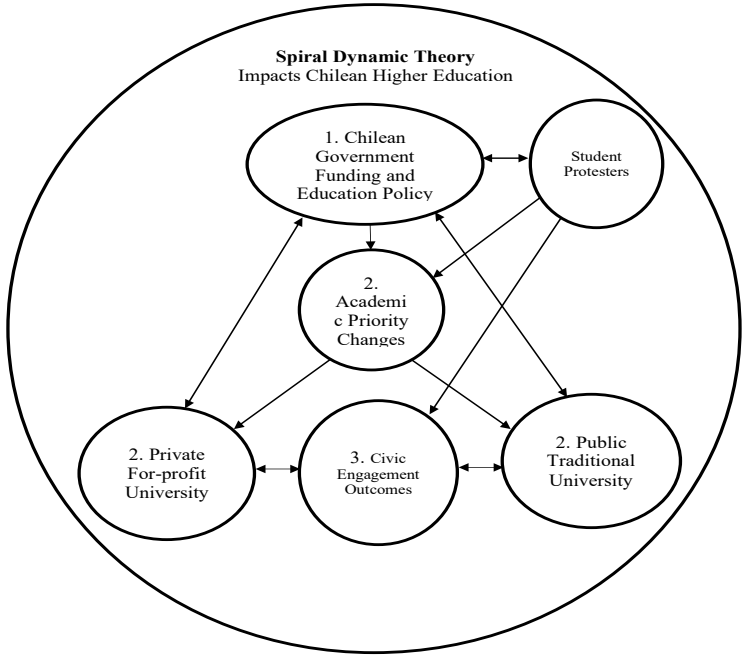

Figure 1. **A graphic depiction of the conceptual model used for the study and how spiral dynamic theory offers a metaframework for the research.**

Spiral Dynamic Theory

As analyzed by Clare Graves *(2005)*, whose research undergirds the spiral dynamic theory (SDT) framework used in this study, adult development occurs within a biopsychosocial system model *(Beck & Cowan, 2006; Brown, 2016; Purdy, 2013)* that incorporates factors of human biology, psychology (thoughts, emotions, and behaviors), and sociology in integral ways, contributing to healthy human function. More specifically, the tripartite health model holds that human well-being is best understood in terms of interconnected relationships, and in this study, memetics helps to further explain those connections.

Memes and Human Imitation

This research introduced the use of memetic science (as a component of SDT) to the study of adult developmental thinking within the context of higher education in order to explicate the phenomenon of civic engagement among postgraduates in Chile. The SDT framework enters the domain of the field of biology by associating processes of *genes* (the natural sciences' genetic inheritance construct) to that of the social science construct termed *memes*—behavioral units of culture that are transferred nongenetically through human imitation *(Beck & Cowan, 2006; Blackmore, 1996, 1998; Dawkins, 1976)*. This research held that civic engagement outcomes within the context of higher education occurred memetically through human beings imitating each other. In the context of this imitation, the meme is subject to the procreative evolutionary processes of replication, variation, and natural selection in order to remain relevant within a social context.

Memes operate and transfer through non-genetic human imitation. Examples of memes include internet images, beliefs, songs, policies, and so on. It is also important to emphasize that memes differ from symbols due specifically to their procreative evolutionary change properties *(Brown, personal communication, March 14, 2018)*. A symbol can become a meme, but a meme is not a simple symbol. Memes are best described metaphorically as the drivers of the mental software represented in each of the 10 unique mnemonically color-coded worldviews represented as part of the two-tiered SDT theoretical framework (Figure 2).

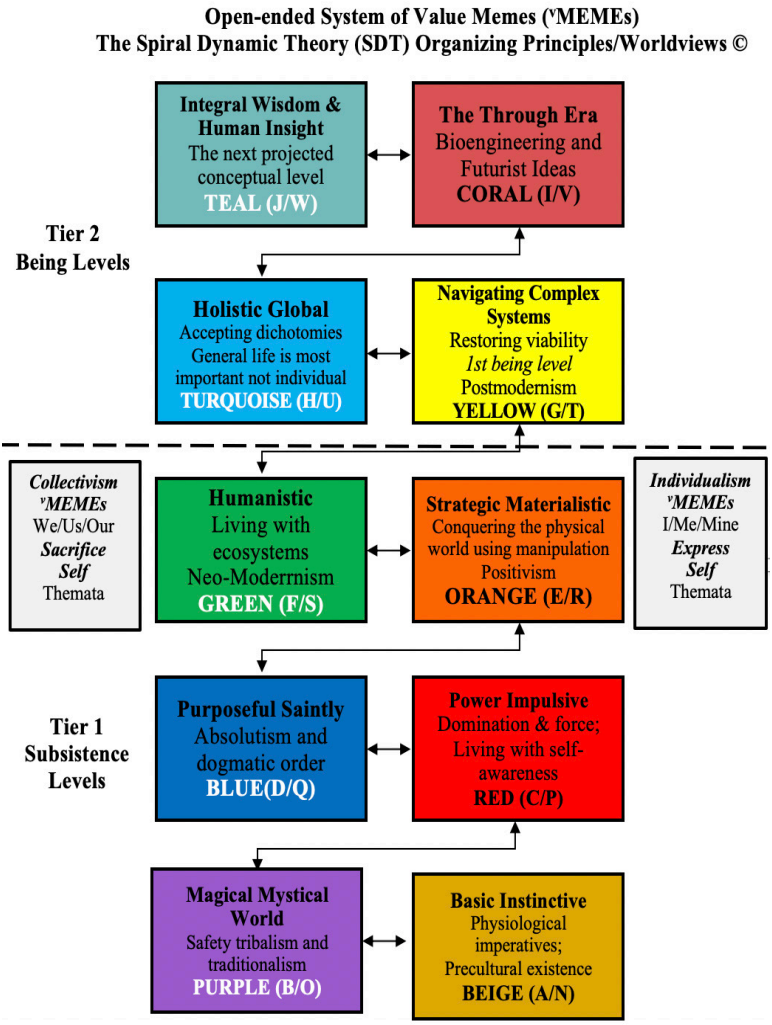

Figure 2. **In the SDT dynamic oscillating framework, the lowest order thinking begins at the color beige (A/N) and moves in an upward, zigzag pattern through the open-ended spiral to teal (J/W). Tier 1 represents those vMEME system levels focused on survival through innate sensory abilities and instinct. Tier 2 contains the SDT systems that represent self-awareness, which is reflexive. On Tier 2, one acquires the capacity to imagine multiple future(s) as one begins to cognitively understand and negotiate complex interconnected realities. Copyright 2015 by Brown. Reproduced with permission.**

Deep Value Systems

SDT holds that each person has a tripartite system of surface, hidden, and deep values *(Cowan & Todorovic, 2000)* that operate in conjunction with our unique ways of interpreting, problem-solving, and negotiating our lives based on a unique and dynamic worldview. Each memetic worldview is composed of its own unique set of axiology, epistemology, ontology, and neurological capacities *(Brown, 2016)*. As adults mature, their way of thinking about the world that surrounds them evolves, moving from simplistic to more complex. At the emergence of a new higher level SDT worldview, thinking becomes progressive and evolutionary as one is drawn toward higher order cognition. These 10 evolving SDT worldviews—called ^{v}MEMEs where the superscript v denotes the word and concept of values—are the memetic units that represent a unique meta-ontology and deep value system *(Brown, 2016)*. Notably, these worldview constructs can be realized on the individual, organizational, and societal levels.

However, Graves *(2005, 2009)* held that change was not inevitable and that thinking can become static or remain entrenched within a particular worldview. Additionally, in some instances, adult thinking can become regressive, with an individual resorting to a more simplistic prior SDT system of thinking in an effort to resolve an emergent existential problem or conflict. In such cases, the zigzag movement along the hierarchical SDT framework can at times be either forward moving or backward retrenching based on one's readiness to problem-solve.

SDT Worldview Metaconstruct

There are five individualistic *me*-oriented ^{v}MEME themata located on the right side of the SDT framework, represented by the colors beige, red, orange, yellow, and coral. On the left side, there are the more self-sacrificial ^{v}MEMEs described as the collectivist *we*-oriented themata, represented by the colors purple, blue, green, turquoise, and teal *(Cowan & Todorovic, 2000; Graves, 2005)*. The SDT theoretical framework provided a means to categorize and interpret the diverse and emergent thinking of study participants, which influenced the dependent civic engagement variables in the research. Table 1 offers detailed descriptions of the mnemonically color-coded worldview systems of the SDT framework. Only six of the worldview systems (due to the highly educated nature of the sample) were used for this study.

Table 1. SDT Framework Mnemonically Color-Coded Constructs

PURPLE (B/O) System Tier 1	B/O is the belief in obeying the desires of magical-mystical spirit beings holding to a worldview marked by tribalism and traditionalism. There exists a prevailing imperative to find safety in a dangerous and unpredictable world. Allegiance is shown to group elders, customs, and clans. Sacred objects and spaces, as well as rituals, are held in high status. The locus of control is external and collectivist in nature.
RED (C/P) System Tier 1	C/P is the egocentric memetic worldview often marked by perceptions that *Life is a jungle* where there exist those who are the *haves and the have-nots*. One looks to avoid shame and to defend one's reputation and respect even if it requires deadly force to do so. It is impulsive and often remorseless, as consequences for one's action may or may not come to fruition. The locus of control is internal and individualistic.
BLUE (D/Q) System Tier 1	/Q is the purposeful memetic worldview marked by sacrifice: a need to bring order and stability to a disorderly situation. One relates to notions of guilt and the enforcement of divine principles, holding that people are assigned to their specific place in life. It holds to a belief in a divine truth or moral absolute. More extreme aspects of this meme would require dogmatic obedience while employing paternalistic attempts to bring order to chaos. Rules are to be followed and are nonnegotiable. The locus of control is external and collectivist in nature.
ORANGE (E/R) System Tier 1	E/R is the strategic memetic worldview marked by autonomy and independence in order to seek material gain. This worldview construct searches for the "best solutions," which are often located through science and technological applications. Competition is a prevailing meme aspect within this construct, as is winning. This memetic worldview is cautious not to arouse the suspicions and disfavor of other authorities, holding logic and reasonable certainty for success above a power impulse. The locus of control is internal and individualistic in nature.
GREEN (F/S) System Tier 1	F/S is the relativistic memetic worldview marked by the exploration of the personal inner self in conjunction with the inner self of others. There is a prioritizing of community, unity, and harmony, as a promotion of shared societal resources for the benefit of all is valued. Notions of greed and dogmatic authoritarianism are rejected, as decision-making based upon consensus is promoted. Togetherness, harmony, and acceptance serve to replace the previous stage's scientific logic. Interpretive reality makes space for the metaphysical and one's feelings as analysis tools. The locus of control is external and collectivist in nature.

Continued on next page

YELLOW (G/T) System Tier 2	G/T is the systemic memetic worldview marked by functionality, competence, flexibility, and spontaneity that allows for creative thought. There is an imperative to restore order to the chaotic. This worldview produces a more tempered individualism, and better results will always default to the better plan without allegiances to a likely temporal leadership. This meme is described as the Flex-Flow perspective and recognizes the layered dynamics of both the nature of human beings and societies. It is most likely to recognize things as possessing a "both/and" nature and not be bound to a simplistic "either/or" perspective. The locus of control is internal and individualistic in nature.
TURQUOISE (H/U) System Tier 2	H/U is the globalism memetic worldview marked by its ability to easily negotiate complexity and recognize patterns more quickly than those operating under Tier 1 ʏMEME systems. The world is seen as a single dynamic organism with its own mind. Dichotomies are more easily accepted, and this particular worldview uses physics and metaphysics together to explore the problems of life and being *(Dawlabani & Beck, 2013)*. It is a holistic and intuitive way of thinking that is open to notions of spirituality, yet at the same time holding that general life is more important than individual personal life. The locus of control is external and collectivist in nature.

Note. Adapted of Beck & Cowan *(2006)*. Copyright reproduction permission granted by Brown *(2016)*.

Each of the color-coded worldviews on the SDT framework has an associated letter code. Psychologist Clare Graves *(1974)* describes the first letter code of the pair as, "the neurological system in the brain [worldview] upon which the psychological system is based" *(p. 73)*. The second letter represents the set of existential problems that the neurological system is able to cope with. Thus, in the state of the RED C/P worldview system, a person would use a C-type of neurological system in order to solve a P-type of problem. In Table 1 the letter pair symbols are separated by a forward slash. Inherent conflicts exist between types of problem and one's capacity to solve said problem, which makes the SDT framework dynamic and serves to facilitate forward movement along the spiral (or regression when applicable).

It is important to reemphasize that cognitive change along the SDT framework is not inevitable *(Graves, 2005)* and that the SDT framework is an open-ended model of adult development. Figure 2 shows the currently identified color-coded SDT worldviews, but the figure is not suggesting any type of end-stage adult development. There is no peaking of adult maturity and development in SDT. Finally, it is possible for an individual to live out the entirety of their life holding to an outdated and simplistic way of knowing and being in the world *(Graves, 1970, 2005)*. Thus, "if an individual holds simplistic beliefs in the certainty of knowledge, then they will

also hold simplistic beliefs in the simplicity of knowledge" *(Knight & Mattick, 2006, p. 1086)* and as a consequence, the desire for change can remain arrested.

The SDT framework offered this research a unique lens through which to examine the phenomenon of civic engagement in higher education among postgraduate students in conjunction with the complexity of thinking that occurs among maturing adults. Each of the distinct SDT memetic worldview levels—only six of which (red, blue, orange, green, yellow, and turquoise) were used in this research study—is representative of a particular way in which an individual might interpret and respond to his/her own reality and cultural context. Since one research criterion was completion of a university degree, the lower order beige and purple SDT worldview constructs were omitted from this study. The researcher interpreted and classified the dominant SDT ^{v}MEME expressions that were in operation within the case universities and among the study volunteers in Chile.

Theoretical Advantages

The SDT theoretical framework offered an advantage over other types of adult development frameworks for the study of civic engagement in higher education due to its attention to evolutionary memetic cultural diversity and its open-ended scaffolding of subsuming worldview levels of thinking that become increasingly more complex. When a change occurs along the SDT framework, movement toward the newer worldview becomes more dominant as prior systems begin to become less pronounced.

As movement occurs along the SDT framework, previous ^{v}MEME systems are retained, integrated, and, in instances of regressive movement, drawn upon when an individual is faced with a new existential problem and the necessary neurology to problem solve has not yet been consolidated. Once enlightenment points are reached and barriers to change are neutralized or removed, then forward movement along the framework toward higher order thinking occurs *(Brown, 2016; Graves, 2005)*. Upward hierarchical movement through the SDT framework happens in a zigzag pattern that oscillates between themata of collectivism and individualism in neighboring worldview systems (Figure 2). Individualistic worldviews (on the right side of the framework) were hypothesized in this study to be more associated with lower civic engagement outcomes than more collectivist worldviews.

Using the SDT framework offers an advantage over traditional adult learning methodologies that compartmentalize or limit adult development by focusing on transformation centered around emotional and spiritual learning *(Mezirow, 1994; Tisdell, 2003)* or from those models based on psychoanalytic theories of personality *(Tummala-Narra, 2015)*. SDT privileges multicultural realities that go beyond traditional Eurocentric models of adult development—where contextual issues are grounded within a normative cultural monolith and timeframe.

Although academe is rich with theories that examine the developmental processes of children and adolescents *(Piaget, 1954)* offering end-stages models of maturity and development *(Erikson, 1959; Maslow, 1948; Vygotsky, 1978)*, there is a paucity of literature on the dynamic thinking of adult graduate students (on topics of civic engagement) and how it changes over time. Moreover, virtually no studies have explored how an evolving social context and expanding worldview impacts the way postgraduates negotiate the phenomenon of civic engagement in higher education. Unlike the adult development theory of critical consciousness offered by Freire *(1985, 1995)* or Erikson's *(1959)* stage theory of role delineation—which focused primarily on adolescents who are moving toward adulthood as they navigate the individualistic (self) identity—SDT introduces memetically emergent open-ended evolving levels of being *(Brown, 2017)* not used in civic engagement higher education research to date.

Interestingly, Kegan *(1982)* offered a concomitant model of adult development to SDT that oscillates between external and internal loci of control and held that self-definition occurs in connection to the surrounding cultural context. The Kegan model also has leveled pathways of cognitive evolution as one advances toward adulthood. However, by contrast, the Kegan *(1982)* stages are grounded in his theory of a subject–object relationship that is negotiated by the adult as she moves within a framework of hierarchical cognitive realities. The Kegan *(1982)* model proved suboptimal for this study of civic engagement in higher education in that it holds to an idealized end-stage of peak adulthood where one achieves a higher form of maturity than others as the person becomes self-authoring. In contrast, SDT holds that the self-authoring stages among adults are multiple, influenced by culture, and reflect an open-ended capacity for continuous lifelong learning and development where there exists no end-stage developmental peaking toward adulthood. Hence, the SDT framework gave an advantage

to this research by offering a never-ending gradient spiral of self-discovery *(Graves, 2005)*.

Methodology

This mixed-methods study investigated civic engagement activities and outcomes among postgraduates in Chilean traditional public and private for-profit universities, interpreting that engagement through spiral dynamic theory (SDT). The research involved an ethnographic cultural immersion experience and used the qualitative research method of content analysis for the transcribed in-person interviews. An online self-administered survey instrument was also used as the quantitative research method for purposes of statistical analysis using SPSS v.21 computer software. The methodology had two phases, and to guide the study the following research questions were posed:

1. In what ways are Chilean public and private for-profit institutions committed to civic engagement education and practices?
2. What are the prevailing SDT [v]MEMEs of Chilean graduate students in public and private for-profit higher education institutions?
3. To what extent is there a relationship between graduate students' personal characteristics and civic engagement outcomes?
4. Is there a relationship between institutional type and graduate students' civic engagement outcomes?

In Phase 1, focus groups were conducted with Chilean graduate students (and working professionals with master's degrees) at one traditional public university (TPU) and one private for-profit university (PFPU). Patton *(2015)* highlights the strength of focus groups as a means to identify major themes. In-person interviews were also conducted with a high-level administrator at each of these institutions. The administrator at the PFPU held a Ph.D., and the one at the TPU was in doctoral candidacy. Table 2 is provided below in order to facilitate understanding of abbreviations used throughout this article.

Table 2. Summary of Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in this Article

Term	Description
CE	Civic Engagement
CRUCH	The Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas)
PFPU	Private For-Profit Chilean University
TPU	Traditional Chilean Public University
SDT	Spiral Dynamic Theory
Mixed	Private not-for-profit Chilean University
^{v}MEME	Value Memes (superscripted v) are the unique identifiers used to describe each of the color-coded worldview constructs represented on the SDT framework.

Study participants were observed over several months through repeated contacts with these individuals and field notes maintained through webpage blogging. Microanalysis of the transcribed text helped to enhance the identification of institutional civic engagement themes, and the audio- and video-recorded focus group discussions served to facilitate the identification of the SDT worldview thinking among the study participants. Phase 2 of this mixed-methods research was quantitative and involved the administration of an online psychometric survey instrument designed to capture the civic engagement and SDT variables.

Because this dissertation study was conducted under the authority of the University of Georgia Adult Education program, participation was restricted to adults 25 years or older who were not undergraduates. The study thus initially targeted graduate students. Those who participated in the focus group discussions of Phase 1 were over the age of 25 and had obtained a master's degree or were enrolled in a graduate degree program. In Phase 2, however, the initial response rate for graduate students taking the survey was unsatisfactory. Criteria for inclusion in the survey therefore were expanded to include Chilean university students who had completed their first degree (*título*). Survey respondents thus included adults who were graduate students and those who were simply working adults holding a *título*. Those without a degree were excluded from the survey via a qualifying question at the beginning of the self-administered online instrument.

Research Protocols and Data Collection

Development of the interview question protocols occurred in two stages. Questions were developed in consultation with a faculty

expert in qualitative research in order to obtain deep and descriptive feedback from study volunteers. Next, the interview protocols in both English and Spanish were registered and approved by the campus Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Survey development. The quantitative survey instrument was also developed in English and Spanish for implementation in a test pilot with Chilean focus group members. The psychometric researcher-developed online survey instrument was initially created and tested in the United States with *(Brown, 2016)* Spanish-speaking graduate students and other adult working professionals who all held college degrees. In fall semester 2013, the test pilot of both the English and Spanish versions of the survey was conducted in Chile. Subsequently, some of the survey items were modified, and the instrument was resubmitted for IRB modification approval, which was granted on April 24, 2014. The finalized Spanish version of the survey was then fully implemented in Chile during Phase 2 of the research design.

Sampling and Demographics

Graduate student volunteers for the focus groups were recruited through referral sampling by classroom professors, academic deans, and flyers that were distributed on campus. The focus groups included two females, ages 28 and 65, and six males, ages 35 to 44. Four focus group members had already obtained their master's degrees, and two others were graduate students in the first year of their academic programs. The discussion sessions were conducted on campus at each of the two separate university sites selected through convenience sampling. Purposeful sampling was used to select the two high-level university administrators who provided in-person interviews with the researcher. The university administrators in the study were male, and their age information was not collected.

Phase 1: University site selection. Selection of the two university sites in the qualitative Phase 1 portion of the study was accomplished using convenience sampling *(Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016)*. The sites were identified based on researcher conversations with key local informants. The two institutions that met the study criteria of being either a TPU or PFPU were both located in the same city in south-central Chile, which reduced travel time needed to conduct interviews. Cold calls that led to scheduled meetings with university staff allowed the researcher to gain access to the study's focus group volunteers and in-person interviewees.

Initially, a PFPU in Santiago agreed to be in the study but later withdrew after its parent company in the United States objected to the institution's involvement in the research. The TPU selected in Phase 1 of the study was a member of Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas (CRUCH), the country's oldest organization of national public universities, which was established in 1954. It is important to mention that CRUCH membership was not available to any PFPUs in the country due to their entrepreneurial status. Exclusion from membership in CRUCH served as the condition for identifying and separating private for-profit university groupings in this study.

Concurrent mixed-methods qualitative data collection. Graduate students and administrators were asked to respond to semistructured civic engagement question protocols in Phase 1 of the research. The graduate students also completed prediscussion focus group demographic profile forms where they self-assessed their own civic engagement levels using a Likert-type scale. The graduate students provided information such as annual family income, enrollment status, and political affiliation. Focus group members were given the study's civic engagement definition on their profile form document. At the close of the focus group sessions, all members were again asked to self-evaluate their civic engagement activities as having increased or decreased since they had begun their graduate studies. At the close of discussions, each focus group member self-selected an attribute that was coded either I for increased civic engagement or D for decreased civic engagement. Civic engagement attributes were recorded for each focus group member.

Phase 2: Selected survey sites. Analysis of survey data revealed a third type of university, a hybrid (mixed) private not-for-profit. The hybrid university in this study held membership in CRUCH. Therefore, that particular institution was labeled as a mixed not-for-profit university type in Phase 2 of the research. The country of Chile is divided into 15 metropolitan regions. Twenty-one out of the 25 traditional public universities (TPU) in these regions offer graduate degree programs and were members of CRUCH. The researcher attempted to recruit all 21 of the TPUs for participation in the survey by placing cold calls and sending out e-mail requests to university administrators, data coordinators, and faculty members. Out of the 21 TPUs who met the study criteria of being not-for-profit, 13 agreed to participate in the survey.

A modified simple random sample *(Flynn, Tremblay, Rehm, & Wells, 2013)* process was used to recruit survey participants. The

sampling approach was challenging, since there was no national umbrella member organization for PFPUs in Chile. Therefore, the exact number of PFPUs available for the study was unknown. Nevertheless, the researcher located an online listing of PFPUs in Chile and proceeded with making cold calls and e-mail contacts in order to recruit participants from among the PFPU populations that advertised graduate degree program offerings. Additionally, review of the PFPU websites (not all were publicly accessible) revealed that many universities of this type were under the authority of private investors and not the national minister of education. It is important to reiterate that the PFPUs in Chile were not eligible to receive *direct university funding* from the Chilean government due to their entrepreneurial status.

Out of the 61 PFPUs identified from the website and recruited for participation in this study, a total of 14 institutions agreed to take part in the survey. Snowball sampling *(Emerson, 2015)* was also used in the recruitment of survey volunteers as participants were asked to share the survey hyperlink with qualifying classmates, friends, and associates. In total, the online survey instrument was sent out by the researcher to over 3,236 potential volunteers at 61 different private for-profit universities (PFPUs), 21 traditional public universities (TPUs), and one mixed private not-for-profit university. Among those university officials who offered the researcher electronic mailing lists, some of the e-mail addresses were invalid, thus invitations were returned electronically as undeliverable. An accurate response rate was difficult to calculate because undeliverable surveys were not separately tracked in relation to the successful deliveries.

Completed surveys were received from 104 respondents at the traditional public universities (TPU), 60 from the private for-profit universities (PFPU), and 38 from the mixed not-for-profit university for a total of 202 completed online surveys. There were no missing data on the survey, as it was structured to advance only after a response was recorded. The researcher met the study goal of collecting 202 completed surveys in accordance with Pearson's power chart sampling criteria standard of $\beta = .80$ power for studies with two to eight groups *(Feldt & Mahmoud, 1958; Keppel & Wickens, 2004)*.

Attention was given to the recruitment of comparable numbers by gender because it served to promote diversity of perspective among self-identified male and female survey respondents. Age homogeneity was also an important demographic factor, as it enabled the researcher to collect a sample from a domain of mature

adults with a mean sample age of 32.5 and standard deviation of 7.1 among the postgraduates.

Data Analysis

Focus group and in-person interviews were professionally transcribed and then interpretively coded by the researcher, who organized the clusters of SDT worldview thinking based on participant responses to the question protocols. Data mined from the interview transcripts using a discourse analysis approach *(Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Ziegler, Paulus, & Woodside, 2014)* were placed in thematic categories based on the mnemonically color-coded SDT [v]MEME. Categorized responses were organized by patterns and given an attribution code *(Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014)* that represented the specific SDT [v]MEME worldview thinking (see Figure 2).

In consideration of data security and participant anonymity, the researcher adopted pseudonyms for the participants named in Phase 1 of the study. The names were derived from the television program The Simpsons due to the discovery that it was one of the most popular TV programs in Chile and most of Latin America.

Qualitative Data Display Matrices

Display matrices are a recommended technique for setting qualitative data in defined columns and rows in order to enhance observational value *(Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014)*. The researcher was attentive to the flow and consistency of expressed thinking (i.e., worldviews) in Phase 1 semistructured interviews. The matrix creation technique helped facilitate the thematic coding and analysis for the development of Table 3. The more dominant representations and clustering of specific SDT color-coded worldview expressions were labeled using all capital letters; the less dominant SDT color-coded worldview expressions received lowercase lettering.

Table 3. Attribution and Magnitude SDT Coding of Graduate Student Focus Group Data

Could we please begin by your sharing with me your own definition or understanding of what civic engagement entails?	SDT Worldview Expression	Profile CE Scale*
"It's commitment to the country and all the elements and surrounding country. Your nationality, your identity, and also the way that you involve within the society, as part of the society."—Marge (Public University)	BLUE/orange	5
"I think that everything is related to politics. I think that civic engagement is related to how we are going to ask for our rights as citizens in our country or also how we fight against injustice in our parts of the world."—Bart (Private For-Profit University)	GREEN/yellow	3

The SDT color-coded worldviews were attributed through researcher interpretations based upon the discourse analysis of transcribed focus group statement patterns for each of the graduate students. Capitalization reflects the more dominant SDT thinking pattern in the respondent(s). *Each of the focus group members self-assessed their own civic engagement (CE) magnitude using a Likert-type scale of 0 = None through 5 = Very High.

The classification system used for the analysis helped the researcher to better locate dynamic shifts or transitions in the memetic worldview and thinking patterns of focus group members and in-person interview volunteers. Marge's response pattern clusters showed an attention to authority and obligations to country and national pride. Such thinking was consistent with the more dominant SDT D/Q BLUE worldview construct description (Table 1). However, she also talked about the need to obtain better material well-being and economic opportunity afforded to a more privileged class of wealthy Chilean graduate students who attended the private for-profit university. The latter response was interpreted to represent (although less dominantly) the SDT E/R orange memetic worldview.

In Bart's response to the civic engagement question protocols, he consistently gave attention to complex themes as he analyzed the state of national politics and recognized the role of complex systems. Bart explained how civic engagement and outreach activities had been a significant part of his secondary educational experience, and he also spoke about the need to incorporate themes of civic awareness in his teaching and that it serves to improve global awareness for his students. However, Bart also described how the demands of family life and his graduate studies had led to his being

less civically engaged as a graduate student. The SDT worldview responses from Bart were the most complex among the PFPU focus group members.

Bart's thinking cluster was coded to be more dominant of the SDT GREEN memetic thinking classification, expressing an attention and concern for the need to recycle, visit the elderly, and read the newspaper in order to stay informed about the world around him. Bart expressed an individualistic form of thinking that was more complex in understanding the role of power, educational systems in Chile, and government authority. Therefore, some of his thinking was interpreted to reflect the SDT yellow worldview that was located on Tier 2 of the SDT framework and was classified as more integrative as it pertained to both the collectivist and individualist themata.

Trustworthiness. The researcher gave attention to the requirements of trustworthiness by the use of in-the-moment member-checking procedures. Focus groups were videotaped and in-person interviews were audio recorded.

Throughout the tapings, the researcher would periodically solicit feedback from the participants in order to verify and deepen the understanding of responses in an effort to enhance data quality *(Patton, 2015)*. Using a professional interview transcriber to process the recordings and generate visual text helped to preserve the quality of the data. The transcription of the interviews helped to increase the interpretive trustworthiness of the collected data, as session discussions could be revisited for accuracy, categorizing, and coding.

Being able to review the nuances of voice tone and body language in the interviews assisted in the establishment of consistently high-quality data and interpretive integrity *(Roulston, deMarrais, & Lewis, 2003)*. Finally, interpretive validity was enhanced through researcher training: In summer 2013 I obtained professional training and certification in the use and application of Spiral Dynamics Levels I and II assessments in Santa Barbara, California, directly from Clare Graves's protégé Christopher Cowan.

Phase 2: Quantitative Analysis

The correlation matrix (Table 4) was created using the SPSS v.21 computer software, and ANOVA tests of the three types of universities were conducted. Multiple regression analyses were also performed with the key civic engagement study variables. Statistical testing showed that four out of the 10 dependent key

CE variables were statistically significant by university type in the sample: (1) *voting in a student election* (CE_13), (2) *hours per week of volunteering* (CE_17), (3) *participating in protests or demonstrations* (CE_33), and (4) *discussion of politics with family* (CE_83). The analysis proceeded with those four items serving as dependent variables.

Table 4. Correlations Matrix of Key Study Variable and Descriptive Statistics

Measures	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	*M*	*SD*
Credential (1)	1.00							1.75	1.33
Enrollment (2)	.53**	1.00						2.00	0.62
Salary (3)	.13	.10	1.00					2.40	1.66
CE_13 (4)	-.13	.02	-.03	1.00				1.98	0.73
CE_17 (5)	-.02	-.01	-.11	-.13	1.00			1.32	1.36
CE_33 (6)	.05	.01	.15*	.37**	-.19**	1.00		2.09	0.68
CE_83 (7)	-.10	-.04	-.11	.19**	-.01	.17*	1.00	1.56	0.62
DQ_Blue (8)	.11	.04	.04	-.13	.04	-.32**	-.12	2.53	0.55
ER_Orange (9)	.05	-.02	-.10	-.05	.13	-.27**	-.15*	2.63	0.51
GT_Yellow (10)	.09	.02	-.10	-.13	-.05	.04	-.05	1.87	0.35
Individual (11)	.10	.00	-.11	-.08	.06	-.18*	-.15	2.39	0.36
Public (12)	.15*	.17*	.08	-.16*	-.11	-.03	-.16*	0.51	0.50
Mixed (13)	-.18*	-.34**	-.20**	-.02	.19**	-.16*	.22**	0.19	0.39
For-profit (14)	-.01	.11	.08	.20**	-.04	.17*	-.01	0.30	0.46

CE_13 Voting in a student election = (4); CE_17 Hours per week of volunteering = (5); CE_33 Participating in protests or demonstrations = (6); and CE_83 Discussion of politics with family members = (7). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Table continued on next page.

Table 4. Correlations Matrix of Key Study Variable and Descriptive Statistics (continued)

Measures	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	*M*	*SD*
Credential (1)								1.75	1.33
Enrollment (2)								2.00	0.62
Salary (3)								2.40	1.66
CE_13 (4)								1.98	0.73
CE_17 (5)								1.32	1.36
CE_33 (6)								2.09	0.68
CE_83 (7)								1.56	0.62
DQ_Blue (8)	1.00							2.53	0.55
ER_Orange (9)	.48**	1.00						2.63	0.51
GT_Yellow (10)	.25**	.29**	1.00					1.87	0.35
Individual (11)	.49**	.89**	.58**	1.00				2.39	0.36
Public (12)	.03	.08	.15*	.11	1.00			0.51	0.50
Mixed (13)	.19**	.14*	-.01	.10	-.50**	1.00		0.19	0.39
For-profit (14)	-.19**	-.21**	-.15*	-.20**	-.67**	-.31**	1.00	0.30	0.46

CE_13 Voting in a student election = (4); CE_17 Hours per week of volunteering = (5); CE_33 Participating in protests or demonstrations = (6); and CE_83 Discussion of politics with family members = (7). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Two types of item-scoring convention were used for the dependent civic engagement variables. For example, a continuous scale was used to measure voting in student elections, participating in protests and demonstrations, and discussing politics with family members (Table 5). Survey respondents were asked to select their levels of civic engagement, choosing 1 = frequently, 2 = occasionally, or 3 = not at all. The number of volunteer hours worked used

a categorical scale ranging from 1 = less than 1 hour per week to 8 = over 20 hours per week.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Key Civic Engagement (CE) Study Variables

					95% CI	
CE Variable	University Type	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Voting in Student Elections	Public	104	1.87	.70	1.73	2.00
	Mixed	38	1.95	.73	1.71	2.19
	For-Profit	60	2.20	.73	2.01	2.39
	Total	202	1.98	.73	1.88	2.08
Community Volunteer Hours	Public	104	1.17	1.15	.95	1.40
	Mixed	38	1.87	1.85	1.26	2.48
	For-Profit	60	1.23	1.28	.90	1.56
	Total	202	1.32	1.36	1.13	1.51
Protests & Demonstration Participation	Public	104	2.08	.73	1.93	2.22
	Mixed	38	1.87	.58	1.68	2.06
	For-Profit	60	2.27	.61	2.11	2.42
	Total	202	2.09	.68	2.00	2.19
Discussing Politics with Family Members	Public	104	1.46	.57	1.35	1.57
	Mixed	38	1.84	.59	1.65	2.04
	For-Profit	60	1.55	.67	1.38	1.72
	Total	202	1.56	.62	1.47	1.65

The survey items were also structured to capture the memetic SDT worldview thinking of respondents, using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree for each color-coded vMEME construct. A total of 90 survey items were used to capture the six SDT ^{v}MEME worldview constructs. Each of the six color-coded worldviews (red, blue, orange, green, yellow, and turquoise) used in this study had 15 associated survey items. Interrater reliability tests in SPSS yielded coefficient alphas ranging from .70 to .87 for the color-coded worldview constructs that led to the creation of six aggregated vMEME variables for use in the statistical analysis. The aggregated SDT color-coded worldview constructs were used for ANOVA testing of the three types of universities (i.e., public, for-profit, and mixed). This item is an example

of one single Likert-type survey item used to specifically identify the SDT memetic GT_Yellow worldview thinking:

> 23. Too many rules and regulations stifle creativity and innovation.
>
> 1 2 3 4
>
> Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

Findings

Research Question 1 asked in what ways Chilean universities are committed to civic engagement education and practice. The administrator from the public university seemed to interpret civic engagement as volunteerism. However, the for-profit university administrator appeared to describe his view of civic engagement as a type of non-research-based service-learning *(Jacoby, 2017)* intended to enhance students' professional marketability and skills development. The researcher found that neither the public nor private for-profit universities in Phase 1 of the study had operationalized any formal civic engagement curriculum as part of their university mission.

Question 2 sought to identify the prevailing SDT worldviews of the graduate students by university type. In Phase 1 the graduate student focus groups at the for-profit university showed a greater depth of categorical clustering of higher order thinking (e.g., F/S Green and G/T Yellow ^{v}MEMEs). The public university focus group members displayed clustering around the lower order D/Q Blue and E/R Orange vMEME SDT worldview thinking (see Table 3).

Quantitative findings from the survey sample in Phase 2 showed that statistically the subjects at the traditional public universities rejected the D/Q Blue ^{v}MEME aggregate thinking and showed more acceptance of the E/R Orange ^{v}MEME aggregated worldviews, reflecting an attention to materialistic and manipulative competition (see Figure 2 and Table 3). Survey respondents from the TPUs were unsatisfied with the obedience-oriented and rules-following expectations of the D/Q Blue worldview thinking system and were drawn toward the E/R Orange thinking that supported nonconforming protest and demonstration behaviors. These findings indicated the presence of a dynamic-level change among TPU respondents that appeared as an upward movement (with this sample) on the spiral.

The survey respondents who represented for-profit universities continued to show statistically greater orientation toward the higher order GT_Yellow worldview thinking ($p \leq .05$, M=1.79) than the subjects at the public (TPU) and mixed not-for-profit universities. Statistically, the respondents in this sample who were from the for-profit universities were more individualistic (p= .01, M=2.28) than those respondents at the public (p= .03, M= 2.43) and mixed not-for-profit (p=.04, M= 2.46) universities. This finding suggests the existence of an environmental influence and mixed-methods complementarity *(Greene, 2008)* obtained from the analysis and interpretation of Phases 1 and 2 data.

Research Question 3 asked about the relationship between the personal characteristics of graduate students and their civic engagement outcomes. The multiple regression analysis (Table 6) showed that the SDT worldview thinking associated with DQ_Blue, ER_Orange, GT_Yellow, and the independent variable of Salary (defined as annual family income) were the most influential predictors of civic engagement *protest and demonstration behaviors*. The mean annual family incomes were highest among the respondents at the PFPUs (M = 2.60) and lowest among those at the mixed university (M = 1.71). The subjects at the mixed university also showed the highest mean average weekly volunteer hours (M = 1.87, β=0.19,p< .01). Multiple regression analysis found that as family incomes increased, the civic engagement protest and demonstration behaviors decreased.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis of CE_33 Protesting and Demonstrations

	Model 1 *B* Unstd.	Model 1 *B* Std.	95% CI	Model 4 *B* Unstd.	Model 4 *B* Std.	95% CI
Constant	3.088**		[2.67, 3.51]	2.760**		[2.14, 3.38]
DQ_Blue	-0.394**	-.32**	[-0.56, -0.23]	-0.362**	0.294**	[-0.55, -0.18]
Salary				0.067*	0.162*	[0.13, 0.12]
GT_Yellow				0.351**	0.182**	[0.09, 0.61]
ER_Orange				-0.215*	-0.161*	[-0.42, -0.01]
R^2	.10			0.17		
F	22.71**			9.99**		

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01.

Research Question 4 was answered using the key civic engagement dependent variables of *voting in student election*s (CE_13), *hours of volunteering per week* (CE_17), and *discussing politics*

with family members (CE_83). The ANOVA test, along with the construction of a two-way categorical table, helped to highlight the relationship between institutional type and these three civic engagement variables. Voting in student elections (CE_13) had a negative regression slope and was most influenced by public university attendance (M=1.87). Performing volunteer hours was highest at the mixed university (M=1.87), and discussing politics with family was lowest among those in the sample from the mixed university (M=1.84). Based on the stepwise multiple regression analysis, the voting frequency was predicted by the volunteers in the survey sample who were from the traditional public universities (β= -.163, p<.01). In summary, findings showed that the not-for-profit universities were the most influential predictors of the civic engagement outcomes when compared with the private for-profit universities.

Discussion

Examining the evolution of civic engagement of graduate students in Chile, particularly in the context of for-profit higher education, is an insightful approach toward the identification of commonly accepted frameworks and epistemology historically used to define the phenomenon more broadly. Results from this study serve to assist researchers that seek to compare how the civic engagement origins of higher education embedded in the American university experience *(Hartley, 2011; Hartman, 2008)* might be realized on an international scale. There exists no universally accepted definition or model of civic engagement in higher education. In this research, civic engagement was defined as *maintaining interest and action in one's world as evidenced by active participation in both civic and political matters within one's community, ranging from the local to international domains (Brown, 2016)*. The research found that there were no formal or operationalized institutional civic engagement plans *(Sandmann, Thornton, & Jaeger, 2009)* at either the for-profit or public universities in Chile. Although several of the graduate students in the focus groups described themselves as being personally civically engaged—as a function of their graduate studies and careers—the university administrators in this research identified no explicit documents of civic engagement mission or curriculum in place at their institutions.

The nation of Chile has been identified as a very collectivist culture *(Heine & Raineri, 2009; Hofstede, 1983)*, yet in this survey sample, the prevailing SDT vMEME thinking among the research volunteers was a combination of both collectivist and individualist

worldview orientations (e.g., DQ_Blue, ER_Orange, FS_Green, and GT_Yellow) whose presence differed based on university type. The culture of the private for-profit university (PFPU) environment yielded greater outcomes of higher order individualistic thinking themata (per the SDT framework) as represented by the dominance of the GT_Yellow ^{v}MEME worldviews in the study sample. The researcher further concludes that the correlation of higher order thinking to higher annual family income—as reflected among the PFPU volunteers—was an important research finding connecting the two variables. The income data led the researcher to surmise that increased socioeconomic investments allowed for greater cultural opportunities and experiential learning, which the literature shows contributes to higher order cognitive capacities development *(Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010)*.

Limitations

The researcher considered the small size of the focus group samples a limitation in this study. An optimal standard would be participation of at least five members in focus group sessions *(Patton, 2015)*. As a result, establishment of comparative differences in the graduate student civic engagement outcomes at the PFPU and TPU in Phase 1 is tenuous. Although microanalysis of subtle differences is, in fact, a limitation often cited in connection with the use of focus groups *(Patton, 2015)*, the prolonged 2-year observation and ethnographic immersion of the researcher within the Chilean context served to mitigate that particular limitation.

Implications of the Study

This research offers a new theoretical framework for the assessment of civic engagement in connection to adult developmental cognition, worldview thinking, and the problem-solving capacity *(Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Taylor, 2006)* that influences postgraduates in higher education. This study suggests that an explicit integration of civic engagement learning into the teaching and research mission of higher education could serve to enhance university community-engaged scholarship *(Holland, 2009)*. By dissecting the complex behaviors and cultural worldviews of student activists and our institutions of higher education, university leaders can establish the motivational benchmarks needed in the production of democratically engaged graduates *(Fretz, Cutforth, Nicotera, & Thompson, 2009)*. Use of the SDT framework as a guide also has the potential to improve teacher training and student leadership development *(Lott,*

2013; Whitley & Yoder, 2015) through the identification of culturally adaptive learning themes based on how adults view and negotiate a complex world. In such instances, the SDT framework would serve as an evaluation or assessment tool for designing outreach that privileges the spirit of reciprocity in the production of engaged scholarship.

Contribution to the Literature

Furco *(2010)* discussed how the civic purpose of higher education was implicit in the mission statement of universities in the United States. This research expands his analysis by offering a broader international context from which to evaluate civic engagement in higher education. Moreover, it allows us to consider the emergent role of private for-profit universities and the long-term impacts these environments might have on the civic engagement outcomes of their graduate student populations.

This study found that there is currently no such implicit attention to civic engagement among private for-profit universities in this sample. Although the Chilean university administrators expressed their own value for a civic engagement curriculum as a form of student development, such an approach at the private for-profit universities would be subordinate to their goals of workforce preparation and professional competitiveness for their graduate students *(Morey, 2004)*. The traditional public university administrator viewed civic engagement learning as a valuable approach to student development as well but indicated that it would need to be a voluntary academic undertaking made in coordination between a student and faculty member. The TPU university administrator did not support a *compulsory* requirement for civic engagement curriculum, holding that the *social mobility* of its students and graduates was tantamount to the institutional mission. Nevertheless, both administrators were interested in learning more about the American university models for operationalizing civic engagement in higher education.

Conclusion

Civic engagement concepts in Chilean higher education were not viewed by administrators in this study as being under the auspices of a community engagement umbrella *(Fitzgerald et al., 2016)* as seen in the United States. The civic engagement definition in this research was informed by the traditions of Ernest Boyer *(1996/2016)*, who viewed civic engagement in higher education as

explicitly intentional and expressed through service and moral-values-based learning *(Pike, Bringle, & Hatcher, 2014)* made integral to university study. This research viewed modern student political activism as an outcome of civic engagement among postgraduates. It connected variables of civic engagement to the personal characteristics of postgraduates and their SDT memetic worldviews. More comparative research is needed in order to determine if the model of entrepreneurial higher education stands in opposition to the implicit expectation that learning in public higher education should lead a nation in the production of globally conscious and democratically engaged citizens among its graduates *(Fitzgerald et al., 2016)*.

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