

Exploring Democracy Beyond the State: Students' Union Democracy in Chilean Colleges

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Abstract

Political scientists have studied state democracy for decades using sophisticated methods for conceptualization and measurement to evaluate the explanatory power of various theories. They have paid little attention, however, to democracy in nonstate political systems. This paper fills this gap by characterizing democracy in college student government and investigating the factors affecting the levels of students' union democracy (SUD) in Chilean colleges. Utilizing concepts from political science and sociology, the study identifies different dimensions of SUD with data from 162 campuses in 2018. The dimensions are aggregated to build an index of democracy for students' unions. Although the majority of Chilean university students attended colleges with democratic unions, our findings reveal a deficit in democratic student representation in most institutions. The article also draws from the comparative politics, trade union democracy, and higher education literatures to explore the factors that vary by institution that could explain differences in levels of SUD. Ordered logistic regression analyses suggest that SUD is associated with institutional quality, membership in inter-university organizations, and student body size and socioeconomic makeup. The results increase our understanding of the features, status, and correlates of democracy beyond the state.

Keywords: democracy; higher education governance; student politics; higher education policy; Chile

Resumen. *Explorando la democracia más allá del estado: la democracia en federaciones universitarias en Chile*

Durante décadas, los politólogos han estudiado la democracia estatal, utilizando métodos sofisticados de conceptualización y medición para evaluar el poder explicativo de varias teorías. Sin embargo, han prestado poca atención a la democracia en sistemas políticos no estatales. Este artículo llena este vacío caracterizando la democracia en el gobierno estudiantil universitario e investigando los factores que afectan los niveles de democracia en federaciones universitarias (DFU). Utilizando conceptos de ciencia política y sociología, el estudio identifica diferentes dimensiones de la DFU con datos de 162 campus en 2018. Las dimensiones se agregan para construir un índice de democracia para las federaciones estudiantiles. Aunque la mayoría de los estudiantes chilenos asistieron a universidades con federaciones democráticas, nuestros hallazgos revelan un déficit en la representación estudiantil democrática en la mayor parte de las instituciones. El artículo también se basa en las literaturas de política comparada, democracia sindical y educación superior para explorar factores que varían por institución que explicarían diferencias en los niveles de DFU. Los análisis de regresión logística ordenada sugieren que la DFU se asocia con la calidad institucional, la membresía en organizaciones interuniversitarias y el tamaño y composición socioeconómica del estudiantado. Los resultados aumentan nuestra comprensión de las características, estado y correlaciones de la democracia más allá del estado.

Palabras clave: democracia; gobernanza de educación superior; política estudiantil; políticas de educación superior; Chile

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1. Introduction

Universities are institutions for academic, social, and political learning where students, faculty, and staff often select representatives through elections. Student union elections are particularly important because they allow the practice of “small scale democracy” (Martín Cortés, 2007: 120). However, the state of student's union democracy (SUD) in Chile's college student federations (*federaciones estudiantiles universitarias*), which are campus-wide students' unions, seems discouraging, with declining turnout and failure to meet minimum voting thresholds for representative renewal in some colleges. (Ramírez, 2017). Periodic reports of electoral irregularities further exacerbate the situation (Diario UChile, 2014; El Dínamo, 2018).

Exploring SUD is important for at least three reasons. First, because higher education has important effects on political identities, attitudes, and behavior (McClintock and Turner 1962; Yang and Hoskins 2020). As Barnhardt et al. (2015: 640) argue, “students’ perceptions of the campus climate manifest as a profound resource for civic skill building and for cultivating commitments that are foundational for motivating a lifetime of prosocial civic behaviors.” Second, a large proportion of global political and party elites are college-educated (Gerring et al., 2019a). Lastly, student organizations have recently driven global social mobilizations with substantial impacts (Ancelovici and Guzmán-Concha, 2019; Ibrahim, 2011; Ortmann, 2015; Vommaro, 2013) can, therefore, influence social movements and their outcomes, and the political behavior of both citizens and elites.

Examining SUD fills a gap in democracy research. Although Dahl (1971: 12) considers the lack of focus on social organizations in democratization studies to be a “grave omission,” subsequent research rarely extends beyond subnational units (Gervasoni, 2010; Gibson, 2005; Posner, 2003) and political parties (Cross and Katz, 2013; Martínez-Hernández and Olucha Sánchez, 2018). Meanwhile, some sociological studies explore democracy in trade unions (Levi et al., 2009; Lipset et al., 1977) and social movements (Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2015; della Porta, 2005) but systematic analyses of democracy in college student organizations are absent. SUD deserves more attention since student governments are analytically distinct from student movements – stable organizations are the backbone of cycles of contention (McAdam, 1999).

This article seeks to characterize democracy in college student government and investigate the factors impacting different levels of SUD. Based on a mostly “procedural minimal” (Dahl, 1971) definition of democracy, it uses concepts from political science and sociology, originally developed for state and trade union democracy to identify SUD dimensions and related variables. Data from 162 Chilean college campuses in 2018 reveals a deficit in democratic student representation, with only a few showing high levels of competitive student politics.

We also delve into potential factors that may account for variations in SUD. By integrating insights from comparative politics, union democracy, and higher education studies, we identify differences in Chilean universities that could be associated with differences in SUD. Given the substantial institutional diversity of the country’s higher education system (Bernasconi, 2006), these institutional factors likely wield significant influence over student politics (Fleet and Guzmán-Concha, 2017), thereby affecting the state of SUD. Regression analyses show significant and robust associations between SUD and membership in the Confederation of Chilean Students (*Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile*, CONFECH), institutional accreditation, college size, and the socioeconomic composition of the student population.

The article is structured as follows. An overview of the literature on state and student democracy is provided, followed by an explanation of SUD measurement via an index score. Hypotheses derived from democracy literature

are then presented in relation to potential factors influencing SUD. These hypotheses are tested using binary and ordered logistic regressions, with results illustrated by adjusted values. The final section underscores the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

2. Studying democracy in student governments

Chilean national and college politics are closely linked due to several factors. The country has high higher education access, with enrollment slightly above the OECD average (OECD, 2021: 155). Higher education plays a significant role in political elite socialization, with around 94% of national leaders having attended college (Gerring et al., 2019b). This education affects mass and elite political behavior, as many Chileans form political attitudes and engage in politics in college, with numerous politicians starting their careers in college politics (Jofré Rodríguez, 2021: 241; Lobos, 2014; Martínez et al., 2012) and accumulating political capital during their time as student representatives (González Bustamante, 2013).

Chile's student movement, based on the federations forming CONFECH (Bidegain, 2020: 362–64), has notably impacted the country's politics and policies in the past decade (Bidegain and Maillot, 2021; Donoso et al., 2023; Guzmán and Álvarez Vandeputte, 2022; Palacios-Valladares and Ondetti, 2018). The 2011 student movement in Chile originated as a response to the high cost and inequity in the country's education system and demanded free, quality education. It was primarily led by student organizations, which were instrumental in mobilizing the masses of newly incorporated students and coordinating nationwide protests (Bellei et al., 2014). Similarly, in 2018, the feminist movement in Chile emerged from universities, with student organizations playing a crucial role (Reyes-Housholder and Roque, 2019). The movement demanded an end to gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination within higher education and beyond, demonstrating the significant influence student organizations hold in societal change. The 2021 presidential election exemplified the significance of student politics, with former University of Chile Student Federation president Gabriel Boric defeating right-wing politician José Antonio Kast, a previous candidate for the presidency of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile Student Federation (Minay, 2021). Boric's campaign notably advocated for the cancellation of college student debt (Turkewitz et al., 2021).

Student politics and SUD in Chile face issues such as periodic accusations of electoral fraud, lack of competition, low turnout, and voter disaffection (Menaes, 2017; Ramírez, 2017; Vargas, 2013). These challenges may extend beyond campuses, as youth organization participation and interaction quality correlate with wider political efficacy among Chilean college students (Martínez et al., 2017). Therefore, it is justified to analyze SUD and its potential correlates in light of the country's democratic representation crisis (Castiglioni and Rovira, 2016).

Current research on democracy in student organizations is lacking. Most studies concentrate on student representation in institutional decision-making, such as the co-government model prevalent in Latin American public universities where students, faculty, staff, and alumni contribute to governance (Brunner, 2011; Kandel, 2010; Naishtat and Toer, 2005). Some studies explore the impact of student representation on higher education governance (Klemenčič, 2012), political engagement (Nureña, 2016), and student mobilization (Dargent and Chávez, 2019: 151–152).

Most student politics research focuses on political elite formation in colleges (Feeney et al., 2017; Wu, 2017), college-level electoral and party politics (Carrasco, 2010; Weinberg and Walker, 1969), and student mobilization (Altbach, 2006; Disi Pavlic, 2020). Fewer studies examine organizational dynamics, typically employing case study designs (Chávez, 2016; Klemenčič, 2014). Notably, a literature review across political science, sociology, and higher education reveals no quantitative analyses of democracy in student organizations.

3. Measuring Student's Union Democracy

This study follows the large-sample tradition of democratization research (Coppedge, 2012) and develops a SUD index using 2018 data from Chilean universities. The selected institutions meet two criteria: recognition by the National Education Council (*Consejo Nacional de Educación, CNED*) – the public organization responsible for quality assurance and collecting information on all education levels – to ensure data availability at the campus level (CNED 2019), and having more than 100 enrolled students in 2018. This process resulted in a sample of 162 campuses from 56 out of 60 institutions, acknowledging that SUD can vary across federations from the same university but in different campuses (Bidegain, 2020: 362).¹

The SUD index, which is primarily based on the procedural minimum definition of democracy,² emphasizes elections. It includes six “effect indicators” (Bollen and Lennox 1991): whether student elections occurred in 2018; electoral integrity; inclusiveness; competitiveness; turnout; and history of elections before 2018. This data was sourced from official union websites and social media. While providing a limited view of SUD, these indicators reflect changes in the underlying democracy level, following the effect indicators logic (Gervasoni 2010: 315).

1. For example, Santo Tomás and INACAP Universities had thirteen and 21 campuses in different cities in 2018, respectively. The only exception identified was the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (*Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, PUC*), where a single federation includes students from the main *sede* (seat of the university) in Santiago and the Villarrica Campus.
2. This definition is present in the literature on state (Dahl, 1971) and trade union democracy (Lipset et al., 1977).

The first SUD index component indicates whether a campus held elections for the student federation's executive board (*mesa ejecutiva*) in 2018.³ This is a prerequisite for democracy as no valid federation in 2018 negates the other indicators of democracy in 2018. Campuses may fail this condition if colleges ban federations, if student representatives are appointed by university authorities, or if elections were not held in 2018 despite a union having been elected in previous years.

The second SUD index indicator gauges whether the 2018 elections adhered to predetermined dates and mechanisms, thus reflecting a basic level of vertical accountability vital to procedural democracy (O'Donnell, 1994). Unions fail this if election dates are irregularly set by incumbents or if an electoral ticket is disqualified during campaigning.

The inclusiveness indicator, crucial for polyarchy (Dahl, 1971), measures the percentage of enfranchised students, determined by comparing the 2018 electoral rolls and undergraduate enrollments (according to CNED data). Assuming minor discrepancies, a campus is deemed inclusive if over 95% of the student body is enfranchised, considering the median among campuses holding elections is 94.5%.⁴

The competitiveness indicator, central to fair elections (Altman and Pérez-Liñán, 2002; Gervasoni, 2010; Griffin, 2006), is based on the winning ticket's vote share. High vote shares for winning candidates may suggest an unequal playing field and reduced democracy. Data is obtained from official union records, social media, and occasionally national news. Elections with winning tickets receiving less than 60% of the vote are considered competitive.

Turnout, the percentage of students participating in federation elections, is an important indicator of democracy often used in measures of substantive democracy (Altman and Pérez-Liñán, 2002; Bühlmann et al., 2012).⁵ Student turnout is generally low: the highest recorded turnout was 60.2% (PUC) and the lowest was 12% (Diego Portales University and University of Concepción); the median was 26%. Turnout was deemed high when at least 25% of students participated.

The final indicator, whether a campus held past elections, is important due to its correlation with regime stability (Altman and Pérez-Liñán, 2002; Martínez, 2015), and the challenges in gathering data from previous years due to the lack of official records and frequent updates to federation websites and social media. To construct this indicator, we searched in reverse chronological order for past elections on media and institutional websites for each of the *sedes* in our sample that did not elect a new federation election in 2018. A salient

3. By statute, executive boards are renewed through elections on a yearly basis.

4. In very few cases, this percentage exceeds 100% because the federations allow graduate students to vote.

5. High turnout is nevertheless a necessary condition for vertical accountability (Morlino, 2004: 14–15).

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha of the students' union democracy index

Indicator	Value	N	%	α if indicator is removed
Current union	No	103	63.58	0.7961
	Yes	59	36.42	
Electoral integrity	No	126	77.78	0.8189
	Yes	36	22.22	
Competitiveness (<60%)	No	138	85.19	0.836
	Yes	24	14.81	
Inclusiveness (>95%)	No	148	91.36	0.8583
	Yes	14	8.64	
Turnout (>25%)	No	141	87.04	0.8501
	Yes	21	12.96	
Elections before 2018	No	85	52.47	0.8302
	Yes	77	47.53	
α			0.8575	

Source: own elaboration.

example of this is the University of the Frontier. This public institution ceased hosting student federation elections in 2016 following its Electoral Commission's cancellation of that year's elections (TRICEL FEUFRO, 2016). This indicator helps distinguish colleges that did not hold elections in 2018 for various reasons from those that have never experienced competitive politics, which may be systematically different.

Assessing the validity of the SUD index is challenging due to the absence of other SUD measures and literature to evaluate its construct validity. However, the index indicators are based on literature on state-centered democracy. Its high Cronbach's alpha (0.86) as shown in Table 1, along with the indicators' descriptive statistics, indicates a strong internal consistency, implying the index effectively measures an underlying concept of democracy.

The six indicators collectively form an additive SUD index. More infrequent original values are aggregated into five categories with more observations to enhance regression analyses. These categories share "family resemblances" (Collier and Mahon, 1993: 847–848), meaning that unions within higher categories, for instance, share components, even if they are not identical. Table 2 displays the index values and the corresponding SUD categories.

The first category, "Nondemocracy," includes colleges that have never held student government elections, comprising 52.5% of campuses in 2018.⁶ "Lapsed Democracies" (11.1% of campuses) elected unions previously but not in 2018, often due to insufficient turnout. "Electoral Democratic" unions

6. Table A1 in the Appendix shows the scores and categories of SUD for each college campus in the sample.

Table 2. Values and categories of student's union regimes

Index			Regime type		
Number of affirmative values in the indicators	N	%	Category	N	%
0	85	52.47	Nondemocracy	85	52.47
1	18	11.11	Lapsed Democracy	18	11.11
2	15	9.26	Electoral Democracy	25	15.43
3	10	6.17			
4	20	12.35	Flawed Democracy	20	12.35
5	9	5.56	Full Democracy	14	8.64
6	5	3.09			
Total	162	100	Total	162	100

Source: own elaboration.

(15.4% of campuses) meet one or two indicators, while “Flawed Democracies” (12.4% of campuses) meet three. “Full Democracies” (8.6% of campuses) meet four or five indicators. It worth mentioning that only five campuses achieved a full index score (six).

In addition to reporting the share of college campuses with different regime types, we emulate studies on country-wide democracy and also describe the proportions of the nationwide student population studying under different regimes “because democracy is rule by the people and it matters how many of them are concerned” (V-Dem Institute, 2019: 10). Although most campuses lacked democratic student unions, they represented less than 14% of the national undergraduate enrollment (Table 3). Conversely, about 23% of students attended institutions with electoral or flawed student democracies. Despite full democracies accounting for less than 9% of all campuses, over a quarter of undergraduates study in such institutions. Therefore, while there are fewer campuses with democratic student governments, more students attend institutions with democratic unions when considering enrollments.

Table 3. Undergraduate enrollments by regime category

Regime category	Student enrollments	
	N	%
Nondemocracy	90,054	13.51
Lapsed Democracy	121,782	18.27
Electoral Democracy	14,783	2.22
Flawed Democracy	135,183	20.28
Full Democracy	167,941	25.19
Total	666,566	100

Source: own elaboration.

4. Correlates of Student's Union Democracy

Chilean student unions display a significant variation in SUD types. While we do not aim to present a unified theory of SUD, we explore factors potentially explaining this variance. These factors, derived from higher education, trade union democracy,⁷ and state democracy studies, are selected based on data availability (Coppedge, 2012: 76). The variables identified underscore the importance of institutional diversity to explain differences in SUD. For example, in Latin America in general, the emergence of private institutions has been identified as a key factor shaping student politics (Levy, 1986, 1991). In the Chilean case, for instance, institutional diversification resulting from socioeconomic stratification and ideological differentiation has caused variation in student politicization and political participation (Fleet and Guzmán-Concha, 2017).

Socioeconomic development is a factor often linked to democracy. While Lipset (1959) suggested that economic development enhances participation and citizen control over politics, Przeworski and Limongi (1997) argued that it promotes democratic consolidation rather than democratization, and Tussell (2015: 195–196) found no significant association between GDP per capita and democratic quality. Meanwhile, trade union democracy is typically stronger when members are skilled, fostering involvement over passive, authoritarian organizations (Turner, 1962). Likewise, education is vital for union democracy, ensuring well-understood policies reflecting real-world conditions (Lévesque and Murray 2003: 16).

Chile's higher education system exhibits significant socioeconomic segmentation, with select universities predominantly serving higher-income students (Villalobos et al., 2020). An increased demand for higher education, mostly met by private institutions, has been facilitated by public policies offering scholarships, loans, and free tuition (Bernasconi, 2006; Espinoza and González, 2016). It has been suggested that higher-income individuals may possess more civic skills (Brady et al., 1995) and a stronger pro-democracy stance (Carlin, 2006), leading us to an expected variance in regime type based on the socioeconomic composition of the student body.

The socioeconomic level of colleges are assessed through the 2018 social vulnerability rate, which represents the percentage of students labeled as a “priority” for at least one year (Laval, 2019) by the Chilean Ministry of Education (*Ministerio de Educación*, MINEDUC) due to socioeconomic circumstances potentially impacting their educational trajectories (MINEDUC, n.d.). This vulnerability rate varies widely, from 4% at the University of the Andes to over 60% at Temuco Catholic University and the University of Aysén.

7. Although they operate under different occupational, institutional, and legal frameworks, both student's and trade unions are formal organizations (unlike social movements) that represent their constituents' interests operating under a usually asymmetrical relationship with company or university management (unlike political parties).

Hypothesis 1: Lower levels of social vulnerability are associated with higher levels of SUD

Demographics, particularly population size, are significant. Research indicates a negative correlation between large population size and democracy (Dahl and Tufte, 1973; Diamond, 1999: 117–119; Lijphart and Crepaz, 1991). In higher education, larger enrollments negatively affect student retention and commitment (Anderson, 1985; Feldman and Newcomb, 1969). Conversely, smaller institutions often have more homogeneous student bodies, fostering integration (Anderson, 1985: 323). This aligns with the experience of trade union democracy, where larger organizations can become bureaucratized, eventually falling prey to the iron law of oligarchy (Lipset et al., 1977), and increased divergence of interests (Offe and Wiesenthal, 1985). Indeed, recent works on trade union democracy emphasize “the challenge of balancing solidarity and diversity with regard to heterogeneous workers’ interests” (Marino et al., 2019: 114). Campus-level enrollment (CNED, 2019) in Chile ranges from a high of 32,446 at the University of Chile to a low of 86 at La República University (Talca Campus).

Hypothesis 2: Larger college size is associated with lower levels of SUD

Recent studies have shown that democratic contagion and diffusion across states can be influenced by membership in international organizations (IOs), which can promote pro-democracy information, attitudes, and cooperation (Brinks and Coppedge, 2006; Pevehouse, 2005; Torfason and Ingram, 2010). Similarly, CONFECH, as the most influential student organization in Chile, plays a role that can be considered analogous to certain IOs in student politics, with several inter-university political groups vying for influence (Bidegain, 2020). Previously restricted to institutions belonging to the Council of Rectors in Chilean Universities (*Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas*, CRUCH), since 2011 CONFECH has begun to incorporate new private universities. To be included in CONFECH, new federations must demonstrate their democratic credentials through the establishment of union statutes and elections (Muñoz, 2013: 58–59). Thus, this explanation differs from the rest, as it goes beyond “domestic” accounts of SUD.

The bivariate association between CONFECH membership and elected federations in 2018 is positive and statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 85.7683$, $p < 0.001$), but it is not perfect. For instance, the replacement of democratically elected federations by exceptional means does not result in suspension from CONFECH (Bidegain, 2020: 367). Conversely, as of 2018, there were several private universities with elected federations that had not joined CONFECH.

Hypothesis 3: Union membership in CONFECH is associated with higher levels of SUD

The flourishing of SUD may also be closely tied to college authorities respecting student political autonomy, reflecting the idea that strong democratic institutions are characterized by civilian authorities not being subordinated

to other actors (Levine and Molina, 2007). This dovetails with the concept of diminished subtypes of democracy (Collier and Levitsky, 1997), such as “protected” democracies (Loveman, 1994), where certain unelected actors hold disproportionate power, suggesting reduced sovereignty.

We posit that public university federations are likely to exhibit higher sovereignty, thereby fostering SUD. Commercially-oriented private universities often inhibit student organization and political participation, both in Chile and across Latin America (Disi Pavlic, 2020: 192; Fleet and Guzmán-Concha, 2017).⁸ Some even interfere in elections to favor student sympathizers (Monteiro et al., 2017: 146). Generally, private institutions treat students as paying customers (Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett, 2013: 216), potentially hindering the formation of a collective identity, while in the case of trade unions, effective democracy “requires a sense of collective identity among the membership – maintaining a ‘demos’ within the union constituency” (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2019: 104). Conversely, public universities adhere to a tradition of collegial and democratic governance, recognizing student participation (Brunner, 2011: 151–152). Their students reportedly maintain a more committed approach to elections (Muñoz, 2013: 59) suggesting public federations may embody a “democratic tradition” (Martínez, 2015), linked with democratic quality (Altman and Pérez-Liñán, 2002).

Hypothesis 4: Public university status is associated with higher levels of SUD

Institutional capacity may also explain capacity differences in SUD. Democratic regimes are higher-quality when the national bureaucracy is efficient (Bühlmann et al., 2012: 525), resonating with Mazza's (2010) claim that high-quality democracies have better outcomes because decision-making is based on universal standards like merit and need; meanwhile, patrimonialist regimes mismanage the state by following particularistic logics such as nepotism and clientelism.

Institutional accreditation, an indicator of higher education capacity, significantly impacts university operation and student governance. Until 2018, the National Accreditation Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Acreditación*, CNA) evaluated Chilean universities across five domains: institutional management, undergraduate education, graduate education, research, and outreach. Accreditation, which is central to quality assurance, determines the alloca-

8. The distinction between public and private universities may be too rough, however, to account for the effect of university officials and policies on student government. Indeed, Fleet and Guzmán-Concha (2017) offer a five-fold typology of higher education institutions in the country that cuts across the public/private divide that includes “public-oriented projects (controlled by progressive Catholic movements – Jesuits and Salesians – academic organisations and NGOs)” (Fleet and Guzmán-Concha, 2017: 167). However, the bulk of the literature on the relationship between institutional type and student politics underscores the demobilizing effect of private ownership (Brunner, 1986; Levy, 1986, 1991), which is what this work evaluates.

tion of resources like free tuition and state-backed loans, and is linked to institutional planning to improve management (Fleet et al., 2014: 451). This process also impacts university politics outcomes such as the tenure of university presidents (Martínez and Arellano, 2021). Although it does not directly measure student governance, accreditation indicates a university's formalization and institutionalization. It can motivate college authorities to establish formal relationships with democratically-elected student unions to facilitate decision-making, as seen in Norway (Michelsen and Stensaker, 2011: 227). The CNA accreditation spanned from zero (unaccredited) to seven years (maximum accreditation).⁹

Hypothesis 5: Additional years of institutional accreditation are associated with higher levels of SUD

Geographical considerations could also shape SUD. The notion of “brown areas” posited by O’Donnell (1993), which denotes territories with inconsistent or weak state control and institutional presence, could be relevant in interpreting differences in student democracy. Applying this concept to the college environment, student unions in “blue areas” might display higher institutionalization, well-established procedures, and stronger adherence to democratic norms. Conversely, student unions in “brown areas” could exhibit less formal institutional procedures and varying degrees of democratic practice.

In the context of Chile, the distinction between Santiago and the rest of the country plays a major role in understanding the exercise of local authority in Santiago’s Metropolitan Region, which tends to exhibit, for instance, less clientelism (Belmar and Morales, 2020: 584). This demarcation is also applicable to higher education politics. For example, university presidents in the Metropolitan Region generally serve shorter tenures compared to their counterparts in other parts of the country (Martínez and Arellano, 2021: 553).

Hypothesis 6: Being located in the Metropolitan Region is associated with higher levels of SUD

In sum, student federations are hypothesized to reach higher levels of democracy in the SUD categories when their colleges are institutionally accredited for more years, public, members of CONFECH, smaller, have a lower percentage of socially vulnerable students, and are in the country’s capital region.¹⁰

9. The minimum number of years of accreditation is two, so universities cannot be accredited for one year.

10. The values of the independent variables in each campus are available in Table A2 in the Appendix.

5. Results

We use different model specifications to assess the effect of the explanatory variables on SUD.¹¹ The first model (I) uses a binary logistic regression to analyze the probability of being at least a Lapsed Democracy. Model II uses an ordered logistic model with the full range of the SUD index. As a robustness check, model III uses the same dependent variable as the previous model but adds random intercepts at the university level, since some covariates vary by campus and others by university. Thus, Model I analyzes whether a campus has had a minimum level of SUD at some point, while models II and III gauge the democratic quality of student federations in 2018. The results of the three regressions are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Binary and ordered logistic regressions of student union regimes

	I	II	III
Accreditation (years)	2.041*** (0.558)	1.699*** (0.255)	1.845*** (0.410)
Private institution	3.585 (2.929)	1.170 (0.482)	1.701 (0.986)
CONFECH membership	26.62*** (22.96)	15.86*** (8.301)	35.42*** (26.44)
Number of students (thousands)	1.067 (0.0883)	1.125** (0.0598)	1.100 (0.0719)
Vulnerability rate	0.190 (0.459)	0.0394** (0.0602)	0.0351* (0.0693)
Metropolitan Region	0.709 (0.521)	0.810 (0.384)	0.673 (0.367)
Constant/cut1	0.00726*** (0.00984)	7.505*** (5.613)	
cut2		24.61*** (18.47)	
cut3		121.8*** (99.35)	
cut4		659.3*** (558.2)	
Observations	162	162	162
Number of universities (random effects)	-	-	65
Pseudo R ²	0.5454	0.3397	-

Odds ratios reported instead of coefficients. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Source: own elaboration.

11. Data and replication files are available in the article's electronic supplementary materials. The statistical analyses were carried out using STATA 17 (StataCorp, 2021).

Several covariates are significantly correlated with SUD in the models. In Model I, each additional year of accreditation is associated with an increase in the odds of electing a union of about 104%. The correlation in the ordinal variable is also large: each additional year is associated with an increase in the odds of reaching a full democracy of about 70% and 85% in Models II and III, respectively. Institutional quality and capacity may have, therefore, a major effect on SUD, confirming Hypothesis 5.

CONFECH membership also has the expected association with SUD. In Model I, the odds of having an elected federation in 2018 for CONFECH members are roughly 27 times that of nonmembers. In Models II and III, CONFECH membership is associated with an increase in the odds of being a full democracy of about 141% and 344%, respectively. These significant, positive, and sizable correlations support Hypothesis 3.

The associations with the rest of the variables are not significant or are inconsistent across the models. In Model II, increasing the vulnerability rate by one percentage point is associated with a 96% decrease in the odds of having a Full Democracy (supporting Hypothesis 1); the correlation is not significant in the other two models, however. Hypothesis 2 is refuted: in Model II, every additional thousand students is associated with an increase in the odds of having a full democracy of almost 13%. This correlation is positive but not significant in Model III. The correlations with type of ownership (public versus private) and geography (Metropolitan Region versus the rest) are not significant, thus rebutting Hypotheses 4 and 6.

To further make sure that the results are not sensitive to model specifications, the regime category variable is regressed using a general ordered logistic regression (Williams, 2016). This model is useful when the parallel regression assumption needs to be relaxed for at least one independent variable. Indeed, the results show that, although the overall model does not violate the assumption, the CONFECH, vulnerability, and Metropolitan Region variables do. Table 5 shows the results of the model relaxing the assumption for these three variables. Each column is like a binary logistic regression: the first column compares nondemocracies with the rest of the categories; column 2 compares nondemocracies and lapsed democracies with democracies in 2018; column three compares the three lowest categories with the two most democratic ones; and, finally, column 4 compares the first four categories with full democracy.

This analysis confirms the robustness of the results in Model II of Table 4. Because they do not violate the proportional odds assumption, the correlations with institutional accreditation, type, and size are the same in every column. The direction, size, and significance level of these associations reflect those in Table 4.

The model's main insight, however, is that the associations between SUD and CONFECH membership, vulnerability, and geographic location depend on the level of SUD. The association with CONFECH is significant and positive across the columns but it is largest in column 2. These results (and those of Model I in Table 4) suggest, therefore, that CONFECH member-

Table 5. Generalized ordered logistic regression of students' union democracy

	1	2	3	4
Accreditation (years)	1.910*** (0.316)	1.910*** (0.316)	1.910*** (0.316)	1.910*** (0.316)
Private institution	1.365 (0.640)	1.365 (0.640)	1.365 (0.640)	1.365 (0.640)
CONFECH membership	3.078e+08*** (1.867e+08)	9.923*** (6.650)	6.120*** (3.630)	12.99** (14.60)
Number of students (thousands)	1.117* (0.0677)	1.117* (0.0677)	1.117* (0.0677)	1.117* (0.0677)
Vulnerability rate	0.000170*** (0.000421)	1.999 (5.312)	0.458 (0.899)	0.103 (0.282)
Metropolitan Region	1.297 (0.855)	1.127 (0.822)	0.241** (0.164)	1.094 (0.782)
Constant	0.329 (0.261)	0.00974*** (0.0103)	0.00611*** (0.00663)	0.000641*** (0.00104)
Pseudo R ²	0.4115			
Observations	162			

Odds ratios reported instead of coefficients. Robust standard errors in parenthesis. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Source: own elaboration.

ship may have a major effect on democratization, and a positive yet smaller effect on democratic quality. Meanwhile, the results suggest that the effect of vulnerability is circumscribed to democratization. The odds of having had a democracy at some point in history are negatively associated with higher vulnerability rates. Finally, the location of a campus in Santiago is negatively correlated with having an electoral or full democracy (versus a non- or lapsed democracy), indicating that being in the capital is associated with lower democratic quality.

Finally, adjusted values are used to illustrate the correlations with the four variables that are statistically significant in Tables 4 and 5.¹² Specifically, they are estimated at the extremes of observed values of vulnerability, institutional accreditation,¹³ CONFECH membership, and campus size.¹⁴ Figure 1 shows these predicted values for the extreme categories of SUD: nondemocracy and full democracy.

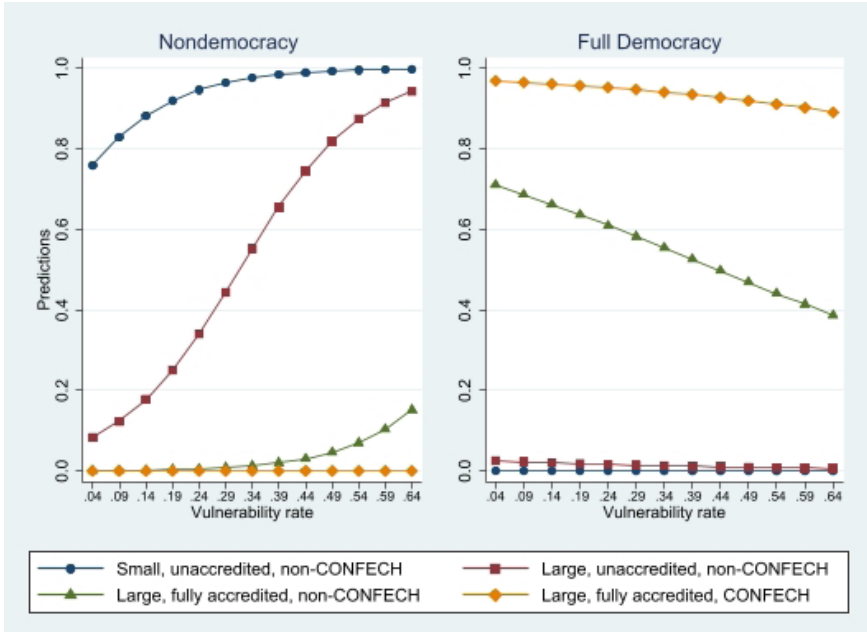
In general, the predicted probability of nondemocracy rises as the vulnerability rate increases; conversely, the probability of having a full SUD decreases when a higher percentage of the student body is socially vulnerable. The predicted probabilities of nondemocracy are very sensitive to college size

12. The rest of the variables are set at their means.

13. Zero (not accredited) and seven years (full accreditation).

14. One hundred and 320,000 students.

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of Nondemocracy and Full Democracy by institutional accreditation, campus size, and CONFECH membership



Source: own elaboration.

but larger student bodies do not increase the probability of full democracy (in the absence of other factors). In large colleges, institutional accreditation makes nondemocracy virtually impossible but in the highest level of vulnerability; the probability of full democracy with full accreditation in large colleges varies from 71% to 39% (without CONFECH membership) depending on the level of vulnerability. Finally, CONFECH membership (with other factors present) virtually ensures that a campus has a fully democratic student government.

6. Conclusion

This article explores some of the dimensions and correlates of students’ union democracy (SUD) by applying concepts and explanations from the literatures on trade unions, state democracy, and higher education. Using a procedural definition of democracy, an original dataset of SUD in Chilean student federations in 2018 is constructed based on six indicators: elections of student representatives, electoral integrity, competitiveness, inclusiveness, turnout, and elections in previous years. Regressions are also used to analyze the association with different explanatory factors: years of institutional accreditation, private or

public ownership, membership in the CONFECH inter-university student organization, campus size, and student social vulnerability.

A descriptive analysis shows that SUD is absent from most Chilean colleges. When analyzing the distribution of the student population across regimes, however, the scenario is more optimistic: almost half of the student population attended campuses with at least some level of student government democracy in 2018. This contrasts starkly with the reality at the cross-national level, where there is a larger share of democratic countries than people living in democracies (V-Dem Institute, 2019:16).

Regression analyses show that four out of the five explanatory variables are significantly and robustly correlated with SUD. Additional years of institutional accreditation are positively associated with SUD, suggesting that arguments about institutional capacity (Bühlmann et al., 2012) and the exercise of power (Mazzuca, 2010) also apply to student democracy. Another significant variable is CONFECH membership, which has a positive and substantively large correlation. This association is larger on consolidation vis-à-vis democratic quality, however. The results nevertheless indicate that the diffusion of democratic norms and membership in inter-governmental bodies (Brinks and Coppedge, 2006; Pevehouse, 2005; Torfason and Ingram, 2010) also apply to student governments. Campuses with a larger share of low-income students are more likely to lack a students' union, supporting modernization theory beyond the country level (Lipset, 1959). Finally – and against the theoretical expectations derived from trade union democracy – campus size is positively correlated with SUD. This lends support to the argument that smaller polities tend to be less politically competitive, and that they have a less vibrant associative life (Newton, 1982).

This article contributes to our understanding of democracy in at least three ways. First, it extends the analysis of political systems beyond the state, showing the extent to which there are important regime variations even within democratic states. Similar analyses could be carried out in other social entities like chambers of commerce, labor unions, high school student governments, and neighborhood associations. This is important because they are also examples of “small scale democracy” that citizens encounter daily (Andersen and Rossteutscher, 2007). Second, the results suggest that the usual understanding of democracy in political science and sociology, which is based on state- and trade union- centered analyses of the phenomenon, may not apply to other instances of polyarchy. As Lewis and Rice (2005: 723) state, “[t]he temptation is to generalize the state and national conclusions to other elections, but this is risky.” We should strive, therefore, to study democracy at different levels before drawing more general conclusions. Finally, our results increase our understanding of college student politics, going beyond individual political participation or its relationship with national or party politics.

This work has several limitations. The main one has to do with data availability. Ideally, federations should publish more and better information about their statutes, elections, and organization. Additional evidence would make it

possible to incorporate more indicators of democracy identified by the state and trade union democracy literatures that transcend the procedural approach used in this article such as accountability mechanisms (Levi et al., 2009; Peruzzotti, 2012), descriptive representation (Madrid and Rhodes-Purdy, 2016; McBride, 2020), and direct democracy mechanisms (Altman, 2018; Baccaro, 2001). Other explanations for democracy like social capital (Nissen and Jarley, 2005; Putnam, 1994), party systems (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, 2008), “occupational communities” (Stratton, 1989) or democratic tradition (Martínez, 2015) should also be explored. From the perspective of the student body, the share of students who work is also important, as employment is associated with decreased student engagement (Caballero, 2006; Elling and Elling, 2000). A longitudinal research design would allow for more variation and causal inference. Future works, therefore, could incorporate new explanatory variables and observations to extend and strengthen this analysis. Finally, the results, which are based on correlations, should be complemented with qualitative research in different campuses and periods to delve into their underlying causal mechanisms.

Finally, this work also has practical implications. First, given the positive association between accreditation and SUD, institutions should consider including students through democratically elected representatives in institutional accreditation and other quality assurance processes (Klemenčič, 2015; Martínez Iñiguez et al., 2017). For example, having a democratically elected union could be one of the criteria in the “strategic management and institutional resources” accreditation dimension of the new Chilean accreditation system, which came into effect in 2020. Additionally, it is worth reflecting on whether the accreditation process is solely reflecting the quality of institutions or if there is an influence from the accreditation exercise itself that promotes student participation in decision-making. Second, universities should also ensure resources and infrastructure for students to organize in general, and to ensure regular elections in particular – especially in low-income campuses. Third, unions should reconsider turnout thresholds to ensure their democratic continuity. Finally, and more importantly perhaps, is the role that CONFECH may play. As mentioned above, the confederation requires unions to meet certain democratic credentials for accession. CONFECH could promote democracy even further among member unions through, for example, a democratic clause which could, similarly to the supranational level (Closa and Palestini, 2018), ensure the consolidation and survival of student’s union democracy.

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Appendix

Table A. Student's Union Democracy Index by campus, 2018

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Current Union	Inclusiveness (>95%)		Competitiveness (<60%)		Turnout (>25%)		Integrity	Union before 2018	Index score	Regime Category
				%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No				
U. de la Serena	FEULS	La Serena	Yes	104	Yes	48.69	Yes	26.51	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Full Democracy
U. de Concepción	FEC	Chillán	Yes	99	Yes	48.99	Yes	32.02	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Full Democracy
U. Finis Terrae	FEUFT	Providencia	Yes	99	Yes	47.32	Yes	29.66	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Full Democracy
U. del Bío-Bío		Chillán	Yes	102	Yes	55.1	Yes	28	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Full Democracy
U. Católica del Maule	FEUCM	Talca	Yes	112	Yes	49.68	Yes	26.46	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Full Democracy
Pontificia U. Católica de Valparaíso	FEPUCV	Valparaíso	Yes	111	Yes	58	Yes	24	No	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. Adolfo Ibáñez	FEUAI	Santiago	Yes	8	No	51.55	Yes	31.97	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. del Desarrollo	FEUDD	Lo Barnechea	Yes		No	59.5	Yes	34.15	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. de Santiago de Chile	FEUSACH	Santiago	Yes	99	Yes	51.99	Yes	13	No	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. de Chile	FECH	Santiago	Yes	96	Yes	46.2	Yes	25.8	Yes	No	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. de Tarapacá	FEUT	Arica	Yes	103	Yes	42.88	Yes	34.67	Yes	No	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. de Valparaíso	FEUV	Valparaíso	Yes	89	No	47.87	Yes	25.73	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. Andrés Bello	FEUNAB	Concepción	Yes	111	Yes	50.16	Yes	15.36	No	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
Pontificia U. Católica de Chile	FEUC	Santiago	Yes	74	No	57.78	Yes	60.16	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	Full Democracy
U. Pedro de Valdivia		Chillán	Yes		No	48.6	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Viña del Mar	FEUVM	Viña del Mar	Yes		No	50.65	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Concepción		Los Angeles	Yes	92	No	67	No	27.2	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Austral de Chile		Coyhaique	Yes	1.12	Yes		No		No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Adolfo Ibáñez		Viña del Mar	Yes		No	74.8	No	42	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Valparaíso	FEUV-SANTIAGO	Santiago	Yes	8	No	89.23	No	43.26	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Mayor	FEUM	Santiago	Yes	91	No	96.1	No	26.99	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Atacama	FEUDA	Copiapó	Yes	76	No	48.3	Yes	34	Yes	No	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Arturo Prat	FEUNAP	Iquique	Yes	52	No	51	Yes	24.4	No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Antofagasta	FEUA	Antofagasta	Yes	64	No	60.1	Yes	23.4	No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de los Lagos	FEUL	Osorno	Yes		No	53.56	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Concepción	FEC	Concepción	Yes	1	Yes	54	Yes	12	No	No	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. San Sebastián		Patagonia (Puerto Montt)	Yes		No	92.15	No	25.67	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción	FEUCSC	Concepción	Yes	76	No	52.1	Yes	21.16	No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de Talca	FEUTAL	Talca	Yes	113	Yes	83	No		No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Austral de Chile	FEUAACH	Valdivia	Yes	108	Yes	62.47	No	22.7	No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Católica de Temuco	FEUCT	Temuco	Yes		No	51	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Técnica Federico Santa María	FEUTFSM	Valparaíso	Yes	89	No	88.83	No	27.63	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. San Sebastián		Valdivia	Yes		No	77	No	29	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. Católica del Norte	FEUCN-C	Coquimbo	Yes	99	Yes	90.9	No	17.27	No	Yes	Yes	4	Flawed Democracy
U. de los Lagos		Puerto Montt	Yes		No	40	Yes		No	No	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy
U. San Sebastián		Concepción	Yes		No	39.75	No	34.64	Yes	No	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy
U. de Magallanes	FEUM	Punta Arenas	Yes		No	89.7	No		No	Yes	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Current Union	Inclusiveness (>95%)		Competitiveness (<60%)		Turnout (>25%)		Integrity	Union before 2018	Index score	Regime Category
				%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No				
U. San Sebastián	FEUSS	Santiago	Yes	No	61.3	No	20.9	No	Yes	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy	
U. Andrés Bello	FEUNAB	Viña del Mar	Yes	No	57.6	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy	
U. de los Andes	FEUANDES	Las Condes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy	
U. Diego Portales	FEDEP	Santiago	Yes	92	No	73	No	12	No	Yes	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy
U. de las Américas		Concepción	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy	
U. Técnica Federico Santa María	FEUSAM	Santiago	Yes	No	No	No	25	Yes	No	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy	
U. del Bío-Bío	FEUBB	Concepción	Yes	No	62	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	3	Electoral Democracy	
U. Austral de Chile		Puerto Montt	Yes	27	No	94.35	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. de los Lagos		Santiago	Yes	No	66	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. de las Américas		Viña del Mar	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy		
U. Alberto Hurtado	FEUAH	Santiago	Yes	No	67.4	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Católica del Maule		Curicó	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Bernardo O'Higgins	FEUBO		Yes	No	67.19	No	17.7	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Católica Cardenal Raúl Yeslva Henríquez	FEUCSH		Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Técnica Federico Santa María		Concepción	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. de Talca	FEDEUT	Curicó	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. de las Américas	FEUDLA	Santiago	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Arturo Prat	FEUNAPVIC	Victoria	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Central de Chile	FEUCEN	Santiago	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Iberoamericana de Ciencias y Tecnología		Santiago	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. de Tarapacá		Iquique	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	Electoral Democracy	
U. de Talca	FEUTS	Santiago	No	No	69.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. Técnica Federico Santa María		Viña del Mar	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. Sek		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. de la Frontera	FEUFRO	Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Educación	FEUPLA	Valparaíso	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. Pedro de Valdivia		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. Andrés Bello	FEUNAB	Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. del Desarrollo		Concepción	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	
U. Central de Chile		La Serena	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy	

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Current Union	Inclusiveness (>95%)		Competitiveness (<60%)		Turnout (>25%)		Integrity	Union before 2018	Index score	Regime Category
				%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No				
U. Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación	FEP	Santiago	No	34	No	No		27.7	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy
U. Católica del Norte	FEUCN	Antofagasta	No	93	No	No		19.58	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy
U. Bolivariana		Los Ángeles	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. Santo Tomás		Puerto Montt	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. de Valparaíso		San Felipe	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. Tecnológica Metropolitana	FEUTEM	Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. Academia de Humanismo Cristiano	UAHC	Providencia	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. de Magallanes		Coyhaique	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. Pedro de Valdivia		Antofagasta	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	1	Lapsed Democracy		
U. Santo Tomás		Valdivia	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Bolivariana		Chillán	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Los Ángeles	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		La Serena	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. la República		Concepción	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. de Aconcagua		Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Rancagua	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Puerto Montt	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Chillán	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción		Los Ángeles	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción		Cañete	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Bolivariana		Concepción	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Coyhaique	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Santo Tomás		Arica	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Punta Arenas	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Bolivariana		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. de Aconcagua		Los Andes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Santo Tomás		Iquique	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. de Aconcagua		San Felipe	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Santo Tomás		Osorno	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. de Aconcagua		Calama	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Bolivariana		Iquique	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Curicó	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. de Talca		Colchagua	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Antofagasta	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Pedro de Valdivia		La Serena	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Arturo Prat		Arica	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Osorno	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. de Aconcagua		Machalí	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		
U. Arturo Prat		Antofagasta	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy		

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Current Union	Inclusiveness (>95%)		Competitiveness (<60%)		Turnout (>25%)		Integrity	Union before 2018	Index score	Regime Category
				%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No				
U. la República		Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Chillán	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Mayor		Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. los Leones		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Los Ángeles	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Arica	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de los Lagos		Ancud	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Aconcagua		Rancagua	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Talca	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Calama	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Talca	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de la Frontera		Pucón	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Magallanes		Puerto Natales	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Talca		Linares	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Aconcagua		Puerto Montt	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Copiapó	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Valdivia	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Valparaíso	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Arica	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Puente Alto	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Bolivariana		La Serena	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Autónoma de Chile		Temuco	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		La Serena	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Adventista de Chile	UNACH	Chillán	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Miguel de Cervantes		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Talca	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Bolivariana		Ovalle	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Antofagasta	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Calama	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Arturo Prat		Calama	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Vitacura	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Arturo Prat		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Gabriela Mistral		Providencia	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Coquimbo	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de O'Higgins		Rancagua	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Antofagasta	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Autónoma de Chile		Santiago	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Concepción	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de los Lagos		Castro	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Iquique	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Aconcagua		Ancud	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Current Union	Inclusiveness (>95%)		Competitiveness (<60%)		Turnout (>25%)		Integrity	Union before 2018	Index score	Regime Category
				%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No	%	Yes/No				
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Concepción - Talcahuano	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. la República		Rancagua	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Copiapó	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Bolivariana		Talca	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Autónoma de Chile		Talca	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción		Chillán	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Aconcagua		La Serena	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Aysén		Coyhaique	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. Santo Tomás		Los Ángeles	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Artes, Ciencias y Comunicación Uniacc		Providencia	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	
U. de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Educación		San Felipe	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	Nondemocracy	

Table B. Descriptive Statistics of Determinants of Student's Union Democracy by campus, 2018

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Metropolitan Region	Ownership	CONFECH membership	Years of institutional accreditation	Social Vulnerability rate	Undergraduate enrollment (thousands)
U. de la Serena	FEULS	La Serena	No	Public	Yes	4	.36	7.396
U. de Concepción	FEUBB	Chillán	No	Private	Yes	7	.38	2.368
U. Finis Terrae	FEUFT	Providencia	Yes	Private	Yes	4	.26	7.305
U. del Bío-Bío	FEC	Chillán	No	Public	Yes	5	.5	4.633
Pontificia U. Católica de Valparaíso	FEPUVCV	Valparaíso	No	Private	Yes	6	.28	15.411
U. Adolfo Ibáñez	FEUAI	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	5	.04	6.905
U. del Desarrollo	FEUDD	Lo Barnechea	Yes	Private	Yes	5	.09	9.842
U. Católica del Maule	FEUCM	Talca	No	Private	Yes	5	.5	6.344
U. de Santiago de Chile	FEUSACH	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	6	.21	21.99
U. de Chile	FECH	Santiago	Yes	Public	Yes	7	.21	32.448
U. de Tarapacá	FEUTA	Arica	No	Private	Yes	5	.42	7.31
U. de Valparaíso	FEUV	Valparaíso	No	Public	Yes	5	.34	12.982
U. Andrés Bello	FEUNAB	Concepción	No	Private	No	5	.22	5.573
Pontificia U. Católica de Chile	FEUC	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	7	.13	27.434
U. Pedro de Valdivia		Chillán	No	Private	No	0	.2	1.212
U. de Viña del Mar	FEUVM	Viña del Mar	No	Private	Yes	4	.27	8.872
U. de Concepción		Los Ángeles	No	Private	Yes	7	.38	1.769
U. Austral de Chile		Coyhaique	No	Private	No	6	.4	0.498
U. Adolfo Ibáñez		Viña del Mar	No	Private	Yes	5	.04	2.767
U. de Valparaíso	FEUV-SANTIAGO	Santiago	Yes	Public	Yes	5	.34	1.77
U. Mayor	FEUM	Santiago	Yes	Private	No	5	.19	14.345
U. de Atacama	FEUDA	Copiapó	No	Public	Yes	3	.38	6.087
U. Arturo Prat	FEUNAP	Iquique	No	Public	Yes	4	.3	7.02
U. de Antofagasta	FEUA	Antofagasta	No	Public	Yes	5	.22	8.05
U. de los Lagos	FEUL	Osorno	No	Public	Yes	4	.5	4.518
U. de Concepción	FEC	Concepción	No	Private	Yes	7	.38	20.761
U. San Sebastián		Patagonia (Puerto Montt)	No	Private	No	5	.29	4.375
U. Católica de La Santísima Concepción	FEUCSC	Concepción	No	Private	Yes	4	.49	10.463
U. de Talca	FEUTAL	Talca	No	Public	Yes	5	.44	7.07
U. Austral de Chile	FEUACH	Valdivia	No	Private	Yes	6	.4	11.777
U. Católica de Temuco	FEUCT	Temuco	No	Private	Yes	4	.61	10.646
U. Técnica Federico Santa María	FEUTFSM	Valparaíso	No	Private	Yes	6	.28	6.192
U. San Sebastián		Valdivia	No	Private	No	5	.29	3.257
U. Católica del Norte	FEUCN-C	Coquimbo	No	Private	Yes	6	.24	3.734
U. de los Lagos		Puerto Montt	No	Public	Yes	4	.5	3.076
U. San Sebastián		Concepción	No	Private	No	5	.29	10.641
U. de Magallanes	FEUM	Punta Arenas	No	Public	Yes	4	.27	4.135
U. San Sebastián	FEUSS	Santiago	Yes	Private	No	5	.29	11.555
U. Andrés Bello	FEUNAB	Viña del Mar	No	Private	No	5	.22	10.271
U. de los Andes	FEUANDES	Las Condes	Yes	Private	Yes	5	.04	8.107
U. Diego Portales	FEDEP	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	5	.22	15.751
U. de las Américas		Concepción	No	Private	No	3	.24	3.657

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Metropolitan Region	Ownership	CONFECH membership	Years of institutional accreditation	Social Vulnerability rate	Undergraduate enrollment (thousands)
U. Técnica Federico Santa María	FEUSAM	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	6	.28	5.468
U. del Bío-Bío	FEUBB	Concepción	No	Public	Yes	5	.5	7.081
U. Austral de Chile		Puerto Montt	No	Private	Yes	6	.4	3.154
U. de los Lagos		Santiago	Yes	Public	Yes	4	.5	0.815
U. de las Américas		Viña del Mar	No	Private	No	3	.24	3.446
U. Alberto Hurtado	FEUAH	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	5	.3	6.897
U. Católica del Maule		Curicó	No	Private	Yes	5	.5	1.808
U. Bernardo O'Higgins	FEUBO	Santiago	Yes	Private	No	4	.53	6.2
U. Católica Cardenal Raúl Silva Henríquez	FEUCSH	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	4	.43	6.62
U. de Talca	FEUTS	Santiago	Yes	Public	Yes	5	.44	0.738
U. Técnica Federico Santa María		Concepción	No	Private	Yes	6	.28	2.52
U. de Talca	FEDEUT	Curicó	No	Public	Yes	5	.44	2.095
U. de las Américas	FEUDLA	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	3	.24	16.011
U. Arturo Prat	FEUNAPVIC	Victoria	No	Public	Yes	4	.3	1.75
U. Técnica Federico Santa María		Viña del Mar	No	Private	Yes	6	.28	4.069
U. Central de Chile	FEUCEN	Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	4	.26	10.88
U. Iberoamericana de Ciencias y Tecnología		Santiago	Yes	Private	Yes	2	.1	1.085
U. Sek		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	0	.1	5.999
U. Santo Tomás		Valdivia	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.017
U. Bolivariana		Chillán	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.398
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Temuco	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.036
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Los Ángeles	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.82
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		La Serena	No	Private	No	2	.32	3
U. la República		Concepción	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.731
U. de la Frontera	FEUFRO	Temuco	No	Public	Yes	5	.54	9.799
U. de Aconcagua		Temuco	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.637
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Rancagua	No	Private	No	2	.32	2.197
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Puerto Montt	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.789
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Chillán	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.355
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción		Los Ángeles	No	Private	No	4	.49	0.77
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción		Cañete	No	Private	No	4	.49	1.425
U. Bolivariana		Concepción	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.533
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Coyhaique	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.217
U. de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Educación	FEUPLA	Valparaíso	No	Public	Yes	5	.39	6.965
U. Santo Tomás		Arica	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.076
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Punta Arenas	No	Private	No	2	.14	0.397
U. Santo Tomás		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	3	.33	7.029
U. Bolivariana		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	0	.12	0.756
U. de Aconcagua		Los Andes	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.943
U. Pedro de Valdivia		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	0	.2	1.346
U. Andrés Bello	FEUNAB	Santiago	Yes	Private	No	5	.22	27.649

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Metropolitan Region	Ownership	CONFECH membership	Years of institutional accreditation	Social Vulnerability rate	Undergraduate enrollment (thousands)
U. Santo Tomás		Iquique	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.757
U. de Aconcagua		San Felipe	No	Private	No	0	.21	1.517
U. Santo Tomás		Osorno	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.067
U. de Aconcagua		Calama	No	Private	No	0	.21	1.232
U. del Desarrollo		Concepción	No	Private	No	5	.09	4.17
U. Bolivariana		Iquique	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.678
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Curicó	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.631
U. de Talca		Colchagua	No	Public	No	5	.44	0.28
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Antofagasta	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.488
U. Pedro de Valdivia		La Serena	No	Private	No	0	.2	2.166
U. Arturo Prat		Arica	No	Public	No	4	.3	0.876
U. Central de Chile		La Serena	No	Private	No	4	.26	1.546
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Osorno	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.852
U. de Aconcagua		Machalí	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.492
U. Arturo Prat		Antofagasta	No	Public	No	4	.3	0.892
U. la República		Temuco	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.655
U. la República		Chillán	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.715
U. Mayor		Temuco	No	Private	No	5	.19	3.388
U. la República		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	0	.14	0.453
U. los Leones		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	0	.12	3.658
U. la República		Los Ángeles	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.45
U. la República		Arica	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.351
U. de los Lagos		Ancud	No	Public	No	4	.5	0.435
U. de Aconcagua		Rancagua	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.528
U. la República		Talca	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.086
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Calama	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.976
U. Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación	FEP	Santiago	Yes	Public	Yes	3	.32	4.415
U. Santo Tomás		Talca	No	Private	No	3	.33	2.291
U. de la Frontera		Pucón	No	Public	No	5	.54	0.21
U. de Magallanes		Puerto Natales	No	Public	No	4	.27	0.2
U. de Talca		Linares	No	Public	No	5	.44	0.329
U. Católica del Norte	FEUCN	Antofagasta	No	Private	Yes	6	.24	6.857
U. de Aconcagua		Puerto Montt	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.639
U. Santo Tomás		Temuco	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.736
U. Santo Tomás		Copiapó	No	Private	No	3	.33	0.137
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Valdivia	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.222
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Valparaíso	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.84
U. Bolivariana		Los Ángeles	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.794
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Arica	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.44
U. Santo Tomás		Puerto Montt	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.789
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Puente Alto	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.699
U. Bolivariana		La Serena	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.56
U. de Valparaíso		San Felipe	No	Public	No	5	.34	0.953

University	Union Acronym	Campus	Metropolitan Region	Ownership	CONFECH membership	Years of institutional accreditation	Social Vulnerability rate	Undergraduate enrollment (thousands)
U. Autónoma de Chile		Temuco	No	Private	No	4	.47	5.947
U. Santo Tomás		La Serena	No	Private	No	3	.33	2.041
U. Adventista de Chile	UNACH	Chillán	No	Private	No	3	.44	1.703
U. Miguel de Cervantes		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	2	.08	1.096
U. Tecnológica Metropolitana	FEUTEM	Santiago	Yes	Public	Yes	4	.38	8.83
U. Academia de Humanismo Cristiano UAHC		Providencia	Yes	Private	No	4	.2	2.897
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Talca	No	Private	No	2	.14	1.072
U. Bolivariana		Ovalle	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.363
U. Santo Tomás		Antofagasta	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.52
U. la República		Calama	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.321
U. Arturo Prat		Calama	No	Public	No	4	.3	0.736
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Vitacura	Yes	Private	No	2	.32	10.925
U. Arturo Prat		Santiago	Yes	Public	No	4	.3	1.75
U. Gabriela Mistral		Providencia	Yes	Private	No	0	.13	2.027
U. la República		Coquimbo	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.124
U. de Magallanes		Coyhaique	No	Public	No	4	.27	0.157
U. de Tarapacá		Iquique	No	Public	No	5	.42	1.554
U. de O'Higgins		Rancagua	No	Public	No	4	.53	1.277
U. la República		Antofagasta	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.354
U. Autónoma de Chile		Santiago	Yes	Private	No	4	.47	11.379
U. Santo Tomás		Concepción	No	Private	No	3	.33	2.027
U. de los Lagos		Castro	No	Public	No	4	.5	0.924
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Iquique	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.346
U. Pedro de Valdivia		Antofagasta	No	Private	No	0	.2	1.081
U. de Aconcagua		Ancud	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.431
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Concepción Talcahuano	No	Private	No	2	.32	1.748
U. la República		Rancagua	No	Private	No	0	.14	0.567
U. Tecnológica de Chile Inacap		Copiapó	No	Private	No	2	.32	0.848
U. Bolivariana		Talca	No	Private	No	0	.12	0.298
U. Autónoma de Chile		Talca	No	Private	No	4	.47	6.641
U. Católica de la Santísima Concepción		Chillán	No	Private	No	4	.49	1.255
U. de Aconcagua		La Serena	No	Private	No	0	.21	0.466
U. de Aysén		Coyhaique	No	Public	No	0	.62	0.194
U. Santo Tomás		Los Ángeles	No	Private	No	3	.33	1.711
U. de Artes, Ciencias y Comunicación Uniacc		Providencia	Yes	Private	No	0	.12	4.658
U. de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Educación		San Felipe	No	Public	No	5	.39	1.01