

The political situation in chile in the 20th century

[Politics](#), [President](#)



Allende attempted to do this by implementing socialist policies into the government, as seen through the first forty measures of the people's government which is outlined in the Popular Unity Program. Many of these policies were aimed at helping the nation's poor. Many of the things that Allende and the Popular Unity hoped to do would never see much result. Unhappiness due to state intervention and regulation broke out that prompted the military coup on September 11, 1973 in order to overthrow Allende. Following this, Augusto Pinochet became dictator of Chile and wanted to reconstruct the economy and limit state intervention; however, to do this, political opposition was silenced and there was violent oppression. Despite the attempt to put an end to state intervention during the Pinochet regime, the state was highly interventionist. The economic and political models of the Popular Unity and Pinochet periods were very distinct as Allende wanted to create a socialist society while Pinochet wanted to eliminate "the chains of totalitarian Marxism"; the policies made under the Pinochet regime would not have been possible without continued state intervention, something that was looked down upon during the Allende administration.

Salvador Allende was supported by the Popular Unity, a coalition of political parties that was led by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

Previously plagued by underdevelopment, unemployment, inflation, and social inequality, he promised to "bring an end to the rule of the imperialists, the monopolists, and the landed oligarchy and to initiate the construction of socialism in Chile" (Allende and Cockcroft 257). Many things he hoped to do was to progress society and create social capital that would

promote development (“ Victory Speech to the People of Santiago” 48). Allende wanted to redistribute wealth and power among Chilean society, give the state a stronger role, reorganize the educational system, and create a new economic policy. This shift in policy would be aimed at serving the interests of the people and helping the nation’s poor. In forming a new economy, the Popular Unity Program called for the nationalization of natural resources, such as copper, to help eliminate social and monetary privileges; the government attempted to increase the production of copper to sustain public programs and encourage industrialization.

The dependence on copper became problematic as the government faced many obstacles to increase and maintain its production (Vergara 158). In the first years of the Popular Unity, workers and the poor were able to afford food; however, things changed in 1972 when there was a food shortage (Paley 55). Economic policies led to food shortages. One individual stated, “ If you ask someone how we were before and how we are today, he will tell you that we were better in the past” (Vergara 171). In an article in *El Mercurio*, the government was accused of using a double standard; it was said that the government was encouraging strikes in the private sector while discouraging conflict and demands in the public sector (Vergara 173). In order to achieve the things outlined in the Popular Unity Program, people needed to be socially aware of their conditions and be united as one. Allende called for people to be aware of class consciousness and to realize that there are other Chilean individuals who make less money than they do. Besides an economic impact on Chile, the Allende administration encouraged social

organization. There was more open space for political and cultural activity, which would not be seen much through the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

The goals set out in the Popular Unity Program were only starting to be realized when the military coup on September 11, 1973 occurred. Efforts to eradicate “ the chains of totalitarian Marxism” emerged (Paley 60).

Opposition to the new government was silenced, which made it easier for Pinochet to implement a new economic approach considering the unhappiness with the economic policies that were implemented under Allende. The Allende government had tried to bring the economy closer to socialism by nationalizing private enterprises, accelerating land reform, redistributing income, and strengthening public services (Paley 62). The military coup hoped to reverse this and limit state involvement in all aspects of life. The Chicago Boys were brought in to develop a new economic approach. They hoped to reduce the role of the state and privatize the economy, while hoping to restructure society too. Pinochet wanted to transform the social institutions of the country. The Chicago Boys replaced import substitution with free market economics, lowered tariffs, opened borders to the import of foreign goods, and increased the exportation of goods (Paley 63). Many of these actions resulted in the severe decline of the consumption of domestic goods. By 1976, poverty rates in Santiago reached 57% and the unemployment rate would reach 80% in some poblaciones, which was different from when Allende was president since his policies helped workers and the urban poor (Paley 63).

By 1982, more than half of the labor force was unemployed, in emergency work programs, or in the informal sector (Paley 76). As the Chicago Boys continued to restructure the economy, they claimed that they were causing the state to withdraw from intervening in the economy, meaning that there was barely any political influence (Paley 65). However, it is claimed that their actions were political acts. The government played a role in facilitating economic restructuring. For example, the state intervened by bailing banks out of an economic crisis in 1982 and compensated income inequality that was generated (Paley 65). In addition to this, while it had been a major problem in the Allende government, the state was almost completely protected from social pressure and the power of executive was almost unlimited. Also, since the copper industry had been nationalized during Allende, the military government did not have to demand more money from the rest of the economy (Martinez and Diaz 66). During the time of the dictatorship, the rich were the ones who were benefiting the most.