

# “No + AFP!” Video activism, civic mobilization, and protest movements for decent pensions in neoliberal Chile

*No+AFP: Video activismo, movilización social y movimientos de protesta por pensiones decentes en el Chile neoliberal*

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes the use and appropriation of digital media by the Chilean social movement No + AFP. Specifically, the spotlight is placed on the movement's digital video activism practices and its communication activity, organizational and collective action strategies mediated by new information and communication technologies. A qualitative (content analysis) methodology was developed to analyze the movement's most relevant videos regarding three aspects: (1) political strategy; (2) actors, and (3) the locations in which videos were filmed. The main conclusion is that video activism was central to supporting the movement's offline strategy. The videos were basically used for propaganda and informational purposes and became a challenge against hegemonic media production in Chile; the main actors were citizens opposing the corporate, the hegemonic media and the government; and the streets, the traditional protest setting, were the preferred location.

**Keywords:** video activism; social media; protest; social movements; Chile.

## Resumen

Se analiza el uso y apropiación de los medios digitales por parte del movimiento No + AFP. El foco está situado en las prácticas videoactivistas y las estrategias de comunicación, organización y acción colectiva. Mediante una metodología cualitativa (análisis de contenido) se analiza: (1) la estrategia política; (2) los actores y (3) los lugares centrales de los vídeos. La conclusión principal es que el videoactivismo fue clave para apoyar la actividad offline del movimiento. Los vídeos se utilizaron fundamentalmente con fines propagandísticos e informativos y se convirtieron en un desafío contra la producción mediática hegemónica en Chile; los protagonistas fueron ciudadanos contra las grandes corporaciones, los medios y el gobierno; y el emplazamiento preferido fue la calle, lugar tradicional de la protestas.

**Palabras clave:** videoactivismo; medios sociales; protestas; movimientos sociales; Chile.

## 1. Introduction

The post-dictatorial democratic system in Chile was not precisely characterized by a great concern for the people's interests and welfare. The neoliberal "experiment" performed in Chile (Foxley, 1988; Harvey, 2007) during the Pinochet dictatorship, inspired by the market economy of the "Chicago Boys" (Correa, 2005; De Castro & Méndez, 1992), involved the dismantling of the public sector and relegating the state to a secondary role, thus, allowing private companies to take drastic measures (Harvey, 2005; Klein, 2012), producing structural inequality (PNUD, 2017).

According to the figures released by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Chile tops the ranking of the most unequal countries among the world's leading economies. Furthermore, "In Chile, socio-economic inequality is not limited to aspects such as income, access to capital or employment, but also encompasses education, political power, and the respect and dignity with which people are treated" (PNUD, 2017, p.5). The capitalism promoted led to high unemployment and inflation rates, thus jeopardising the quality of life of the majority of Chileans (Durán & Kremerman, 2018).

In Chile, before 1981, there was a public pay-as-you-go pension system, which was managed by the state and had some failings (Arellano, 1985). Low profitability and the idea that public systems are inefficient (Larraín & Assael, 1995; Larraín & Vergara, 2001) was what led and motivated, among other reasons, the young Chileans students of the University of Chicago to generate an alternative model, based on their neoliberal ideas (Von Gersdorff, 1984). In the first instance, it was thought that the new system would become a wealth accumulation mechanism (De Castro & Méndez, 1992). However, different groups, government departments and organizations, such as the Oficina de Planificación (ODEPLAN), opened a key debate on the required changes (Del Real, 2017). The final impulse came from José Piñera, who, in 1978, launched his proposal to privatize the pension funds in the hands of "companies with owners" (Piñera, 1995, p. 21-22). Then, the "*administradoras de fondos de pensiones*" (AFPs, pension fund administrators) were born.

Since 1981, AFPs have grown rapidly in both affiliates and income. In fact, two years after their establishment, two thirds of the workers had joined them (Elter, 1999, p.106). It should be noted that Chileans are forced, by constitutional provision, to retire within this system. For this reason, the investment of AFPs in companies has allowed the consolidation of the economic system and the growth of the country, especially in its macroeconomic indicators, such as the GDP (Gárate, 2012). According to the Superintendencia de Pensiones (Superintendency of Pensions), the assets of the pension funds accounted for 77% of the national GDP by July 2019.<sup>1</sup>

In short, the new system soon impacted the economy, developing a strong capital market (Riesco, 2007, p.111) that contributed to making Chile the richest country in the region, and reinforced the idea that the AFPs had lifted millions of Chileans out of poverty. In fact, its good performance during its early years of operation served to stimulate interest in the Chilean system (Larraín & Vergara, 2001, p.21) —an idea that has been promoted by the state and the official media (Vergara, 1985, p. 223).

The macroeconomic success of the model is related to the way in which large economic groups have consolidated their power in the market, driven by the investments of the AFPs (Gálvez & Kremerman, 2019). However, many economic metrics remain precarious. Neither the distribution of wealth nor the real wages relate to economic growth (Fazio 2014, 2016). This problem affects directly the development of the pension system, since factors such as labor flexibility, outsourcing, and low wages are crucial when analyzing the economic context of the Chilean population (Fazio & Parada, 2010; Ruiz & Boccardo, 2015). In fact, the privatizations carried out affecting the health and pension systems have given rise to a lack of welfare provision for the elderly, the sick, and disabled, while also directly discriminating women (Labra, 2002; Rivadeneira, 2017). As with many other privatizations, that of the AFPs was a formidable tool for taking power away from the state and giving it, not to its legitimate owners, but to companies controlling and managing the funds (Matamala, 2016, 2018). In short, this privatization has diminished the power of the welfare state, which has been transferred to companies "for their own benefit".

Likewise, these companies are managed by national capital, primarily linked to the country's wealthiest families controlling banking, mining, retailers, and energy companies, as well as global corporations (Matus, 2017; Guzmán & Rojas, 2017). Moreover, the AFPs have become the preferred refuge of the political elite with the different ministers and politicians who have held executive positions in many of those companies.<sup>2</sup>

Pension funds have allowed investing into a few companies (Gálvez & Kremerman, 2019). One of the most benefited industries, both directly and indirectly, is the national media. Since their establishment, AFPs have collaborated in the growth of the business networks owned by different corporations, channelling resources to media companies. The horizontal and diverse business interests of the holdings include a constant flow of direct and indirect investment in the media, which are financed with advertising from large national companies and through the investment of the AFPs in these companies. This is the reason why the owners mainstream media, historically related to right-wing stakeholders, joined the effort of promoting the AFPs, thus supporting the measures taken (Mönckeberg, 2011; Rebolledo, 2012).

In Chile, from the 1980s onwards, media ownership has been almost entirely in the hands of two large economic groups, which has led to high levels of concentration and lack of diversity in this sector (Becerra & Mastrini, 2009). Since that decade, those two large groups (El Mercurio and COPESA) have maintained control over the press (Santa Cruz, 1988) and have always supported the AFPs, repeatedly arguing that pay-as-you-go systems in the world are all broken or that it is dangerous to change the system. Therefore, it is possible to draw a line between the AFPs and the country's business, the political field, and media companies. All of them seem unstoppable supporting the AFPs and profiting through them. Thus, backed by an official and solid media discourse about their contribution to the economy and well-being of Chilean citizens, the AFPs have not had to confront any opposition over decades.

On the whole, this individual and obligatory pension system, in addition to promoting the concentration of capital and lacking any redistributive effect, is "unfair" (Elter, 1999) insofar as it implies

the enrichment of a few (Zapatta, 1997), and the misery of many. Firstly, the philosophy of this kind of capitalization does not guarantee a pension at the end of the day and depends solely on individual saving (Fundación Sol 2014, p.3). It is precisely the promotion of that individual capitalization that has led to meager pensions equivalent to between 20 and 30 percent of the worker's salary (Rivadeneira, 2017). Moreover, three out of every four pensions are lower than the national minimum wage.<sup>3</sup> This individual system very unlikely to its public counterpart, in place in most of the member states of the OECD, which is administered by the state and has a tripartite capitalization, namely, that is financed by employers, the State, and employees.

Secondly, it is a private system that is not an alternative to a public institution, but the sole obligatory pension scheme for the citizenry, which is an open violation of their rights. Cheered by neoliberals, this system has remained in place and supported by the governments of the Concertación period.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it was exported and adapted in 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries since the 1990s, including Bolivia and México (1997), El Salvador (1998), and the Dominican Republic (2003) (Kremerman, Durán, Gálvez, Bosh & Basile, 2016). This substitute model was implemented precisely in those countries where neoliberalism was strongest (the aforementioned countries) and the mixed model in those where it was more moderate or weaker (Mesa-Lago, 1999, 2013) or where the reaction of the citizenry was fiercer, as in Argentina, for instance.

However, by 2000, the Chileans had already begun to voice their objections. In fact, a study conducted by then showed that only 27 percent of the respondents trusted the AFPs (Morales & Navarrete 2004). With Michelle Bachelet's in the presidency in 2006 and under an increasing public pressure, a commission of experts drafted a report that led to the "Social Security Reform of 2008" and the enactment of Law No. 20.255. Despite including slight amendments and being trumpeted as "the most important change in the system since the creation of the AFPs in 1980"<sup>5</sup>, neither the reform nor the law altered the essence of the system. A compensatory state subsidy (a non-contributory pension), called the *Sistema de Pensiones Solidarias* (SPS, Solidary Pension System) was introduced. Those citizens who lack the right to a pension in any social welfare sche-

me can apply for this subsidy—provided that they meet a wide range of requirements.<sup>6</sup> In 2019, this "solidary" pension currently amounts to 107,304 Chilean pesos, equivalent to a third of the national minimum wage, on which it is impossible to live.

## 2. The No + AFP coordinating committee

In this context of unrest and discord, a social movement called *Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores No + AFP* (No + AFP. National Workers Coordinating Committee) emerged in 2013, aiming to raising public awareness and demanding decent pensions for the elderly. Opposing low pensions, the concentration of capital, the political lobbyism, and corruption, this civic group came into being under the slogan "No + AFP". For a pay-as-you-go, tripartite solidary pension system managed by the state.<sup>7</sup> In 2014, an official survey revealed the alarmingly precarious situation of the elderly: 71 per cent of the respondents were unable to satisfy their basic needs with the pension they received (STATCOM, 2015). In 2016, according to the public opinion survey CADEM No. 133, 87 percent of the respondents claimed that it was necessary to introduce changes in the pension system.<sup>8</sup>

The growing social unrest and the creation of the coordinating committee led to pot-banging protests and small demonstrations during 2015. In July 2016, the first No + AFP mass protest was staged, which stirred the entire country, the elites included. According to its organizers, more than 1 million people participated.<sup>9</sup> Then, on 21 August, over 1.3 million people took to the streets throughout the country to stage another mass protest,<sup>10</sup> the largest since the return to democracy by then.<sup>11</sup> In October 2016, there was a third protest in which the No + AFP committee called on the citizenry to leave the AFPs Provida and Cuprum, after several cases of corruption and capital flight were exposed.<sup>12</sup> In addition to calling for massive demonstrations, the committee also sent a letter containing different proposals to President Bachelet.<sup>13</sup> It became an issue of public and media debate and, after several meetings with the coordinating committee, President Bachelet created an advisory council tasked with drafting a reform proposal

that, once it had been transformed into a bill, was launched in 2017.<sup>14</sup>

The No + AFP committee is a national movement open to all citizens. It is closely linked to union action, given that its founding organizations are the *Confederación Nacional de Funcionarias y Funcionarios de Salud Municipal* (CONFUSAM), the *Confederación de Sindicatos Bancarios y Afines* (Confederation of Banking and Related Unions), the *Confederación Nacional de Profesionales Universitarios de los Servicios de Salud* (FENPRUSS), and the *Colegio de Profesores* (Teachers' Union).

No + AFP is a very personalist movement. Indeed, its leaders have an essential role in communicating the movement's decisions and actions. Luis Mesina is its main leader and visible face. A 64-year-old history teacher, activist, and member of the *Fuerza Social y Democrática movement* (FSD, Social and Democratic Force). Carolina Espinoza is the movement's second spokesperson, and embodies its feminist face. Espinoza is a union leader, member of CONFUSAM, spokesperson for *Mujeres Cono Sur*.

The movement uses digital media to publicize its demands as it has no support from the corporate media. Through their social networks (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook), at Internet forums, and, most especially, through video creations, they are generating an alternative discourse. Thus, citizen participation and social mobilization cannot be understood without taking into account the use and appropriation of digital media (Gerbaudo, 2017) and the scope of techno politics (Sierra & Gravante, 2017), including digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The No + AFP, as with many other "recent global social movements" (Sabariego 2017), has based part of its strategy on video activism.

As defined by Tina Askanius (2015), video activism is a set of strategies that can offer counter-hegemonic alternatives, foster the empowerment of underprivileged groups, and bring to light testimonies and complaints about human rights abuses and violations. Just as there are many video categories—from those made by institutions to those filmed by anonymous citizens—so too is there a large variety of video genres or typologies (Askanius, 2013, 2015; Nos Aldás & Farné, 2015).

For the purpose of identifying the digital political strategies of contemporary social movements, this paper analyzes empirically the use and appropriation of social networking sites—in this case, official websites, Facebook and YouTube— by the movement No + AFP. More specifically, it focuses on its digital video activism practices and its communication, organizational and collective action strategies mediated by digital media, in order to understand how they alter organizational and democratic practices, identification processes, and repertoires of action.

The selection of the case was made based on its explanatory potential and the fact that it is yet unexplored. From 2011 onwards, a wave of citizen protests with a fundamental digital component has swept the world, and Latin America is no exception. Those protests include the Occupy movement, the Arab Springs, the Chilean Spring, the Mexican #YoSoy132, or the Spanish 15M. All of these movements were characterized by their use of technological means and the widespread presence of youth among their most relevant participants. In contrast, the No + AFP movement is a pension-focused movement led by older adults (65-70 years), and that is why their use of digital media and video is striking.

### 3. Methodology

A qualitative methodology was developed (using content analysis) for examining the movement's use of digital media. Firstly, the focus was placed on the political strategy implemented or promoted in the videos. To this end, an analysis was performed on the type of video, on the one hand, and its function and purpose, on the other. To determine the type of video, the categorization of social movements designed by Sola-Morales (2017, 2019), based on previous typologies of activism (Notley, Lowenthal & Gregory, 2015; Treré, 2015; Nos Aldás & Farné 2015), has been employed. The categories were defined based on inductive reasoning and previous observation and were refined interviewing No + AFP members to test emerging concepts and interpretations.

#### TYPE OF VIDEO

1. Pre-mobilization/social impact.
2. Informational, testimonial.
3. Own creation, remix, meme, mash-up.
4. Propagandistic or programmatic.
5. Digital narrative.
6. Others.

To identify the function and purpose of the videos regarding the movement's political strategy, the following 13 categories were created:

#### ROLE OF THE VIDEO

1. Disclosure or dissemination of political ideas
2. Providing information or reporting on the movement's activities or holding press conferences
3. The movement's internal organization and communication
4. Calling for protests and civic assemblies
5. Support for the movement
6. Extolling identities
7. Challenging enemies or approaches relating to logics of confrontation
8. Fostering digital participation
9. Extolling international links
10. Alternative calls to action (different from protests and assemblies)
11. Messages aimed at the authorities
12. Reporting abuses and injustice
13. Others

Secondly, an analysis was performed on the protagonists and antagonists appearing or challenged in the videos. The categories were established according to the generational variable or the main role played by the character in the video. The protagonists are defined by their relevance in the plot, whether they appear in the foreground, look at the camera, and speak.

PROTAGONISTS
1. Individual citizens (adults)
2. Workers
3. Young people
4. Seniors, retired grandparents
5. Movement leaders
6. Families (couples with children)
7. Singers, actors or cultural personalities
8. Politicians
9. Others

ANTAGONISTS
1. Government
2. Politicians (not in the government)
3. AFP and businessmen
4. System
5. Social minorities
6. Pinochet, José Piñera, and/or the dictatorship
7. Corruption
8. Police and law enforcement
9. Media
10. Others

Lastly, the places or locations where the videos were filmed were analyzed:

SETTING
1. On the streets
2. Official buildings
3. Workplaces
4. The movement's premises
5. AFP companies
6. Private places
7. Others or undefined

### 3.1. Corpus

An online observation of all the official websites and digital accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) of the movement was carried out. All digital materials were checked and filed manually. Using search engines such as Google, YouTube, and Facebook, a vertical selection (Koopmans & Zimmermann, 2010) was made to create a hierarchical sample of relevant websites presenting No + AFP digital activity.

To gain further insights into the video-activist practices in which the movement has engaged from its beginnings until the present day, all the videos posted on its official websites,<sup>15</sup> its Facebook profiles,<sup>16</sup> and YouTube<sup>17</sup> since 2014 to date were retrieved (N=456). However, to define the final sample the most representative viral videos, namely, those that had the greatest impact, with a minimum of 1,000 views and lasting less than five minutes, were selected (N=39).

IDENTIFICATION	VEWS	LINK
'Villa Cariño...'	1.067.414	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yCT91fduSc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yCT91fduSc</a>
'#YoMarchoel21'	462.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1620196064938278">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1620196064938278</a>
'AFP, la gran estafa'	165.439	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2efTsCcTmA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2efTsCcTmA</a>
'¡Cámbiate!'	94.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1626674880957063">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1626674880957063</a>
'Lagarto'	70.134	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR_9ZxkkfqA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR_9ZxkkfqA</a>
'Manifestación'	62.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1805871653037384">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1805871653037384</a>
'Lo que dicen'	61.512	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kD9GakAyho">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kD9GakAyho</a>
'Luis'	59.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1939382423019639">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1939382423019639</a>
'Durante'	59.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=203063827255748">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=203063827255748</a>
'Coordinadora'	48.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=298735564168696">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=298735564168696</a>
'A tocar'	47.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1617853981839153">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1617853981839153</a>
'Declaración'	43.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2161076064110586">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2161076064110586</a>
'Unidos'	42.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=269752363661508">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=269752363661508</a>
'Carolina'	39.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1937178723240009">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1937178723240009</a>
'Faltan'	39.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1621299928161225">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1621299928161225</a>
'No'	33.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1621298194828065">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1621298194828065</a>
'Chile'	23.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1890119637708085">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1890119637708085</a>
'Domingo'	22.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1783572898600593">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1783572898600593</a>
'Alcaíno'	20.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1948606722097209">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1948606722097209</a>
'Mesina'	19.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1761576264133590">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1761576264133590</a>
'Sábado'	17.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/1963052440652637/">https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/1963052440652637/</a>
'Marcha'	17.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/2036959276595286/">https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/2036959276595286/</a>
'Propuesta'	16.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1761144027510147">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1761144027510147</a>
'Pierdes'	14.330	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brRZCC0WvY0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brRZCC0WvY0</a>
'Suma'	14.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1148355255339729">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1148355255339729</a>
'Ahora'	14.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/1804469023177647/">https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/1804469023177647/</a>
'Qué'	13.821	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGz-pWhX4m0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGz-pWhX4m0</a>
'Mujeres'	13.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=715780188821087">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=715780188821087</a>
'2019'	13.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=307325733319739">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=307325733319739</a>
'Testimonios'	12.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1784700275154522">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1784700275154522</a>
'Coordinadora'	12.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1737362279888322">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1737362279888322</a>
'Aguilar'	12.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1713990045558879">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1713990045558879</a>
'Congreso'	11.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/1874892056135343/">https://www.facebook.com/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores/videos/1874892056135343/</a>
'Razones'	11.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1774776716146878">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1774776716146878</a>
'Plebiscito'	11.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1778613132429903">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1778613132429903</a>
'Sistema'	10.241	<a href="https://youtu.be/ef7gvXfXA3A">https://youtu.be/ef7gvXfXA3A</a>
'#Actualidad'	10.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1719947341629816">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1719947341629816</a>
'Inilza'	11.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1800180943606455">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1800180943606455</a>
'Lucha'	10.000	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=612250462581556">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=612250462581556</a>

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Video activist strategy

As to the movement's video activist strategy, the types of videos and their function and purpose, plus a number of paradigmatic examples of the proposed categories (using the videos with the highest number of views in the sample as benchmarks) in order to offer a more comprehensive and illustrative contextualization, are described and discussed below.

#### 4.1.1. Type of videos

The most frequent type of videos posted by the No + AFP movement are propagandistic or programmatic, in which there is a clear ideological call to join the movement, to endorse its ideas, and to fight for its goal (17). For example, "AFP, la gran estafa" is a video made by a group of different organizations (*La Revuelta, Fundación Sol, and Confederación de Sindicatos Bancarios y Afines*), with a marked informative and pedagogical tone, in which a hand is seen drawing on a blackboard, while the narrator explains why the AFPs are a swindle for Chilean workers. Another is *Comenzamos la campaña*, a video in which the movement's leader Luis Mesina, talking to the camera in his office, succinctly explains why the AFP system is unfair, why it is necessary to be responsible citizens and look after our savings, and why the coordinating committee has proposed the provisional measure of changing to the E Fund (the least risky among the pension funds offered to workers), pending a real reform of the pension system. In a monologue aimed at workers and future pensioners, Mesina warns against the speculation and corruption associated with the AFPs, condemning them to poverty in their old age, before making a call to political action through protests and by taking adequate steps. Equally noteworthy is the video entitled "Unidos derribaremos...", in which Mesina, again talking to the camera, proposes abandoning the AFP Provida, after the disclosure that a sick person's claiming a disability pension was rejected, corruption and employee kickbacks were exposed.

The pre-mobilization or social impact videos come in second place (13). Their purpose is to encourage the citizenry to participate in demonstrations, as-

semblies, pot-banging protests, meetings, to vote in the referendum, to leave the corrupt AFPs, or to change pension funds. This is the case with "#Yo-Marchoel21", a video in which different people call for decent pensions and a pay-as-you-go-based public system and urge the people to participate in specific demonstrations organized by the coordinating committee.

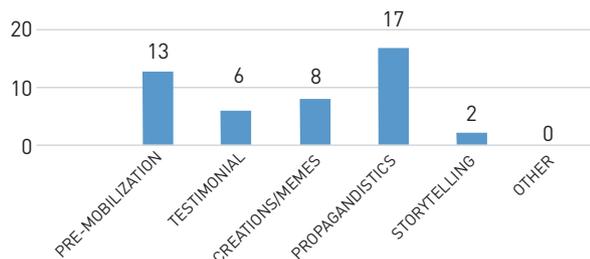
Own creations, memes, and mash-ups (8), namely, creative videos normally made by anonymous citizens or other organizations, are the third most frequent kind, using entertainment or fiction features, such as music, advertising or film, and strategies including irony and parody. The purpose of these videos is to gain followers and to arouse interest and sympathy for the movement. In this case, noteworthy videos include a trailer ("No more AFP"), made in English and highly satirical; a video clip ("Villa Cariño Oficial"), produced by a famous local band; a short film ("Lo que dicen las AFP") made by the Centre of National Studies on Alternative Development (CENDA); a TV interview programme ("Lagarto Murdock..."), featuring a very well-known hand puppet in Chile, going from one demonstration to another and expressing shamelessly satirical opinions; a meme song ("No AFP. Pierdes tu plata"); and a promotional mash-up featuring the Minions ("Mario Aguilar").

Testimonial videos (6), focusing on citizen participation in demonstrations or the movement's activities, come in fourth place. It should be noted that there is a large number of these videos in the universe analyzed, but since most of them last more than five minutes, they have not been included in the study sample. To offer just two examples, in "Manifestación de repudio..." a group of protesters, together with the movement's leader Mesina, express their concern in front of the company in question, and "Durante la mañana", a video that documents the political action of the police who are arresting peaceful demonstrators.

Lastly, the narrative or storytelling videos (2), which are much less numerous, as can be seen in **Figure 1**, are, however, more interesting for they direct appeal to the emotions and are of a markedly documentary nature. One such example is "Testimonios de una compañera pensionada", in which a pensioner describes the impossibility of making ends meet on her miserable pension, after having paid

her national insurance during 43 years; and "Una vez más...", a 84-year-old pensioner who calls on her fellow citizens to participate in the plebiscite against the AFPs.

Figure 1. Type of videos (N=39)



Source: Own elaboration

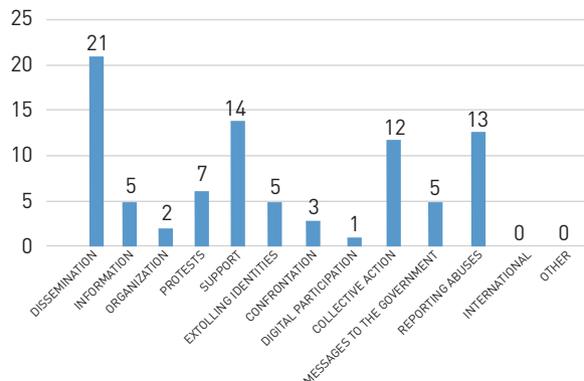
#### 4.1.2. Function and purpose of the videos

As to the political function and purpose of the videos (Figure 2), the presentation and dissemination of political ideas or the transmission of ethical values is the most frequent in all the videos analyzed (21). In an educational frame, these videos explain how the AFP system works, the reforms implemented by different governments, and their limitations. Also, the pieces depict the roots of the system and the current situation of poverty and inequality. Videos of this type include slogans that summarize ideas as "We want a public system", "social security is a right", or "we want a solidarity distribution system". The slogan "No + AFP" appears in all the videos analyzed, irrespective of their function or purpose.

Drumming up support for the movement is the second most relevant function (14), followed by reporting abuses and injustice (13), and calls to collective action other than demonstrations or assemblies (12). Calls to protesting or convening assemblies (7), providing information or reporting on the movement's activities or issuing public statements (5), messages urging the government to take steps or to listen to the people (5), and extolling identities (5) are also functions appearing in some of the videos, although to a much lesser extent than in the previous ones. While confrontation (3), internal organization (2), and fostering digital

participation (1) have a token presence, there are no videos advocating for connecting to international movements or for seeking foreign support (0).

Figure 2. Function of videos

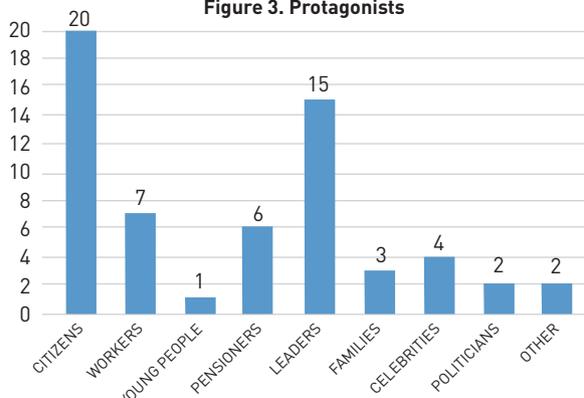


Source: Own elaboration

#### 4.2. Protagonists and antagonists

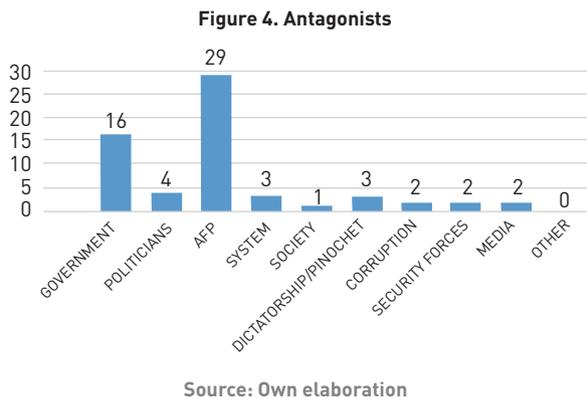
Most of the people depicted in the videos are ordinary citizens (20) expressing their concern about the AFP system, decrying a situation that they believe is unfair, or protesting collectively. These are followed by the leaders (15), in this case Mesina, the main one (14), and Carolina Espinoza, the movement's most prominent female leader (1). The third largest group includes workers from different sectors dressed for work (7), and the fourth, pensioners (6) describing how difficult is for them to make ends meet. Despite participating in the protests and appearing in the videos, celebrities (4), families (3), politicians (2), and young people (1) do not usually play a leading role (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Protagonists



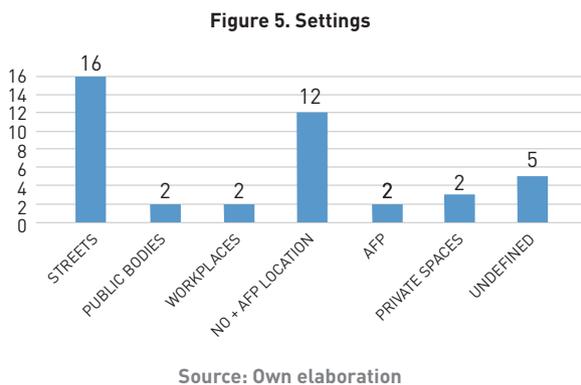
Source: Own elaboration

The main antagonists of the videos are the AFPs and the businessmen running them, (29), followed by the government (16), criticized for not changing the system, for suggesting perfunctory reforms that will make no difference, and for not heeding either the people or the No + AFP coordinating committee. Specific politicians (4), the system (3), and Pinochet and the dictatorship as a whole (3) are also the antagonists of the videos analyzed. Corruption (2), the security forces (2), the media (2), and a social minority (1) appear much less frequently (Figure 4).



### 4.3. The videos' settings

Regarding the videos' most frequent settings, the streets (15), the main public space where demonstrations, meetings, and protests, take place; the headquarters of the No + AFP coordinating committee (12); and undefined settings (5), like blackboards, neutral backgrounds, and indeterminate locations, are depicted. Private spaces, including homes (3), workplaces (2), public bodies (2), and the façades of the companies involved (2) appear less often, as shown in Figure 5.



## 5. Discussion

Despite being created and developing mainly offline, the No + AFP movement has leveraged technology as part of its political, communication, organizational, and collective action strategies. Specifically, regarding its video activist strategy, it is possible to claim that the videos have served as a catalyst sometimes supporting and sometimes enhancing the movement's political strategy. Moreover, the marked propagandistic tone of the videos evinces the importance of political-ideological strategies aimed at increasing the movement's following. Likewise, the educational and informational nature of many of the videos demonstrates that these have served as an alternative and counter-hegemonic communication channel serving the movement, encouraging reflection and public awareness raising. In this sense, the role of disseminating ideas and values is essential, as well as that of reporting injustices that the mainstream media, which "have sold themselves out to the corporate world and the AFPs themselves" (Mayorga, Del Valle & Nitrihual, 2011), are incapable of expressing. In addition to supporting the movement's communication strategy, videos have been fundamental for organizing collective action, insofar as they have called on the people to mobilize, fostered both conventional (demonstrations, assemblies, pot-banging protests, and voting in the plebiscite), and alternative participation (changing pension funds, leaving the AFP Provida, participating online...).

Identifying the protagonists and antagonists, four trends have been detected. Firstly, the existence of a confrontation or duality between an *us* (the Chilean people, the citizenry, the pensioners, the retired, the elderly, the workers, etc.) and a "guilty" them (the system, the AFPs and their top management, the government that neither listens to the people nor implements real reforms, José Piñera and the Pinochet dictatorship, both responsible for introducing and promoting the system). In this regard, it is a polarized discourse that highlights a logic of confrontation between those represented by the No + AFP coordinating committee and those accused of wrongdoings.

Secondly, it is a movement in which its leader Messina is very present, featuring in 14 of the videos analyzed and appearing in many others in a second-

dary role. Notwithstanding the fact that other leaders, spokespeople, and anonymous supporters of the movement appear in many of the material, Mesina is the most representative and the coordinating committee's main figurehead.

Thirdly, Chilean citizenry is broadly represented in the No + AFP movement given its diverse nature. Despite catering expressly to a specific generation (pensioners), it encompasses all workers because, sooner or later, they will reach their retirement age. Thus, the movement appeals to the young, the workers, and the population as a whole, especially women, regarded as the most negatively affected by the system, to join forces against the AFPs. Similarly, it integrates other movements and trade unions and engages them in dialogue, thus promoting a wide range of participation.

Lastly, by urging the citizens (regardless of their ideological sympathies) to challenge the AFPs, their top management, and the government, it is a movement that has a clearly anti-establishment and anti-liberal discourse. Be that as it may, it does not have any evident ideological or partisan links. Precisely because it lays the blame equally on the system's founders, José Piñera and Pinochet during the dictatorship, and on its "followers", the presidents of the Concertación (for instance, Lagos is mentioned on several occasions due to the ineffectiveness of his reforms, and also Bachelet for failing to provide solutions), it could be said that it is a non partisan movement. It addresses a national dilemma that affects all the country's working classes, irrespective of their political affiliation, and no political party or president has been able to fully address.

Regarding the movement's most representative spheres of action, as with any classical social movement, the public arena is still the most popular for collective action. Accordingly, most of the videos are set in the streets amidst mass demonstrations, showing the largest protest to have taken place in the country's history (now the second largest after the feminist strike on 8 March 2020). Furthermore, the movement's own premises, i.e. its headquarters, offices and lecture halls in which many of the videos were filmed, demonstrate that it is a well-organized institutional movement with an important element.

## 6. Conclusion

In sum, the No + AFP coordinating committee's video-activist political action has been crucial in supporting its offline strategy and has allowed overcoming the challenges of providing an alternative information system parallel to that of the large media corporations. The aim of the videos is basically propagandistic and informational, with the former being more plentiful. In this connection, their informational and counter-hegemonic content, offering arguments, explanations, key information aimed at raising public awareness about an unfair situation maintained and sustained by different governments for years, has been key.

The pre-mobilization videos have also been crucial for encouraging citizen participation and urging the government to take action. The movement's own creations, albeit less numerous, are relevant inasmuch as they express the support for the movement using alternative formats and different aesthetics. The actions organized by the movement on the streets, plus the coordinating committee's conferences and meetings, have been supported by the videos produced by the movement itself, like-minded associations and/or ordinary citizens. The most important functions include the dissemination of values, supporting the movement, reporting abuses and injustice, and calling on the citizenry to participate.

It can be assumed that the former are the people, Chilean citizens in general, the working classes versus the AFPs and the governments that have sustained them and failed to implement substantial reforms or to abolish the system, which would be the antagonists. Likewise, the movement's leader appears in most of the videos addressing the Chileans, decrying the injustice of the system and stressing the need to be informed and to mobilize in order to put an end to the AFPs once and for all.

The results show that the preferred setting were the streets, a traditional choice, where the citizenry assembled to express their discontent mainly at demonstrations, or where the coordinating committee offered press conferences.

This study has allowed us to determine how a narrative and a discourse conforming with the canons

of social movements, together with the technological tools currently available, can connect with the different stances of a society in order to come to grips with economic and social problems. In short, the No + AFP movement is organized, pacific, institutionalized, non partisan, participatory, and popular, and most of its activity takes place offline. However, its video-activist strategy is essential since it fosters participation and mass mobilization,

serves as an alternative information source versus the conventional media, and raises awareness. But, above all, it decries the shortcomings of a system that has been functioning in Chile for decades and the ineffectualness of successive governments that, irrespective of their ideological persuasions, have failed to put forward any solutions for an unfair and inefficient system that has plunged most of the population into poverty.

## Notas

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16. <https://www.facebook.com/nomasafp/>, with 35,005 followers, and <https://www.facebook.com/pg/coordinadora.nacionaldetrabajadores>, with 46.919 followers
17. Under the keyword "No+AFP", with over 1,000 views.

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