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**Abstract**

Chilean higher education has expanded greatly in recent decades, primarily through drawing on the private contributions of students and families, and an increased number and variety of institutions. In the context of attempts to address criticism that the sector is not free, public or high-quality enough, this article examines the association between education and its moral and ethical dimensions, and their separate yet complementary consideration alongside economic development, through the two centuries of the Chilean state's existence. Since the beginning of the current decade, discontent with the framing and performance of higher education as a whole has grown. The overview traces this process not as fresh crisis, but part of a social question pondered repeatedly in the past and supported with varying success through educational and political initiatives. This historical (and historiographic) approach illuminates the limits of conceiving of higher education as either an economic good or as a human right, and an overlooked need to support its benefits through policy. Not simply an interpenetration with economic thinking, but also a lack of sufficient appreciation of Chile's

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fundamental and singular character, present as challenges in understanding expanded access's function and its prospective contribution to growing debates around ethics and inequality. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Leihy, Peodair, E-Mail: [pete.leihy@uv.cl](mailto:pete.leihy@uv.cl)