**Piñera’s insufficient response**

President Piñera had previously endured protests in his first term (2010-2014), when students almost paralyzed the country demanding free access to higher education in 2011. As one of Chile’s wealthiest men, Piñera struggled with low approval in his first administration.

Though there was healthy economic growth, Piñera’s people skills were often not up to the occasion. He would regularly crack inappropriate jokes (Once, he asked what is the difference between a man and a politician? I won’t repeat his punchline, but you can guess there is no way such a joke can end well). Chileans believed that Piñera cared more about the elites than about them. Yet, after Piñera’s successor (and predecessor), the leftwing former President Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 and 2014-2018) completed her second term, Chileans were ready to give the moderate businessman a second chance. Since Bachelet had attempted sweeping state-centered reforms that slowed the economy and increased unemployment, Chileans were ready to vote for a candidate who would put the focus back on the private sector as the engine of economic growth. Piñera’s 2017 presidential campaign message was simple and blunt: “The good times are coming.”

Chile — as most other Latin American countries — is highly dependent on commodity exports. When the price of copper falls, the Chilean economy suffers. As a non-oil producing country, Chile is also dependent on international oil prices. A fiercely open economy, Chile is highly vulnerable to trade wars among large nations. President Piñera — who publicly stated that he preferred Hillary Clinton to win in 2016 — has strongly criticized Donald Trump’s trade war with China.  So, while the Chilean economy has continued to grow despite the headwinds of the international economy, Piñera’s promise of good economic times has failed to materialize.

GLOSSARY

1. Endure: Aguantar
2. Wealthiest: Más adinerado
3. Struggle: Luchar
4. Healthy: Saludable
5. Growth: Crecimiento
6. People skills: Habilidades interpersonales
7. Crack: Contar, decir
8. Joke: Chiste
9. Leftwing: De izquierda
10. Former: ex-
11. Compaign: Campaña
12. Blunt: Vacío
13. Commodity: Mercancía, prroductos
14. Copper: Cobre
15. Trade: realizer intercambios económicos
16. Despite: A pesar
17. Headwinds: Viento en contra