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The enactment of the admission process in secondary schools in Maipú (Chile): timing and opacity as key features.

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Abstract

This research explores the enactment of the admission process in secondary schools in Maipú, a "middle-class" district of Santiago, the capital city of Chile. This research, based on a policy sociology perspective (Ozga, 1987) and policy enactment theory (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012), explores the enactment of the school admission process in four schools, two public and two private subsidised. The research draws on enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012) and poststructural policy analysis (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). It deploys analyses of interviews and policy documents explored in two dimensions, the 'context of practices' and the 'context of policy text production'(Ball, 1994a), respectively, through the analysis of interviews with the school policy actors and analysis of policy documents produced by and for the school.

This original research explores the school admission process from an enactment perspective, understanding school admission as a two-way mechanism in which, simultaneously, families choose schools and schools select families. The peculiarity of school admission as a two-way process has been enunciated before from a theoretical point of view (Atria, 2007), but has not been explored from the school perspective in terms of the associated practices (Mansuy, 2016), nor from an enactment perspective. Moreover, Chile presents a distinct case because the admission system works in a one-to-one interaction, in contrast with what tends to occur in other countries, where the system works in a centralised way through a local authority (Carrasco, Honey, Oyarzún, & Bonilla, 2019). Furthermore, in Chile, this interaction has been operating in a highly marketised context during the last four decades (Bellei, 2015).

The research presents two key findings related to the school admission process. The first finding is that opacity in the enactment of the admission process engenders nebulous effects, ostensibly imbuing the school policy actors with an agency-of-sorts, providing ideological cover for paving the way towards multi-layered variegated discrimination across distinct settings. This situation also means that school policy actors involved in the admission process face a trade-off in terms of equity and competition. The second finding relates to how the timing of the admission process throws up important nuances in the enactment of the policies and the strategies consequently pursued by the school policy actors. It finds that different actors engaged in these processes are influenced by the school calendar in ways thusfar underestimated by the current regulations and which urgently require deeper and more sustained attention through education policy research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of the school admission team workers who generously shared their experiences and time with me. I also want to thank *Becas Chile*[1], for making it possible to study abroad in the company of my family.

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saga ongoing from 2016 and which have been followed by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as mass social unrest and a historic referendum in Chile, as a family with two babies/toddlers, we feel indebted to the NHS, and to the peace and tranquility Bristol´s parks have brought us.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my family. First, I would like to mention Doris, my wife, who has provided love and care for our children and, as she usually does, quoting an Óscar Hahn poem (2014), she 'has knocked down my house, cracked my bridges and made me lose my balance'*[2]. To our children: Victoria and Manuel. Victoria was four months old when we arrived in the United Kingdom in 2016 and Manuel was born two years later in Bristol. Both have been a very demanding source of happiness and energy throughout this process. I am also very grateful to Mercedes Camilla, César Frites López, and Doris Retamal, the grandparents, who have helped us in too many ways to mention here throughout this process, showing more patience than I suspect we deserve, dealing with a wide range of practical issues, and putting up with the absence of their first grandchildren during their first months and years with profound generosity and -almost- without regrets. I also have to mention the dialogues with my parents, in 'Excel' with César and in 'Word' with Meche, as we used to joke. Of course, I must also thank my "little" brother Exequiel, who has been refreshing company throughout this period, making us feel happy and proud. Finally, I would like to mention César Frites Cabaña, my grandfather, my *abuelito*, who lived in Maipú from 1979 until he passed away in 2018, and my grandmother, my *abuelita*, Alicia López, who, maybe capturing the spirit of the times, gave a one hundred peso coin for each test with the top grade to all her grandchildren. All of them are part of this work.

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[2] The use of an asterisk at the end of a quotation ('*') signals that the quotation is my own translation.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:.. DATE: 20-11-2020

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Víctor Jara

1.1 Introduction

In October of 2019, I was in Bristol, in the middle of the writing process and embarking upon the final year of my PhD. On the 18th October in Chile, after an incremental rise in the price of public transport by 30 Chilean pesos (0.03 pounds), secondary school students protested, jumping over theturnstiles and evading payment on the *'Metro'*, the Chilean underground in Santiago. By the end of the day, nine stations of the Metro network had been burned down (P. Fernández, 2020) and more than 80 out of 136 stations had suffered some kind of damage (Muñoz Riveros, 2020). In short, that day the biggest crisis since the recovery of democracy in 1990 following the Pinochet dictatorship was triggered. During the days and weeks that followed, there were mass protests (the biggest demonstration brought together more than a million and a half people) demanding education, health, and pensions, and bringing together environmental movements, movements for sexual diversity and indigenous groups, without the flags of political parties or trade unions. A month later, an agreement between the government and the opposition was signed calling for a referendum for a new Constitution – the last one was created in 1980 by the Pinochet dictatorship, the enduring influence of which will be detailed in Chapters Two and Three. The mass protests continued over the following months and were only interrupted by the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.

One of the main slogans of the protests was 'This is not about 30 pesos, this is about 30 years' (in Spanish, '*No son 30 pesos, son 30 años*'). Until that moment, the topic of my thesis, the enactment of the school admission processes in a middle-class district in Santiago, seemed to be a niche concern, as part of a relevant debate but situated on the fringes of the national debate[3]. These critical diagnoses put some of the problems of the 'Chilean model' at the centre of the debate, related to inequality and the provision of public goods, such as pension funds, health system, and education right; in this sense, the educational field has been a privileged space to discuss this critical agenda given the mass protests during the last 15 years. However, as a result of the massive social demonstrations and protests, some of them with high levels of violence and repression, in what has been called the 'social outbreak' ('*Estallido social*', in Spanish), the topics addressed by my thesis, such as the mechanisms associated with

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[3] This critical agenda was related to topics such as the situation of pension funds (Matus, 2017; Weibel, 2020), problems arising from the water situation (Tamayo & Carmona, 2019), the situation of indigenous peoples (Cayuqueo, 2018), the early childhood situation (C. Rojas, 2020), the feminist movement (Zerán, 2018) or corruption in the army (Weibel, 2016) and the police (Weibel, 2018), and the different scandals that affected the Church (Contardo, 2018; A. Lagos, 2017; Monckeberg, 2013).

commodification in the provision of public goods, experiences of inequality, or access to the opportunities of the middle class, were suddenly central, or even paradigmatic, issues at the heart of the national debate about the failings of neoliberalism and/or the extent of its embeddedness. In effect, my research went from the grey tones of exploring the paradoxes of the malaise of a successful case, to being placed within the framework of a debate on the origins of a social outbreak that paralysed the country for months, which forced long-resisted agreements by the political elite, and a milestone that has altered the debate in the social sciences in Chile This has resulted in fruitful discussions which have generated more than 20 books[4], most of them written in a style hard to define, which oscillates between the essayistic and the journalistic, and which has a broad scope across the social sciences.

In the context of the Chilean school system and the recent debate questioning the changes of the last four decades, the school voucher policy epitomises the omnipresence of the neoliberal agenda. School vouchers have been in the spotlight for decades, and Chile has been an example as an early adopter of this policy. School vouchers can be defined as a way to allot resources for enrolment to families (Friedman, 2006), in which schools receive money in direct correlation with the number of students enrolled at each school (Jofré, 1988). Various countries have devised and experimented with multiple systems incorporating private and public participation/ financing in different ways (Bellei, 2015). Chile has pioneered the school voucher policy, since its introduction in 1981 under the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990). Since then, the Chilean school system has experienced manifold changes in terms of enrolment rates, assessment, and curriculum; however, the voucher system has remained a constant during this period. In effect, during the last four decades, the school voucher reform and the creation of school markets have been core elements in the neoliberal education agenda globally. The Chilean system has exemplarily represented the intensified market conditions (Santori, 2016), rooted in the assumption that market mechanisms create a general improvement in the school system, and present many advantages compared to a reliance on state provision. Nonetheless, neoliberalism remains a highly debated concept, and there are several conceptual approaches that are differentiated broadly according to methodological perspectives, their distinct understandings of power, and their points of view concerning social

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[4] Triggered by a social Outburst in October (2019), and just stopped by the pandemic arrival in March (2020), these are some of the books that have been published: Mayol (2019), Baradit (2019), Araujo (2019), Matamala (2019), Fuentes (2019), Herrera (2019) Alvarado (2019), Ruiz Encina (2020), Peña (2020), Fernández (2020), Tironi (2020), Contardo (2020), Akram (2020), Muñoz Riveros (2020), Merbilháa et al. (2020), Rojas-May (2020), Zapata (2020), Heiss (2020), Bassa (2020) Soublette (2020), Mlynarz and Dela Fuente(2020), Michelson (2020), Ugalde, Schwember, and Verbal (2020), Larraín (2020), Poduje (2020), and Garcés (2020).

and economic transformation (Cahill, Cooper, Konings, & Plimrose, 2018). In this research, I follow a Foucauldian approach, which understands neoliberalism as a rationality that seeks to govern not through command and control operations but through the creation of an environment in which the choices of formally free actors tend to uphold the ideology (Rose, 1996). Neoliberalism is not understood as simply a shift in the delimitations between the state and society, it is also a system which characteristically 'develops indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them' (Lemke, 2001, p. 201). In this same way, the school voucher debate is also about actors and their practices and rationalities, and not just, as it would appear, about how resources are distributed, the role of the state and the logic of competition in the provision of a public good. In this way, the school voucher system is based on the idea that the school management team and teachers are going to be focused on the school's attainment, and that parents are going to exercise school choice mainly according to school results. Nevertheless, there has been an evolution in how school choice has been understood and exercised, and also researched, as will be fully detailed in Chapter Two.

Since its creation in 1955 (Friedman, 2006), there has been a vibrant and wide debate about the voucher system including many perspectives, such as economic, political, social and legal critical perspectives (Berends, Primus, & Springer, 2020). The policymakers who designed this policy explained the whole school system dynamic as mimicking the market and through the lens of economics, and a very particular perspective within the field of economics. The school voucher system which has been operating in Chile for almost four decades can be considered to be a radical version according to different criteria, such as jurisdiction, student eligibility, private school regulation, the voucher value, and the voucher cap, as will be fully developed in Chapter Two. Thus, the voucher is the main instrument to finance and regulate school provision, and it is currently operating in one of its most deregulated iterations (Coulson, 2009) accounting for more than 90 percent of total enrolment (Bellei, 2015).

 School vouchers have been operating in such diverse societies as Colombia (Arenas, 2005), the United States (Egalite & Wolf, 2016), and Sweden (Carnoy, 1998). The logic underpinning the design of the school voucher policy putting the school choice as the key mechanism of the system is as follows: financial resources are distributed to schools by the state according to the prevailing market logic. That is to say, parents will opt for schools with better results according to standardised tests, and in this way, the logic follows, poor performing schools will disappear from the system if they do not have enough students/resources (Jofré, 1988). This logic (parents choosing schools in the same way as consumers choose providers) puts school choice

at the centre of the debate, as a key mechanism by which the school system is driven, as can be seen in Figure 1:

Figure 1: School Choice Process Model

The singularity of the school voucher in Chile is found in its longevity, pervasiveness and radicality (Bellei, 2015); after four decades of extensive use of the school voucher, the practices associated with the voucher have evolved into an interaction that involves parents and school policy actors, such as management teams and teachers. The Chilean voucher includes more than ninety per cent of total enrolment at a national level, and it has been embedded in a specific context where there have been different practices of choice and admission, which have been constantly evolving. This dynamic has presented negative effects in terms of inequality, which has been stated by others on an abstract level (Atria, 2007) and in terms of territorial segregation (Valenzuela, Bellei, & De Los Ríos, 2010), but has not been addressed considering the practices associated with it (Mansuy, 2016). Since the voucher scheme's introduction in 1981, many policies have been deployed by successive democratic governments, and thus the system of admission has been in permanent evolution and subject to ideological adjustments in a process that has been related to the evolution of providers, districts, policy actors, and the privatisation process.

Although school vouchers and school choice issues have been in the limelight, as the key mechanisms which makes the system work as a market, my research explores the school admission process as a process which has operated in the shadow of these debates, because the school admission process has not yet been recognised as a key element in the Chilean educational debate during the last four decades. In effect, one of the main peculiarities is related to how the voucher system works in Chile (Bellei, 2020), and school choice and the admission process have thus been placed in a relationship of unacknowledged and inherent interdependency, with the voucher as an articulating instrument (Atria, 2014). In effect, both processes interact: parents choose schools, and schools choose families, putting families and schools at the same level. This double selection process was made concrete by mechanisms that were widely accepted, such as interviews with parents, entrance exams, and the request of some documents such as the previous grades of the students, and/or the psychological profile, which were considered to be pre-requisites when the students were applying to schools. These mechanisms started to be questioned by scholars from two perspectives: from

a 'market' point of view, explaining how these mechanisms were obstacles to the principle of inter-school competition and parents' freedom of choice, and from a social justice perspective, highlighting how the interviews and documents requested could be/were a form of discrimination. Since then, there have been many changes in the way research understands the school admission process in Chile. Therefore, the voucher system and its processes have been the subject of research but the interaction that has emerged between them has not been investigated in depth using a qualitative approach which assumes that the result of this interaction between school choice and admission is more than the sum of its parts, rather than one being the reverse of the other, and which takes into account the fact that these practices have been evolving during the last 40 years.

More schematically, Figure 2 shows how parents and schools interact at the same level, with parents choosing schools and school admitting students. The focus of the research has been on how parents choose a school, instead of how schools admit parents, as can be seen in the upper and lower parts of the diagram respectively.
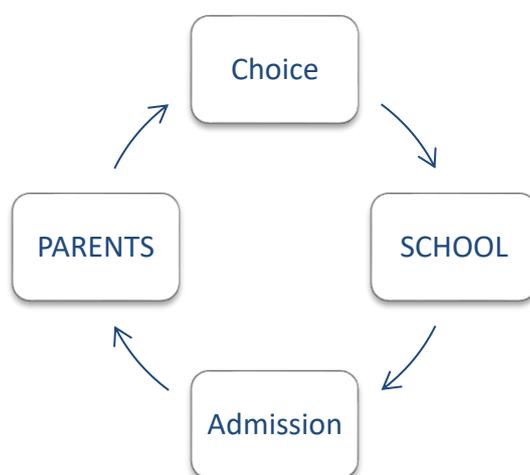
Figure 2: The Interaction Between Choice and Admission

The singularities of the school admission process, as will be fully described in Chapter Two, and the interaction between school choice and the process of admission was the basis of critical accounts which stated that the voucher presented unintended effects, meaning, in real terms, an incentive to exclude 'bad students' (Mizala, 2008). In turn, this has impacted upon levels of socio-economic segregation at the school level, which was even more marked than in neighbourhoods (Valenzuela, Bellei, & De Los Ríos, 2013). In this context, the voucher system was never reformed with the aim of ameliorating/ curtailing the prevailing market logic, or some of the unintended/ unexpected effects of the voucher system, until the year 2008, when the Preferential School Voucher Law (*Ley de Subvención Escolar Preferencial*, in Spanish) came

into being. The Preferential School Voucher Law is based on a diagnosis that considers that the original voucher presented problems in its design, which made it difficult for parents to exercise school choice (P. González, Mizala, & Romaguera, 2002). According to this diagnosis, the problem was that the original design of the voucher system did not acknowledge differences between students, because it offered the same amount of money to every student, through a 'flat voucher'[5]. Therefore, the school voucher, and the rationality underpinning the school system since 1980, was deemed to be operating as an incentive to exclude disadvantaged students who were, from the school's perspective, 'harder to teach' and by extension to obtain the 'right results' from. In effect, the schools started to develop admission processes, such as admission exams and/or personal interviews, which made school choice difficult for parents (Montecinos, Ahumada, Galdames, Campos, & Leiva, 2015) and discrimination according to family characteristics and/or the student's attainment started to be a common practice in the admission processes (Atria, 2012). In line with this diagnosis, the Preferential School Voucher had a twofold objective: equity and quality. The first objective was to improve equity in the school system, by eliminating incentives leading to student exclusion, which involved directing more money to the schools that underprivileged students attend. According to the current definition of 'underprivileged students' (Congreso, 2008), approximately forty per cent of the total enrolment qualified. The second objective was to improve the quality of the system by asking for some specific outcomes from schools, such as higher attainment and more accountability, as part of the same process. Both objectives are linked by a conditional clause (P. González, Mizala, & Romaguera, 2004; Mizala, 2008, 2009). In this way, the Preferential School Voucher Law attempts to change the logic of school choice for parents, who after the reform can effectively choose any of the schools financed by the state, without any restrictions, with schools not permitted to use tests and/or personal interviews as part of the admission process. In effect, the Preferential School Voucher is the biggest reform to the school voucher system since its origin, and it represents a significant twist in the way the quasi-market school has been operating, and how the State is redefining its role in education by attempting to reconcile competition and equity.

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[5] As will be seen in Chapter 2, since the year 1993, parents have been able to top this up with their own resources to access better/more expensive schools. This was called 'shared financing', and it has been gradually reduced in the last yearsand will be eliminated in a few years (Carrasco, Flores, Manzi, Paredes, & Santelices, 2014).

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

This research explores the school admission process, employing policy enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012), based on a policy sociology approach (Ozga, 1987), focusing on two dimensions, the 'context of the practices' (Ball, 1994a) and the 'contexts of the policy text production' (Ball, 1994a). To this end, this research considers four schools –two public and two private subsidised schools- where I carried out semi-structured interviews with members of the admission team and I analysed policy documents produced by and for the schools associated with the admission processes. This research was conducted in Maipú, which is one of the most populated districts of Santiago and thus can be considered an emblematic example of the 'new middle class'and a hotspot in terms of the recent changes in Chilein relation to the creation of educational markets and the expansion of private actors.

Given this background, the research aims to explore the enactment of school admission in the context of what has been referred to by scholars as an interactive process where parents and schools choose each other, and where the schools concerned have been very reluctant to adopt the current regulations (Atria, 2007, 2012). In this way, I want to understand how and in what ways policy actors at the school level – specifically the school admission teams- in Maipú interpret and enact the admission process given the context of the Preferential School Voucher.

This research presents two objectives:

-The first objective is to explore how policy actors at the school level interpret and enact the admission process in Maipú.

-The second objective is to explore how policy documents at the school level are enacted by the policy actors at the school level, given the context of the Preferential School Voucher policy.

These objectives present one overarching research question:

How does the admission policy enactment process configure, modify and challenge the practices and rationalities of the school admission team in the context of the Preferential School Voucher?

The main research question is associated with three interrelated research questions:

Research question 1: How do the school admission teams enact the school admission processes under the current regulations?

Research question 2: How is the admission process enacted by policy actors at the school level through its policy documents, created by and for the school, as discursive practices?

Research question 3: What kind of rationalities associated with equity and competition can be identified within and between the schools in the enactment of the school admission process?

1.3 Personal Point of View

At this point, it is pertinent to highlight that this research is inextricably linked to my personal trajectory and family history. Forty years ago, when my grandparents moved to Maipú and my parents were at secondary schools, Maipú was largely rural and was not considered part of the city (people would say 'I will go to Santiago'). In contrast, nowadays Maipú is the second most populated district in Santiago and Chile[6], becoming emblematic of a 'new middle class' and the prevailing Chilean notions of progress and capitalist modernity (Contardo, 2020). My own family can be considered as an example of this 'progress': my parents were the first generation in their families who accessed higher education, and their parents, my grandparents, were part of mass rural to urban migration. In this way, my approach is multi-layered. My family history is expressive of the changes of the last fifty years and I have witnessed Maipú's gradual transition from a semi-rural into an urban district, an example of breakneck urban growth and development in Chile. As a resident for twenty-five years in this district, I have witnessed this process as a primary and secondary school student, and I saw how what used to be a two-way road surrounded by farms and trees, horses and peasants, became an urban territory where the same road now has eight lanes and is surrounded by houses and buildings, with the urban train, the *metro*, going above and below the ground. In one of my first jobs, I was part of the street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 2010). Much later, as a Masters' student, I developed my dissertation (Frites, 2012) under the supervision of Alejandra Mizala, an economist whose studies where the basis of the development of the Preferential School Voucher Policy, and, as a research assistant, I worked researching the Preferential School Voucher Policy and the changes in the Chilean school system in recent decades (Alarcón, Donoso, & Frites, 2015; Donoso, Frites, & Castro, 2014). Additionally, in my last job in Chile, I worked with schools in Maipú and other similar districts, where I perceived some of the dilemmas that policy actors at the school level face in the context of a local school marketplace. Finally, the school voucher policy in Chile is almost as old as I am, and I have experienced it first hand and then witnessed all these changes in the educational sector of Maipú, which have run parallel to its breakneck growth. So, my research is not just anchoredin my trajectory. Rather, the school voucher policy

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[6] Chile has 346 districts, with Santiago having a total of 52 districts.

has been evolving and moving during this period, in the same way as my understanding of neoliberalism, approaches to the educational debate and the emergence of this new middle-class in Maipú throughout this period, providing an object of study which lends itself well to the theoretical frame I set out.

1.4 Thesis Structure

In terms of structure, this thesis is divided into seven chapters. The focus of each chapter is as described below. In this introduction, *What's Happening With the School Admission System in Chile?*, I have begun to introduce key themes like the role of the school voucher in Chile and the relevance of the school admission process tothe Chilean educational debate; neoliberal policies in Chile, which will be explored in more depth throughout the thesis; and a brief overview of the aims, objectives, theoretical framework, and my approach.

In Chapter Two, *The Enactment of the School Admission System in Chile*, I outline the theoretical framework and review the relevant literature to introduce the research problem. I explain the problematisation that has made me consider enactment to be the most pertinent approach, as well as why I focus on the enactment of the admissions process, presenting the admission process situated from a policy sociology perspective, with an approach to neoliberalism which stresses the relevance of practice. Then, I explain the admission process with reference to how the school voucher system works.

In Chapter Three, *School Admission in a middle-class District*, I present the context of the research. I explain the singularity of the decentralisation process, how it is related to the privatisation process, and why Maipú can be considered an example of a new middle-class district. The analysis starts in 1980, when the dictatorship introduced the main reforms to the school system and the school system started to show some of the key characteristics that remain present in 2020.

In Chapter Four, *Methodology: Researching the School Admission Process in Maipú*, I explain how the theory 'meets' the chosen methods. Here, I present and I develop a detailed account of the four schools where I developed my research, the school policy actors whom I interviewed and the selected documents used during the interviews. I discuss the methods and decisions made throughout the study, including a detailed accountof the research design, the fieldwork, the data analysis, and ethics.

In Chapters Five and Six, I present the findings from my fieldwork. In Chapter Five, I present *The Enactment of School Admission through its practices and documents*. First, I present school admission as a regular process that takes place every year and which culminates in the entry of

new students at the beginning of each school year, which in Chile corresponds to the month of March. In the enactment of the school admission processthere are divergent practices, and each school makes decisions that translate into a calendar, with school policy actors and resources that conform different scenarios. Then, I explore the second modality of admission, the admission process as a non-regular process, as an admission process that takes place during the school year, which in the Chilean case goes from March to December. Here I explain why this process is qualitatively different from the previous one and the perception that exists regarding new students, and how this is reflected in the enactment of the process.

In Chapter Six, *The Crossroads of Admission, Equity, and Competition in Dispute*, I explore different tensions that appear in establishments when schools receive, according to school admission teams, 'anyone and everyone' ' as a way of expressing the great diversity of students. This increases tension in establishments in different ways, and forces school policy actors to place themselves in dilemmas that are presented in specific contexts.

In the final chapter, Chapter Seven, *Conclusion: The Chilean School Admission Process in Maipú and the Policy Debate in Education*. Firstly, I review some of the topics of study and the Chilean policy debate in education. Then I present the main findings of the research, related to the unexpected dimensions of the enactment of school admission in both its timing and the opacity of the process. Afterwards, I review some of the contributions of the thesis,related to the explorations of a process that has remained in the shadow through a perspective that has not been used before in this area. Finally, I present some concluding thoughts explaining how this research has been in constant dialogue with some biographical elements.

Chapter Two. The Enactment of the School Admission System in Chile

The discussion of educational policy in Chile has been largely marked by a specific tone, anchored in a tradition of public policy and described by the literature, which marks the truth conditions of the discourse and determines its legitimacy. It is a process that was modeled by elite sectors and was projected to broader sectors of society, which determined what it was possible to discuss. This, in a post-dictatorship context, resulted in the absence of discussion about certain topics, such as human rights. This is a way of arguing in the public sphere and in the public policy debate in which there is a clear hegemony of numerical and quantitative methodologies, to the detriment of qualitative evidence. This has defined the characteristics of those arguments thus considered legitimate, as well as those which have been disqualified or rendered as antiquated, as anchored in the past, irrelevant or resentful. Some studies indicate that the characteristics of this debate have been forged since the 1980s; and that a large part of its characteristics are shaped by the need to generate a dialogue in a context of great polarisation, and to offer governance to the country in a context of disclosure and what would be come to be known as the democratic transition. In this sense, the debate is configured and promoted towards those actors in the system who express their ideas in terms that elude value judgments, by using an aseptic tone based on 'facts', which is based to a great extent on academic credentials. This context has had profound effects at different levels. Indeed, as Patricio Silva summarises: 'Before the military takeover technocrats cautiously kept their diplomas in their desks, while since the era of the Chicago boys they have been hung proudly on the wall' (1991, p. 389). In effect; the academic, political, and educational policy discussion promotes a markedly technocratic tone; educational research in Chile had a marked emphasis on 'outcomes', to the detriment of the study of 'practices'. Herrera (2019) summarises that there is an 'economistic' perspective that opposes a 'moralist' point of view, and the difficulties of creating a dialogue between these perspectives. Along the same lines, according to Bellei (2014) educational research has been oscillating between two poles: 'unproductive speculation' and 'myopic empiricism'; stressing the lack of communication between a theory without data, and, on the other hand, the data without theory.

In Chapter 2, I present a literature review explaining the relationship between education and neoliberal policies and how some of these policies have been studied at the school level, particularly focusing on policy enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012), and its origin in the policy sociology approach (Ozga, 1987), and the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a; Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992). The literature review chapter is thus divided into six sections. Firstly (2.1), I review the relationship between neoliberalism and education, describing my perspective in relation to

neoliberalism, highlighting the definition of neoliberalism with a lower-case 'n' according to the classification of Ong (2007). Secondly (2.2), I describe a Foucauldian approach to neoliberalism, based on governmentality studies and policy technologies (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). I explain that my research is situated within a Foucaldian perspective, stressing the relevance of practices, based on a policy sociology approach (Ozga, 1987), the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a; Ball et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 1992), and enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012). Thirdly (2.3), I focus on the studies that have been developed at the school level focusing on the policy process and their practices, following the policy enactment approach (Ball et al., 2012). I review the work of Stephen Ball and his attempt to explore the 'context of practices' (Bowe et al., 1992), and the challenges associated with researching policy processes at the school level; and why the study of practices in Latin America present particularities that must be considered in the analysis (Araujo, 2009b; Güell, Frei, & Palestini, 2009; Martuccelli, 2009; Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009). In the fourth section (2.4), I describe how the school voucher was introduced in the Chilean context, and which elements made the school voucher experience so extreme and unique, presenting admission and school choice narratives in three key moments (1981, 1993, and 2008). I explore the different ideas which underlie and foreground each moment: the reform of 1981, the reforms of shared financing in 1993, and the preferential School Voucher in 2008. Then, I explain how the admission process as a research topic in/from Chile presents some peculiarities. In the fifth section (2.5), I focus on the Preferential School Voucher as the main reform to the school voucher system since its origin and as the most ambitious synthesis of the prevalent logic of the educational debate nowadays, combining the use of policy technologies, such as the market, accountability, and management. I describe the interplay between choice and admission as two different, but related, processes. Finally, in the conclusion (2.6), I sum up the main ideas of the chapter and how these ideas are related to the context of the research.

2.1 Neoliberalism With a Lower-Case 'N' and Education Policies

There are several ways to understand neoliberalism. These approaches are typically differentiated according to broader methodological commitments andtheir particular understanding of power and processes of social and economic transformation (Cahill et al., 2018). Following Birch (2015, 2017), my study engages mainly with a Foucauldian approach which understands neoliberalism as a specific form of governmentality. Birch distinguishes

other approaches too[7]. In a broad sense, according to Ong (2007), there are two ways to understand neoliberalism. Firstly, neoliberalism in with a lower-case 'n' and, secondly with a capital 'N'. Ong defines neoliberalism with a lower-case 'n' as a set of practices that can be adapted to a different context and coexist and thrive alongside different rationalities. On the other hand, neoliberalism with a capital 'N' considers these processes as structural and inevitable, with predetermined elements and outcomes. So, in a more general sense, I follow Ong`s classification, using the definition of neoliberalism with a lower-case 'n' to highlight the multiple paths that can be labelled under the same concept, along with the singularity of each process. Ong refuses to see neoliberalism as a set of attributes with predetermined results 'as a logic of governing that migrates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts' (2007, p. 3). In this sense, according to Ong, 'if we view neoliberalism not as a system but as a migratory set of practices, we would have to take into account how its flows articulate diverse situations and participate in mutating configurations of possibility' (2007, p. 4). An example is given by Judt (2010), who highlights the compatibility of this system with right- and left-wing dictatorships (Chile and China, for example) or with social democratic monarchies (Sweden) and plutocratic republics (the United States).

Over the last four decades, we have seen significant changes in education, such as the introduction of the school voucher and the en masse privatisation of the school system, which are often associated in a wider sense with neoliberalism. According to David Harvey (2005), the years 1978-80 may be looked on by historians as a revolutionary turning point in terms of the rise of neoliberal ideas. These ideas can be synthesised as a particular version of individual freedom which highlights economic dimensions, including deregulation, privatisation, and the minimal role of the state (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberal ideas were already known before this period, but it was in the context of the economic recession of those years that this agenda found an opportune scenario to be implemented by Ronald Reagan in the United States, Margaret Thatcher in the UK, and Augusto Pinochet in Chile (Valdés, 1995). In this context, almost four decades ago Chile was the first world laboratory of a project that ended up being called neoliberalism (Araujo & Martuccelli, 2012a).

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[7] Birchdistinguishes other approaches such as a state-centric perspective associated with the Regulation School and which centres on state actors rather than on private actors as the key drivers of change; and a geographical approach which understands neoliberalism as an always emerging and contested process. A Marxist approach, which understands neoliberalism as a hegemonic project benefitting capital at the expense of labour. An ideational analysis, which views neoliberalism as the product of normative doctrines. An institutional analysis that takes institutions as the key variable which determines the form that neoliberalism has taken in different locales; and, finally, an epistemic approach which provides limited details about how epistemic communities –or thought collectives– go about creating change.

In Chile, the introduction of neoliberal ideas has undoubtedly been most associated with the ideological influence of the Chicago Boys. This group took part in the most important changes in Chile's recent history. However, the reforms that occurred in Chile are presented in a specific historical and social context, which allows the confluence of this group of economists with the military personnel and the civilians who led the dictatorship. In this vein, the relevance of the Chicago Boys cannot be dismissed. However, the reference to this pro-market-reform group of economists does not explain the specificities of what happens at the school level, in terms of practices and rationalities which underlie policy enactment in its different contexts. In this sense, understanding neoliberalism as a 'migratory set of practices' as 'a technology of governing' free subjects 'that co-exists with other political rationalities' (Ong, 2007, p. 4), will allow me to appreciate what elements of continuity and ruptures there are with Chilean history and the wider Latin American context.

The introduction of market logic into public provision has been a highly debated topic. Considering the evolution of this debate since the 1980s, this process has been mainly characterised through concepts such as quasi-markets, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and New Public Management. According to Le Grand (1991), we talk about quasi-markets when the system works according to a market scheme, with competitive providers that are actually financed and regulated by the state. The introduction of quasi-markets requires that the state stops being both funder and provider in order to become a funder that purchases educational services from a variety of private actors 'all operating in competition with one another' (1991, p. 1257). The introduction of competition into the delivery of social services reveals different views of society and divergent assumptions about human motivations and behaviour. Le Grand highlights the consequences of this shift from the welfare state to market-oriented policies (Le Grand, 1997, 2011; Le Grand & Wolfson, 1998), stating that agents could behave, according to the circumstances, as public spirited altruists ('knights'), as passive followers of policies ('pawns') or as agents primarily oriented by their own self-interest ('knaves'). In this sense, the concept of quasi-markets acknowledges how different logics and approaches to public policy can operate concurrently. So, according to the quasi-market theory, policy actors are not just maximising their opportunities, as was stated at the beginning of the process. A second approach is related to Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPPs can be broadly defined as 'arrangements between public and private actors for the delivery of goods, services and/or facilities' (Verger & Moschetti, 2017, p. 2). PPPs are presented by their advocates as being cost-effective policy solutions to the problems of access and quality that many educational systems face (Verger & Moschetti, 2017). Similarly, they are promoted by the World Bankin

terms of quasi-markets, highlighting the advantages of market provision and competition as a way of strengthening the quality and effectiveness of educational systems (Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio, & Guaqueta, 2009), putting pressure on schools to get good results and compete for better students (Verger, Bonal, & Zancajo, 2016b). These concepts are related to what can be labelled as the neoliberal agenda, but these are not primarily focused on the practices which underlie the policy enactment approach adopted. A third approach is offered by the New Public Management approach; according to this perspective, the State, through different governments, understands the school as an organisation which must be managed as an industry to accomplish results which are controlled by a set of parameters and indicators. In this way NPM starts to be part of the way in which the system is regulated, through features such as explicit standards and measures of performance, control of outputs, a shift towards disaggregating the public into different units, greater competition and stress on private sector styles of management and the 'right' use of resources (Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2013). In Chile, a systematic and coherent approach, following the principles of management, has been used as as the main way to understand policies (Sisto, 2019).

The introduction of market mechanisms, and the way this is explained through quasi-markets, Public-Private Partnerships, and New Public Management, supposes new challenges and consequences for research in education and around policy debate which go beyond the traditional dichotomy between public and private. Traditional categories of analysis, such as public/private, lose their purchase for explaining the complexity of the system (Verger, Moschetti, & Fontdevila, 2017). In effect, there are different concepts and levels for understanding the processes of educational change, which have been broadly categorised within concepts such as neoliberalism, privatisation, decentralisation, quasi-markets or public-private partnerships As Dale (2006) states, these explanations tend to be too general, considering the variety of situations which can be understood by the different concepts that we use to describe the interplay between the state and education. Something similar can be said in terms of the trajectory of these privatisation processes (Verger, Fontdevila, & Zancajo, 2017). In effect, in Chile, this situation goes beyond the educational debate, including the provision of other public goods, such as health and pension funds. Therefore, quasi-markets, Public-Private Partnerships, and New Public Management are very useful to describe how public and private logics and provision interact, but more specific concepts are needed to describe these processes at the school level in Chile and to focus on practices; a first useful distinction is given by the research from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective.

The research from Chile suggests that looking at vouchers from an outcomes perspective is an over-represented tendency (Coulson, 2009), in contrast to the research that highlights the voucher policy from a qualitative and historical perspective (Bellei, 2015). There is a wide amount of research exploring the effects of vouchers in the school system. In this sense, some scholars have compared outcomes distinguishing provider, rurality, and socio-economic level based on data from government and standardised tests. This is a tradition exemplified in the research of McEwan and Carnoy (2000), whose research is based on administrative data taken from the Ministry of Education and standardised tests. They explore the effectiveness and efficiency of private and public schools in Chile, concluding that the advantages of some schools cannot be considered to be a result of this policy. Other studies of the Chilean educational system, such as González, Mizala, and Romaguera (2004), have explored inequality within the system and what has been considered to be unintended/ unexpected effects of the voucher policy. In this study, for example, they argue that a fundamental design flaw in the vouchers' structure allots the same amount of money to students from different backgrounds. The aforementioned authors, based on administrative data, standardised tests, and the national poverty survey, state that a way to resolve the design problem of the voucher is to make changes to the structure of the voucher scheme. Finally, there are other studies that have explored inequality and segregation of the system. In this sense, Valenzuela, Bellei, and De Los Rios (2013) developed an empirical study of school segregation in Chile, at the national and local level, studying the relationship between market-oriented policies and school segregation, and finding, for example, that schools in Chile are even more segregated than their neighbourhoods from a socio-economic perspective. These studies are indicative, at the same time, of the type of research being developed from an outcomes perspective, and the evolution of educational research in Chile. These examples illustrate the different topics which have been investigated adopting a quantitative approach to the voucher system in Chile. From my perspective, the most pertinent conclusion of this debate was summarised by Bellei (2015) when he states that the alleged positive effects of the voucher policy cannot be demonstrated, even considering all the sophisticated methodologies that have been deployed by a range of educational scholars; this is in opposition to the negative effects in terms of equity and segregation which have been demonstrated by educational research and which have been at the centre of public debate in recent years (Atria, 2012; Santa Cruz & Olmedo, 2012).

Thereby, there is another strand of research exploring the school voucher scheme in relation to the context of practices. In Chile, the overrepresentation of quantitative research is matched by the underrepresentation of qualitative approaches. In a broad sense, qualitative

education research has been focused on the research of policies, and it has been more related to identity, social justice, or exclusion. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that there is a growing amount of research exploring some of the processes described, parental choice or school competition, for example. In these cases the focus is not on school admission but on the problematisation of parents' school choice, or school competitionimplying a problematisation of admission. In this regard, the school voucher policy is key to understanding some of the unexpected effects. So, in terms of processes, the core questions about vouchers can be classified into two main perspectives. Firstly, from the parents' perspectives, by trying to understand the school choice process (How do parents choose a school for their children?) and, secondly, from the school's, in order to understand competition between schools (If schools compete, how do they compete?) or whether it is possible to use market instruments to fight against discrimination and inequality (Can vouchers promote equity?) (García-Huidobro & Bellei, 2006). In Chile, an initial approach to exploring the different rationalities of policy actors involved in the school choice process can be seen in the research of Hernández and Raczynski (2015). Based on interviews with parents, the authors identify different logics that underlie school choices made by parents, showing parents' preferences according to gender and to their perceptions of children's skills. Bellei, Canales, and Orellana (2016) study how this process takes place based on interviews and focus groups in working-class and middle-class families, stressing why they choose private institutions, instead of public schools, according to variables related to the perception of social class and if the school develops admission exams as a proxy for quality. Also, parents took these decisions almost without considering the outcomes of standardised tests. Carrasco, Falabella, and Tironi (2016) researched the choice process in three families based on interviews and ethnographic work done during a period of seven months, explaining the different logics that families consider in this process, and how the admission process is a source of a wide range of tensions. Rojas, Falabella, and Leyton (2016) and Leyton and Rojas (2017) researched the role of mothers as key actors in school choice, balancing protection, the social and cultural status of the school, and how the socio-economic position, neighbourhood, public transport, the school offer in the district, and the type and quality of the information available affect choice. Here, again, the researchers found that there are many competing logics which underpin the choice process. Corvalán and Román (2012, 2016) have explored the perceptions of parents in relation to the quality of schools, and how this perception can be different from the policy perspective, and how the parents' perception about school quality is not consistent with results from standardised tests. To sum up, if there is a minimum common denominator between these authors, it is the attempt to provide a contrast to and a nuance with the logic stated by policy-

makers, and to elaborate explanations, based on qualitative works, which are not necessarily related to the policymakers' assumptions.

Beyond the hegemonic problematisation of these changes, through concepts such as quasi-markets, New Public Management and Public-Private Partnership, these changes, and how they have been expressed in terms of outcomes and practices, represent a challenge for educational research;the discussion presents its specificities and emphases. In this sense, my research puts into discussion three chunks of the educational debate in Chile that roughly correspond to what can be called the neoliberal, the democratic, and the critical. These chunks can be also related to moments where these approaches have been prevalent during the last four decades. The first one, the neoliberal approach, played a hegemonic role during the Chilean dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet and led to profound reforms in the 1980s. These changes were designed by a group of postgraduate Chilean economists from the University of Chicago, dubbed the 'Chicago Boys' (Valdés, 1995). This influential group of economists, supported by the dictatorship, understood almost all dimensions of social life from an economic perspective, based on the ideas of the free-market economist Milton Friedman. The reforms were made through an economic lens trying to mimic the market and following a very specific way of understanding the market and the field of economics, as per the Chicago School perspective. In this context, Chile went from being a laboratory of market policies to becoming an international model of marketisation during the following years, when this model was consolidated after 1990 (Araujo, 2013). A second approach to the educational debate emerged during democratic rule, after the return to democracy in 1990, when the government started to deal with, adapt and change the legacy of the dictatorship, trying to balance equity and competition. Since then, there has been a controversy inside these governments, with two main positions. With a certain level of glibness, but with some analytical value, these positions have been labeled the 'self-complacents' and the 'self-flagellants' (Varas, 2010). On the one hand, the self-complacents highlight the general improvement in equity, productivity and citizenship (Ottone & Hopenhayn, 2007), and, on the other hand, the self-flagellants emphasise the elements that did not change after the dictatorship, the 'denied agenda', which corresponds to how the educational system works under the market reforms, the redefinition of the role of the state under the voucher system, and competition between schools (Cox, 1997, 2012; Mizala & Romaguera, 2000). A third arena concerns critical approaches; these accounts have played a secondary role during the majority of the period, overshadowed by the successful Chilean case, remaining in the margins of the hegemonic debate during the last decades. Nevertheless, the debate raised from these critical perspectives was revitalised after

the massive student mobilisations of 2006 and 2011, calling into question the policies followed by the dictatorship and the subsequentdemocratic governments.

The predominant views in the Chilean debate have been related to Neoliberalism with a capital 'N', and, consequently, with a debate in terms of outcomes. Nevertheless, critical approaches have been part of a debate that, situated in the margins until now, has been gaining relevance during the last decade, and particularly since the social uprising of October 2019. In the next section, I will focus on how these critical approaches have been working around practices and neoliberalism with a lower-case 'n'.

2.2 The Policy Sociology Approach, Actors and Context(s)

In this section, I explain briefly the policy sociology approach (Ozga, 1987) and the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a; Bowe et al., 1992), a very productive approach developed in the 1990s, which underlies current approaches and which I posit is still very useful in the Chilean context. Policy sociology is a concept coined by Jenny Ozga, which proposes the development of studies'rooted in the social science tradition, historically informed and drawing on qualitative and illuminative techniques' (1987, p. 144). Using this approach, I explore in detail the context of practices and the context of policy text productionas two key dimensions of the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a; Bowe et al., 1992); and the challenges associated with the role of policy actors and context in the policy process at a school level (Ball et al., 2012).

This work is supported by a Foucaldian approach. Considering the wide range of what can be considered 'Foucaldian', the idea of a Foucaldian approach requires some clarification. Foucault wrote in an overwhelming diversity of records and he was often reluctant to set boundaries for the usage of his ideas, and their principles and methods. As often noted, one cannot speak of a Foucaldian approach as a single set of assumptions. In this context, the first question after declaring a Foucauldian approach would be: 'which one?'. Several dimensions complicate a definition. Foucault developed a vast work that was published in a variety of formats. His works include texts with diverse uses and purposes: books published while he was alive; intervention articles and interviews, published while he was alive; as well as Collège de France courses and other works, such as conference papers and speeches not included in *Dits et écrits*. This library has more than 10,000 pages (E. Castro, 2011). Indeed, although his first work dates back to 1954, the courses of the Collège de France began to be published in 1997 and the papers resulting from conferences from 2004 onwards[8]. In addition to the

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[8] To this basic library more than 72,000 unpublished pages can be added, which will surely give rise to new publications (E. Castro, 2014).

complexities that Foucault offers by himself, there is a lengthy and diverse list of authors who claim to be tributaries in some sense to a Foucauldian point of view. Although it is debatable to make national distinctions in terms of ideas, it is fair to say that the chronological criterion has been in dialogue with the translation, and this has affected Foucault's reception. So, concerning the analysis of educational policies, I rely largely on the Anglo-Saxon reception of his ideas, and with what has been called 'governmentality studies'(Castro-Gómez, 2015), which is based on works published in the 1990s (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996; Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991) and the reception of his ideas from the educational debate (Ball, 1994c; Ball et al., 2012; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004).

Defining a Foucaldian approach presents many difficulties as has been said. However, it is possible to find some parameters that unite what we might call the Foucaldian approach. In this sense, I am particularly concerned with the authors that are working on 'late' Foucault (Dean, 2010; Lagasnerie, 2015; Lemke, 2019), with an emphasis on the 'heterogeneous practices, and in particular the knowledge practices, that produce hierarchical and inegalitarian forms of rule. By emphasizing a plurality of practices, it becomes possible to insist that the realities we live are contingent, open to challenge and change' (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 4). Sharing this sensibility, my work forms part of the Foucaldian tradition of governmentality studies where 'the focus is on government as a critical tool for analysing political technologies and rationalities in contemporary societies' (Lemke, 2019, p. 1). In this sense, the work on governmentality is presented in two senses, mediating:

> between power and subjectivity and makes it possible to investigate how processes of domination are linked to "technologies of the self" and how forms of political government are articulated with "practices of self-government" and 'the problematic of government accounts for the close relations between power and knowledge and helps to elucidate what Foucault in his earlier work called the "knowledge-power" nexus. (Lemke, 2019, pp. xiv–xv)

Deleuze (1999), addresses at least four points of the Foucaldian ideas on neoliberalism to explain Foucault: (i) Societies moderate the behaviour of the subjects, they do not intervene directly on their bodies, but rather on an 'environment'(remote action) that favors self-regulation of behaviour. (ii) The freedom of the subjects appears as a condition for their submission. (iii) There is nothing that is out of the market and control is deterritorialised and molecularised. (iv) In control societies, the 'immaterial' is as important or greater to the economy than the material, neoliberal technologies go beyond the basic needs, and subjects seek to capitalise themselves.

In this sense, unlike the other approaches explained in the previous section, the concept of governmentality allow us to explore this class of phenomena from a perspective that introduces a new analytical dimension; by exploring power relations in terms of 'conduct', as an effort to create an approach which avoids the analysis which separates the micro and macro levels, grasping the interplay 'between governing others (*"gou-vernement des autres"*) and modes of self-government (*"gouvernement* de soi")' in a fuller fashion, thereby enabling a more thorough examination of the processes of subjectivation' (Lemke, 2019, p. 21). In this way, governmentality studies are explored as 'governmental practices that constitute political "subjects" as "governable" through promoting identities that "perform" behaviours deemed to be desirable' (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 50). In this sense, taking this vision to the analysis of policy seems to be of particular interest considering the effects of policies in their enactment, and how public policies can be implementedin opposition to their declared ends, or with unexpected/ unforeseen results. Given the context of governmentality studies, it is interesting to explore the underlying assumptions that policy design makes that policy 'is a good thing that fixes things up' (Bacchi, 2009, p. ix). This idea entails an understanding of the 'problem' to be 'fixed', and the nature of what 'needs to change'. This notion collides with a multiplicy of perspectives more blurred and multi-layered than the policy problem defines. As Ball states, 'the history of education policies, is precisely, a history of the problematisations of education, set within a broader field' (2013, p. 28).

The policy cycle approach highlights that the actors involved in the policy process are not neutral or indifferent. In my research, the policy actors are situated at the school policy-making level, corresponding to the school administration team, teachers and management teams. Bowe, Ball, and Gold state that policy actors: 'do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come with histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of policy' (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 22). Policies are interpreted according to these differences. In effect, policy actors play a key role in the policy process. According to Ball Maguire et al.: 'They are engaged, coping with the meaningful and the meaningless, often self-mobilised around patterns of focus and neglected and torn between discomfort and pragmatism, but most are also very firmly embedded in the prevailing policies discourses' (2011, p. 636).

In this way, policy actors and context become central elements in the policy process. According to this perspective, policies are not simply slavishly implemented, as the application of policies just as was stipulated in their design. In contrast, policies are enacted recognising the development of a policy as 'creative processes of interpretation and recontextualisation' and

the multilayered and messy 'relationship between making policy and practising policy in complex situated contexts like schools' (Maguire, Braun, & Ball, 2015, p. 486). In effect, according to policy enactment theory some of the policy effects can be difficult to understand from the policy design perspective, as well as which practices will help to accomplish the desired outcomes or, instead, are going to present unexpected effects (Ball et al., 2012).

In the case of policy-actors, following Olssen, Codd, and O'Neill, the management teams and teachers express an inherent tension between liberal and neoliberal governmentalities. The liberal, as 'a mode of institutional organisation characterised by a principle of autonomy which represented a form of power based on "delegation" (that is, delegated authority) and underpinned by relations of trust. (2004, p. 186)' is in opposition to a neoliberal governmentality, where 'principal-agent, line-management chains of command, replace delegated power with forms of authoritative hierarchical relation, which erode, and seek to prohibit, an autonomous space from emerging' (2004, p. 186). These guidelines are particularly clear in the case of teachers, as Bellei (2001) suggested in relation to teachers' identities. There are divergent types of teachers. Firstly the 'essential teacher' as the realisation and joy, a 'commercialised profession' as a business and investment, the 'daily teacher', as delivery and effort, and the 'liberal profession', associated with competition and results.

In this regard, a distinction that has been very productive in the context of policy studies refers to 'policy as texts' and 'policy as discourse' (Ball, 1994a), as a way to understand the unstable interplay of these dimensions at the school level as a core element of my research. Policy as text is essentially a way to see policies as representations which are encoded and decoded in complex ways; encoded through 'struggles, compromises authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations' (Ball, 1994a, p. 16), and decoded through actors' interpretations which are related to their 'history, experiences, skills, resources and context' (Ball, 1994a, p. 16), recognising the relevance of policy actors when the policy depends on an enactment process which is related to commitment, understanding and resources and the practical constraints and practicalities of the context. Secondly, policy as discourse places emphasis on how 'we read and respond to policies in discursive circumstances that we cannot, or perhaps do not, think about' (Ball, 1994a, p. 23) and considers 'the subjectivities, the knowledge, and the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows' (Ball, 1994a, p. 22). In this sense, practices and rationalities are a key element to understanding the interplay between these dimensions; and the effect of the policy is related to what we can think of as possible, and our capability of thinking otherwise. The distinction of policy as texts and policy as discourse has been useful, as Casimiro states, 'for the investigation of the regulatory processes that operate

in guiding the reading of political texts in a certain direction, without ignoring the possibility to escape which textuality provides us' (2016, p. 3). According to Falabella, this distinction begins a dialogue between notions of agency and constraint: 'Agency will always be framed by constraints, and constraints will be resisted and rebuilt through agency' (2013, pp. 83–84). This means being tied at the same time 'to someone else by control and dependence' [and] 'to one's own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (2016b, p. 1131).

Finally, following the concept coined by Ozga, this perspective highlights a view of the policy process as a 'contested terrain'. In this way, the school voucher and admission processes are 'not delivered, in tablets of stone, to a grateful or quiescent population' (2000, p. 1), and there has been a continuous process of revision and debate from across educational policy research. In this way, my research attempts to address the interplay of both dimensions according to the 'policy actors'" particularly focusing on the 'contexts of practices' and the 'context of policy text production'.

A defining feature of the policy sociology approach and the accompanying concepts of the policy cycle and the theory of enactment is that they all refuse a linear approach to the policy process for the same reason. They eschew the simplistic notion of state policy simply being designed by an educational expert and implemented by policy actors following a top-down logic. According to this mechanistic perspective, implementation is understood as a causal chain where different actors follow different roles which have been previously defined: 'While at the top of the hierarchy, policymakers make plans or reforms in an active way, at the local level schools, heads, and teachers passively carry out the plans to reach the desired goals as established by policymakers.'* (Carrasco, 2010, p. 27).

In Chile, this type of linear approach, with its inevitable economic bent, has been predominant in policy debate to date, to the detriment of alternative perspectives (Ruiz Schneider, 2010; Valdés, 1995). In this sense, the policy sociology approach states that the effects of market-based policies and the day-to-day life-worlds of schools cannot be understood merely in terms of quantitative results (Angus, 2015), and also posits that the effects of these policies are infinitely more complex than the alleged positive effects in terms of cost-effectiveness and quality promoted by their advocates. To sum up, according to this perspective policies present 'effects', instead of 'outcomes', and would be 'enacted' rather than 'implemented'.

Disregarding this diversity, the Chicago School claim that 'it is possible to manipulate and predict behaviour by means of an indefinite extension of market rationality' (Dean, 2010, p. 185). Given this particular vision, neoliberal management considers 'the professions as self-

interested groups who indulge in rent-seeking behaviour' (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 187). According to Lemke (2001), neoliberal thinking generalises these principles, following two objectives: first, expanding their analytical principles and economic terms to non-economic areas; and, secondly, enabling the critical evaluation according to these principles. The identity of professionals associated with the provision of public goods -doctors, lawyers or teachers– 'traditionally wanted to have the terms of their practice and conduct dictated by anyone else but their peers' (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 187).

The main way to create these changes is through the technologies of agency and performance, or policy technologies. Policy technologies are understood to be neoliberal technologies: 'globally, the neoliberal reform process has three major, highly interrelated and interdependent components or technologies – multifaceted mechanisms of change that bear upon and reinvent public sector services' (Ball, 2016a, p. 1049). Ball presents an attempt to describe the neoliberal reform process through its different components or technologies. Technology is a Foucaldian concept which corresponds, according to Han (2017), to two techniques: as techniques of the self,which correspond to how subjects deploy themselves, their singular self, to reach their "ideal" of being; and techniques of domination, which correspond to how individuals take dominium over other individuals. In the context of the educational debate, Ball (2016a) distinguishes policy technologies such as the market, management, and performance, which are defined as the 'multifaceted mechanisms of change that bear upon and reinvent public sector services' (2016a, p. 1049). Ball states that these technologies are interrelated and interdependent. Market policy technology particularly corresponds to 'arrangements of competition and choice, and various forms of privatisation' (2016a, p. 1049). Management policy technology 'is a delivery system for change, a method for reculturing educational organisations, and is the fulcrum of changing relations between teachers and head teachers and thus teachers and the state, and citizens and the state' (2016a, p. 1049). Performativity policy technology is a 'complex and powerful relationship between such indicators and management systems and teacher identity and professionalism' (2016a, p. 1052). As Ball details, performativity is made of state regulation which: 'requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation' (2003b, p. 215).

The focus on the admission process as a market technology is related to a key aspect of the school system that has been discussed widely in recent years, and the admission process has been evolving since the voucher's introduction in 1981. In addition, a great part of the

regulation efforts have been related to this dimension, and particularly access issues (Orellana, Guajardo, Jara, Sanhueza, & Carvallo, 2018). In this way, 'these technologies of reform typically do not confront us in the form of grand strategies but, rather, as mundane and practical changes in our everyday practices' (Ball, 2016a, p. 1050). Nevertheless, the focus has been on the admission process but not on the dialogue between parental choice and the enactment of the admission process as a practice. In this way, understanding the admission process as an internal and external process is not just in our actions: 'they also change who we are, how we think about what we do, how we relate to one another, how we decide what is important and what is acceptable, what is tolerable' (Ball, 2016a, p. 1050).

Following the works of Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) and Ball (1994a), my research is focused on the context of practices and the context of policy text production at the school level; two out of the five contexts that the policy cycle considers. The policy cycle contemplates the context of practices, which refers to 'a number of arenas of action -some private and some public. Each context involves struggle and compromise and also ad hocery. They are loosely coupled and there is no one simple direction of flow of information between them' (1994a, p. 26). The key point is that 'policy is not simply received and implemented within this arena rather it is subject to interpretation and then "recreated"' (Bowe et al., 1992, pp. 21–22). The context of policy text production, refers to the creation of policy content, which can take different forms, such as legal texts, policy documents, and official speeches among others. This context refers to the desire of a policy, usually framed in terms of a solution to a problem. As Falabella states, 'behind these policy texts lie assumptions, competing interests, ambiguities, contradictions, and omissions. Furthermore, they embody the explicit and implicit struggles and conflicts of their production and interpretation' (2013, p. 85).

The context of influence corresponds to 'the setting in which policies are devised. This implies the economic, social, political and historical factors that knit the context in which policies are constructed' (Falabella, 2013, p. 85). The context of outcomes corresponds to 'the relationship between first order (practice) and the order effects' (Ball, 1994a, p. 26) and the context of political strategy, which refers to the political and social activities to remedy inequalities. My research will focus on the context of practices and the context of policy text production. In this way, from my perspective, exploring these contexts at the school level is a way to stress the relevance of policy actors and the context of the policy process, because, as I will attempt to demonstrate, I consider that this context has been historically underestimated by the Chilean research to date. In this sense, my research is based on an approach which considers an inconsistency consubstantial with this scenario: 'the school is continually disrupted or faced

with contradictory expectations, but this is an incoherence that can be made to work, most of the time' (Ball, Maguire, et al., 2011, p. 637). In effect, by analysing the practices and the policy documents associated with the school admission process, I want to explore these tension points that have been traditionally understood 'as more stable than [they] really [are]' (Ball, Maguire, et al., 2011, p. 637). In effect, my research focuses on a policy that attempts to correct some of the now acknowledged unintended/unexpected effects of the original voucher policy, highlighting the policy actors, the practices, and rationalities which are present in the context of the policy process. The voucher policy was designed according to what can be defined as linear thinking, which postulates social relations as results of 'relatively constant, delimitated, and recognisable cause and effect relationships. It affirms that if these relationships are known, their results can be modified through interventions which will have a predictable effect, directly and proportionally linked to them'* (Güell et al., 2009, p. 66). What this vision does not recognise is that the actors for whom these reforms were intended interpret and construct the meanings of them, adapting their interests to the new context offered and not necessarily reacting according to plan.

The enactment theory, and other distinctions such as the policy cycle and the policy as text/ discourse, rest upon a Foucauldian perspective, which sees power as a force 'disseminated across the social space through complex and open-ended relations, involving a range of actors and institutions [rather than] viewing it as flowing top-down from a transcendent authority' (Behrent, 2016, p. 29). This approach envisages a vision of public policies in which the policies do not rest on the head of the policy makers, moving beyond the 'right' design and the 'correct' incentives. In this vein, according to Ball, Hoskins, Maguire and Ball 'it is only possible to begin to think sensibly about policy and its enactment if we work with an encompassing (extensive) and conceptually dense definition of policy and policy processes' (2011, p. 11). Therefore, 'To reduce all of this to a problem of "implementation" is a travesty of the policy process and a massive interpretational failure by researchers and policymakers' (Ball, Hoskins, et al., 2011, p. 12). This is in opposition to a vision of policies which are created under an image of society and its members, in which the political actors are supposed to share the same rationality and interests, and should interpret the situation in the same sense that the policy-maker gave them. According to Ruiz Schneider, state action is planned in terms of incentives, not rights, as if: 'agents [were] atoms that have mechanically determinable behaviours based on interests, not subjects that argue in common about rights.'* (2010, p. 111). Nevertheless, the voucher policy has presented negative effects in terms of increased inequality and socio-economic segregation according to how it has been implemented (Bellei, 2015; Mizala, 2009).

Many of the concepts which have been productive for educational research in the 1990s in the United Kingdom, if not directly applicable, are also very useful for framing aspects of the Chilean debate, especially when considering the emphasis on outcomes and what has been criticised as an 'economicist' perspective (Herrera, 2019) and a 'myopic empiricism' (Bellei, 2014).

2.3 The Enactment of School Aadmission in Chile

In this section, I present the policy enactment theory and some of the elements which must be considered for its application in Chile. My research is focused on policies at the school level, and, more specifically with the school admission process, understanding this process as a special type of market policy technology. In this way, I want to know and to analyse the kind of problematisation which is made by the admission process as a practice, assuming a critical perspective on the so-called implementation studies. Considering the policy process in a complex way, these studies allow me a first approach to the study of these processes as practices. In this way, the studies that I will review are a response and a criticism of the mechanistic and linear logic that has been present in studies of policy implementation. In this sense, these studies seek to recognise and address the complexity of policy processes and how these processes are influenced by multiple contextual dimensions hitherto neglected, and also by how policy actors are positioned in relation to policy (Ball et al., 2012).

Ball's work, in his 'enactment' strand[9], explores how the different policies interact with each other through teachers, and a diversity of policy actors, in ways that can be unpredictable or could have unexpected effects, and the roles that are assumed by those who must somehow make sense of the policy (or policies). Ball started to develop the enactment concept at the end of the 1980s (Casimiro, 2016). Nevertheless, this was widely developed by Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992) and Ball (1994a), and years later in association with Meg Maguire and Annette Braun, in the book *How Schools Do Policy. Policy Enactments in Secondary Schools* (2012) and many other articles which explore different dimensions of the concept (Ball, Hoskins, et al., 2011; Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011; Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010; Maguire et al., 2015; Maguire, Perryman, Ball, & Braun, 2011). In these works, Ball[10] offers conceptual tools to understand how school policies work in the school context. Ball states that the context should be considered seriously by exploring some contextual dimensions, such as history, staffing,

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[9] Ball has also engaged with a more Bourdian perspective, exploring choice and the middle class (Ball, 2003a) or race (Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, & Ball, 2015).

[10] I am going to refer just to Stephen Ball, in order to make the document easier to read.

school ethos, and culture, in addition to material elements like buildings, resources, and the external environment (Ball et al., 2012; Braun et al., 2011).

Policies are intimately shaped and influenced by other factors, in ways that tend to be neglected by policymakers and researchers. At the same time, Ball explores how policy depends upon policy actors and how they are positioned differently in relation to policy and aspects such as experience, responsibility, and aspirations (Ball, Maguire, et al., 2011); and how the opinions and the engagement of policy actors are allied to particular perspectives, as Maguire, Braun, and Ball say: 'where you stand depends on where you sit' (2015, p. 490). In this way, Ball et al (2011) have developed a typology identifying the different voices which a variety of actors assume in relation to policies. In this sense, Ball is not only concerned about the interpretation, selection and enforcement of meanings ('narrators') or advocacy and integration ('entrepreneurs') but also with the kind of roles and actors which lead these processes. In fact, he also considers the actors who are passive ('receivers'); entrepreneurs, partnerships and monitors ('outsiders'); actors who account and report ('transactors'); union representatives ('critics') or actors who are in a role of creativity and investment ('enthusiasts'). To sum up, enactment theory is an attempt to engage with the level of complexity involved in school research from a qualitative standpoint and an attempt to take into account the different layers embedded within a policy.

Their work was developed through ethnographic research, interviews, and documentary analysis, which considered all the actors involved in the policy at the school level. This type of approach considers the different roles which can be seen and how the interaction of the diversity of interests, agendas, and the particularities of an institution affect the way in which policies are enacted according to policy design and the policy debate agenda. To develop this kind of analysis, Ball considers contextual dimensions, such as situated contexts, professional cultures, material contexts, and external contexts (Ball et al., 2012).

Ball defines 'context' as where actors 'make sense' of policies, considering the history of the schools and the external environment, as a way to develop a better understanding of the policy process and how power is distributed in schools. In this sense, Ball offers a 'heuristic device' in order to create a better understanding of the policy process within schools, as a reflection on the limits that enable us to think about new possibilities.

The study of practices in the context of policy research has particular nuances pertinent to the Latin American context, given a long tradition of ambiguity in relation to norms, regulations, and laws. This problematic relationship can be traced back through famous phrases, such as

'the law is recognised but not complied with' ('*La ley se acata, pero no se cumple'*, in Spanish), or in the idea that we live in the culture of 'as if' (Girola, 2009). In a context where the 'law is recognised but not complied with', the admission process is in a context of opacity. In this way, the opacity is incomplete, and the assumption is that the opacity is partly legible and there is a calculation that does not follow the norm but rather takes it as a reference. In this sense, it is important to clarify that the particularity of practices in Latin America goes beyond the use of traps. In this sense, the school admission process can be understood from the perspective of different actors that concur in a joint manner, experiencing different aspects of the the same scenario. In this sense, as Ruiz Encina suggests, 'the reception of the ideals and projects born of the transformation of central capitalism follow the convoluted processes of regional metabolism, where their original meaning is resignified under local peculiarities'* (2019, p. 63). In this sense, not only the concepts should be carefully considered. There are relevant issues associated with the nature of practices in the Latin American context which must be factored into the analysis.

Given this context, practices in Latin America must be understood beyond the idea of 'not following rules'. In other words, beyond a deficit, or beyond the figure of an incomplete or anomalous process, speaking of the specificity of practices in Latin America does not imply that Latin America has the privilege/ monopoly on inventing lies or cheating. The relation between the individuals and the norm is defined by the distance that the subjects define with the norm as a reference: 'It is the management of the distance from the norm, its adjustment to it, that characterises the framing of the problem'* (Araujo, 2009a, p. 93). The interpretations that follow this approach show great diversity, going from considering lies as a threat to society or through analyses which describe the circumstances that explain the lies, or that highlight their positive character, associated with critical approaches and power relations. In this sense, the validity of a norm is defined operationally to the extent that it is really accepted as a practical principle ordering its conduct, that is, 'not only to be accepted verbally or ideally, but to have empirical force in the life of its recipients'* (Girola, 2009, p. 27).

In this sense, according to Girola, analysing Mexican society, secrets, lies, and duplicity would be part of a repertoire of 'adaptive' outings, 'not consciously or reflexively assumed, but operative, to the problem of persistent transgression, and the anomies'* (Girola, 2009, p. 48). In this sense, as Girola suggests, these processes not only do not observe the existing order, they are deviations that can also be seen as a sign of new emergent orders, as a way to question the current ones, which can be considered as a failure or non valid: 'it is a way to confront the conditions of inequality, hierarchical relationships and the impossibility of

managing one's life with dignity, by a large part of the population'* (2009, p. 51). In effect, this is a way to see a semblance of order within the apparent disorder.

From Chile, it is worth considering the scope regarding the study of practices, in this sense, although the study of practices has not been carried out at the school level, sharing the sensibility of the studies outlined above[11]. A development which has as abasis opposition to what is characterised as linear thought, generally associated with economists and the hegemonic vision that has prevailed for the last four decades. In this sense, these visions depart from a critical diagnosis of what has been identified as 'linear thinking', which shows its limitations, because 'it supposes a type of actors and relationships between them that are very idealised, it tends to overlook the real behaviours of the people and the particularity of the situations in which they act'* (Güell et al., 2009, p. 67).

This is in opposition to 'the persistence of ways of doing things deeply rooted historically and culturally in Chilean society. The consequence is usually that unexpected effects appear that distort the programmed changes'* (Güell et al., 2009, p. 67). In this sense, I focus exclusively on certain typologies of the ways of doing things in Chile that leaves the study of practices in Chile, associated with a series of studies on different topics, in areas such as health, education, work and others. Although they are not theoretically or thematically related to my research, they give an account of the specificity of Chile and, in a broader sense, of Latin America. Although the researchers mentioned do not share the approach previously indicated from the studies of policy sociology, nonetheless they have beenen lightening in informing aspects of my own study. From that perspective, it is important to look at this challenge from the sphere of practice and norms that are present transversally in different areas of social life and that are essential to consider. As was stated by the study *The way of doing things* (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009), there are different ways to respond to new regulation/policies, as can be seen in Table 1:

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[11] Recent exceptions are Falabella (2020), Inostroza (2019, 2020), and Verger, Bonal, and Zancajo (2016a).

Ways	Phrase
Resisted adoption	'I will do that, but in my own way'*
Adaptive improvisation	'It must be done, if I do not do it, nobody will'*
Transgression agreement	'This is not good for you, for me neither, let's solve this between us'*
Permanent negotiation	'Who are they to tell me what I should do?'*
A minimum agreement	'Why should I do things, if they do not do the same?'*
Negotiation for the best	'If all of us try, everyone wins'*
Projective adaptation	'In the long run, the changes are for the better'*

Table 1: The Way Things are Done in Chile. Adapted from PNUD (2009)

According to Araujo (2009a), the study of practices and their usage/ the presence of lies would be associated with a scenario that, such as lying, requires a second look, which requires avoiding two traps, the normative and the pragmatic. The first one, the normative trap refers to the gap, to the deficit, to the distance between the ideal and real performance of the individual. In this sense, the verification of the divorce between practices and ideals is a frequent conclusion. On the other hand, the pragmatist trap implies the preeminence of social determinations over the individual, where behaviours are conceived of as a result of the thrust of the economic structure or of social relations, as compliance, or as a reaction. Considering this scenario, Araujo suggests considering 'ideals-social experience-subject configuration''' as an analytical tripod that can contribute to the study of the relationship between individuals and norms, and avoid the aforementioned double trap, understanding these processes in all their complexities and nuances: 'by incorporating in the centre the dimension of the contingency at the same time as the individual agency, it opens the space for a plural understanding of moral work and its destinies.'* (Araujo, 2009a, p. 114). Finally, in a complementary way, Portocarrero highlights that both the moralistic and cynical position imply an abdication of the condition of 'subject', and a more sensible approach is to accept that 'each one is inhabited, in different proportions, by all these figures'* (2009, p. 59).

It is said that Chile is a 'legalistic country', as a way to stress the centrality that norms and regulation play in Chilean life. This idea took root in the first years of the Republic during the 1830s, and has continually been stressed as a foundational myth of Chile and its singularity as a 'poor, but honest country' (Silva, 2016), and the origin of the authoritarian and conservative state. I will not go into more detail in this analysis, but I want to point out that there is a problematic relationship between regulations and laws,and the Chilean identity which is in

dialogue with the Latin American context. The continuity of this 'legalistic' nature can be seen through some observations of common life[12].

Finally, I would like to conclude by quoting the writer Jorge Ibargüengoitia, who in some ways exemplifies the problematisation of this section, describing the problems that occur regarding the export of strawberries from Mexico to the United Kingdom. Explaining an irregular situation, which seems obvious to the chronicler, the 'dangers of export', he states:

> When Mexican strawberries arrived on the English market for the first time, the English importers protested that not all of them were equal. It was an unwarranted protest of ignorant people. Everyone knows that the Mexican strawberry is packaged: a layer of "first selection", a second one, a crushed layer, a very ripe layer, and a rotten layer on the bottom. This way of packing is a commercial procedure perfectly accepted and well known in Mexico; of great ancestry, besides. We inherited it from our indigenous ancestors, whose merchants based their operations on two fundamental principles: "that the good defend the rotten ones" and "the bruised one goes to the back"' * (2013, pp. 62–63).

This kind of situation is not uncommon even today, the encounter – sometimes as a balance, sometimes as a clash – of different practices and rationalities; which, at the same time, gives us access to how this process works, and what makes the school admission process in a middle-class district of the capital city of Chile different and unique. In a secondary way, it also captures a feeling of the awkwardness of exploring topics that seem to be quite obvious, but highly contradictory, according to their different protagonists.

2.4 The Chilean School Voucher in Three Moments

In this section, I introduce the idea of the voucher; I explain some of the particularities of how it operates g in Chile, and the narratives associated with three milestones in its evolution; first, with its origin (1981), second, associated with the so-called shared financing policy (1993) and, third, the Preferential School Voucher (2008), moments that crystallise different political moments/debates.

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[12] For example, Gabriel García Márquez, the Colombian writer, once said that Santiago was the only place he knew where the law was sold on the streets, next to newspapers and magazines (Matamala, 2019). Along the same lines, there is a brief story of a failed Coup d'etat in 1973, the so-called 'tanquetazo', less than three months before the 'successful' one, the military went from the regiments to the Palacio de La Moneda (the House of Government), the tanks stopped at the red lights, and then, when the traffic lights turned green, they followed on their way next to cars and public transport (Baradit, 2018; Marks, 2015).

The concept of the school voucher was set out by Milton Friedman in 1955 (Friedman, 2006) and was implemented in Chile in 1981, as one of the earlier and more radical experiences of voucher systems around the world. Since then, the school voucher has been evolving for almost 40 years, private actors have participated in school provision in manifold ways, and the voucher policy has been one of the most relevant ways. Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guaqueta (2009) describe this diversity showing the continuum from a public system to a mostly private system. On the face of it, there is a mostly public system, where regulation, finance, and provision are made by the state. Beyond this, there is a grey area where the state and the private sector converge, and there are subsidies to inputs in private schools, there are contracts with private schools to provide a portion of the teaching, or the private management of public schools. Finally, there is a predominantly private system, where the system is financed and regulated by a voucher system and the funding 'follows the student'. Given this context, the school voucher system, and therefore Chile, is situated on the private extreme of this continuum. Being part of the extreme of this continuum presupposes acceptance of the outcomes of market logic; in the words of Jofré,

> The market wouldn't have an optimum if the game weren't to be true if by the end of the month, you would say: congratulations, you are rich, but now, give me your money, the state would give you an amount without regard for what happened in the game* (1988, p. 207).

The school voucher is on the private extreme of the public-private continuum, but there are different ways to implement the voucher policy, and according to these differences Chile is situated again at the extreme. Egalite and Wolff (2016), based on a review of the empirical research of the different experiences of school choice in the United States, identified five dimensions to characterise the experiences of 23 states. These criteria corresponded to: jurisdiction (district, city, county, and state), student eligibility (if the voucher is targeted), private school regulation (if schools are regulated in relation to accreditation, accountability, assessment, financial audits, student admission policies), voucher value (if there are differences according to grade level, type of expenses, etc.), and voucher cap (if there are limits on the number of vouchers). These criteria are a source of diversity, and the voucher can work in different ways according to how each of these five dimensions is configured. It can be hard to debate coherently about vouchers in this messy context, as Clarke, Newman, and Westmarland posit: 'it is not a single axis of debate and conflict. Public, policy and political discourse about choice continues to slide around these different axes of antagonisms, proving disconcerting, distressing and disorderly in the process' (2008, p. 252). So, even considering

this 'messy' scenario and the many possible combinations, the Chilean school system consistently follows the most extreme path with a voucher system working at the national level, with all students being eligible, with low regulation, with differences in the value of the voucher according to socioeconomic level, and without limits on the number of vouchers which are given. So, if the application of neoliberal policies presupposes a change in the role of the state, there have been multiple ways of redefining this new role and shaping a new scenario, where organisation, management, and the decision-making process in the system are discussed (Ball & Youdell, 2007). Given this general context, it is very clear that the Chilean school voucher is situated on the extreme of this public-private continuum and that, according to its design, it has been implemented in the most extreme way. Finally, on top of that, Chile is not just placed on the 'extreme of the extreme' of the public-private continuum, Chile was also an early adopter of neoliberal policies, and this agenda has been evolving during the last four decades and when these policies started to be applied, many neoliberal concepts referring to values, governance, and regulation were still in their 'infancy' (Rizvi, 2013). To sum up, Chile has an experience that 'first made the country an "experiment", and, afterwards, it became a model'* (Araujo, 2013, p. 114), which in education is an 'hyper-marketised environment' (Santori, 2016).

The large-scale reforms of the 1980s proposed a sea-change in admission and school choice logics. However, this change was not once and for all, and the system has continued evolving and changing. Here I introduce the narratives which are associated with three moments. First, the voucher reform in 1981; the second, 'shared financing'in 1993 and, finally, the Preferential School Voucher law in 2008. Here I want to highlight these moments as policy text which carry particular narratives and 'tell a story about what is possible or desirable to achieve' (Ozga, 2000, p. 95). In this first moment, in the year 1981, the policy established that the school system worked as a quasi-market. In effect, according to this logic, parents would choose schools according to their results and good schools would increase their enrolment and poor-performing schools would naturally disappear. Concerning processes of admission and choice, in this foundational moment, there was a mechanical translation from the market logic. So, the parents would be consumers looking for the best provision, and families would thus behave as rational actors within this logic. On the other hand, schools would accept students, because their income would depend on that, and they would maximise their chances for more students. In this case, the whole system is based on the idea that school policy actors will be rational actors, and 'the peculiar understanding that rational choice consists only of the clever promoting of self-interest' (Sen, 2009, p. 32).

A second moment is in 1993, with the shared financing reform, when the first democratic government allowed parents to give private complementary resources to the schools. This reform is proposed as a complement to the value of the subsidy that had not been adjusted since the early 1980s, and which had lost 30% of its value in relative terms, in this context, the subsidy recovered its value at the moment of decentralisation with a 33% readjustment (Espínola & de Moura, 1999). According to this new scenario, private providers enthusiastically adopted this new system. Given this context, following the ideas of New Public Management, the vision of the state as the corrector and creator of incentives was strengthened,and they began to play a new role. Cox (1997) stated that the State should be the 'rower', and not the 'rudder' of the changes, following the metaphor of Osborne and Gaebler (1992). In this sense, as Cox states, it is the State that:

'adds to its conventional tools of the norm and the budget, growing its use of the instruments of information, evaluation, and incentives; that externalises functions and creates support networks in civil society; and that it conceives of one of its essential functions that of watching, proactively, through programs and strategies that are explicit and sustained over time, by the quality of the system as a whole and, through positive discrimination practices, by equity'* (1997, p. 20).

Concerning the effects of shared financing, Jorge Arrate, the Minister of Education at that time, said that the reform did not accomplish his expectations, because 'the regulations that I proposed were not included, and situations of injustice and inequity occurred'* (Espínola & de Moura, 1999, p.52). In that sense, the ex-minister added, explaining that the logic of shared financing, and the injustice of giving the same subsidy to the 90 per cent of the population, in practical terms, from decile one to nine, were no different: 'It does not seem fair, that someone who is in a very favorable economic condition receives a subsidy and those in a situation of extreme poverty receive exactly the same'* (Espínola & de Moura, 1999, p. 96). Following these ideas, the authorities considered that the parents who could afford it could pay a minimum fee to the school provider. Nevertheless, according to the former minister, 'there was a lack of coordination in the rules and, in short, the application of the system caused some side-effects that, clearly, were not what was desired'* (Espínola & de Moura, 1999, p. 96). Conversely, this logic was very well received by other actors, as Patricia Matte, a member of one of the richest families in Chile[13] who had established a network of subsidized private schools, vindicated the logic that underpins shared financing, by noting that shared

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[13] Luksic, Angelini, Paulmann and Matte - in 2010 they owned 21 per cent of GDP (Solimano, 2012)

financing is one of the keys to the greater commitment of parents to the educational establishment, when they pay and they 'demand more from the establishment and its children because they feel that they are paying for a service that is being given to them and they complain if they feel that they are not delivering what they expect'* (Espínola & de Moura, 1999, p.107), concluding that parents from different backgrounds –low and high income families- are not different, and there is a confluence between left and right, who arguing in different ways with divergent logic, ultimately reach the same conclusion according to the importance and relevance of private education. Those who do it from a conservative tradition, do so from the point of view of the protection of the freedom to choose, and those who do it from a more progressive tradition, will do so thinking about the protection of diversity. This is the time of maximum confluence between the Chilean left and right, either from the assessment of diversity or from the perspective of freedom of teaching and entrepreneurship. So, shared financing, together with other discretional criteria for the selection of students, led private subsidised schools towards establishing measures that allowed them to homogenise their student body in socioeconomic terms, specialising in certain types of students. From economic theory, shared financing is similar to price discrimination (Treviño, Salazar, & Donoso, 2011).

It can be considered that there is a third moment, which was engendered by the Preferential School Subsidy law of 2008, and changed the narratives of choice and admission again. It was in this last period when policymakers started to consider that there were problems in the design and implementation of policies, according to the unintended/unexpected outcomes. The reasoning behind the Preferential School Voucher, which will be more fully analysed in the next section, judged it possible to create and correct the situation through new incentives and rules. At the same time, the critical literature considers that it was at this moment when the first governments resolved to make substantive changes and try to regulate and govern the relationship and dynamics between the State and the Market. In this sense, critical views emerged which confirmed the difficulties that parents faced in choosing a school establishment. At the same time, voices arose that posed nuances regarding the inconveniences of the admission processes. In this latter sense, Brunner (2007) states that there can be a selection process, and that it is not discriminatory provided that it obeys the conditions of context andis conducted in a timely manner with students of the correct age., The effects of selection on educational centres can not be exaggerated, 'nor are the advantages (or disadvantages) of working with homogeneous or diverse groups of students clear'* (p.243). The Chilean system with high social differentiation reinforces the effect of that

selection on that segmented homogeneity. To summarise, the Preferential School Subsidy Law was the most ambitious policy since the system began operating in 1981. The Preferential School Subsidy seeks to correct a fundamental design error, which was pointed out by its creators.

In this sense, it is an initiative that seeks equity through targeting instruments, by correcting the price system, and through the market mechanism. The union of market mechanisms and state in specific territories is an anomaly at the international level, and it is impossible to explain without reference to history. In effect, these three moments account for readings and options regarding the role of parents and the school. In effect, there is an evolution of the voucher, and the narratives of admission and school choice, according to the policy documents and legislation. These moments reflect a particular problematisation, where there are underlying ideas and a policy problem which are an answer to different problems; and also a vision of the role of school choice and school admission, as can be seen in Table 2.

	The voucher origin (1981)	Shared financing (1993)	Preferential School Voucher (2008)
Underlying Idea	The school system works as a market.	Parents are authorised to make private contributions as a complement to the voucher.	The system contemplates differentiated resources according to student's origin.
Policy Problem	The system did not present incentives for efficiency or improvement of the system, because it was centralised.	The system did not have enough resources. Parents can and should provide more resources, according to capability.	System does not recognise the costs of educating different students.
School Choice	Anyschool that receives resources from the State.	Conditioned by the ability to pay.	Any school that subscribes to the Preferential School Voucher Law.
Admission process	The biggest incentive is to have more students; however, establishments can develop admission processes.	The establishments can develop selective processes based on the ability to pay, or other criteria, such as entrance exams or students' characteristics.	The establishments are not authorised to develop admission processes, according to any selection criteria.

Table 2: Voucher Evolution: Underlying Ideas and Policy Problems, Choice and Admission

There is a particular vision of tschool choice and school admission processes underlying these three moments, which responds in turn to different policy problems, showing a clear underlying idea. Nevertheless, these visions share the assumption of symmetric information and school quality as the base of the school choice (Mediavilla & Zancajo, 2018). In effect, the system has been evolving according to the challenges that have been exposed, and these

visions envisaged clear assumptions about school choice and the school admission process. These moments are an account of the evolution of school choice and the admission process that has been crystallised in narratives regardingwhat each process represents, and consequently what a parent and a school, ideally, should be. In this sense, the Preferential School Voucher Law represents a solution to a decades-old problem.

The Chilean admission process, until the year 2008, was defined by the interplay of the schools which were chosen by the parents, and the schools which tried to choose the students to teach through a selective process. Consequently, there is an emergent group of scholars who are studying the admission process from the schools' perspective. Elacqua and Santos (2013) show how the changes in regulation –the Preferential School Voucher – has revealed the preferences of private providers, according to their situation in the market and the values promoted by the institution. Atria developed several essays (2007, 2012, 2014) signalling how private providers consistently exclude some citizens, according to competitive criteria, according to the students' characteristics or admission tests. So, in the next section, there is a detailed account of the characteristics of the Preferential School Voucher, and how this policy has tried to address this dynamic.

2.5 The Preferential School Voucher and the Centrality of the Enactment of School Admission

The admission process was one of the most debated points when considering the changes proposed by the Preferential School Voucher. The centrality of the admission policy is related to the fact that the interplay between parents' preferences and the school admission process was not carried out in the way the policy design originally stated. In practical terms, parents were not able to choose, because schools created admission processes in order to choose the students. This interaction (parents choosing schools, and schools choosing parents) was considered problematic for policymakers and scholars from two different perspectives. Following market logic, the main mechanism to improve the system, school choice, was not working the good schools grew, and the poor-performing ones disappeared just when parents were able to exercise school choice. From the perspective of equity and social justice, the voucher system was manifestly unfair, because parents were discriminated against by its characteristics and were unable to choose schools for their children that were financed with public resources. Given this context, the Preferential School Voucher Law represented a solution to both aspectsfor the policymakers. Nevertheless, after the application of the Preferential School Voucher Law, school admission remained a constant source of controversy. In effect, there was some evidence that some schools were setting admission exams, conducting personal interviews with parents, or using more subtle covert methods which

discriminated against some students along socioeconomic lines (Irarrázabal et al., 2012). From the families' perspective, there were parents who valued the admission processes developed by schools in order to maintain the school's characteristics (Canales et al., 2016). In this sense, the legislation was strengthened by the Inclusion Law among others. This reform eliminated and sanctioned a series of discriminatory practices in the admission process, which were presented in a general framework of reforms. What is relevant, in this case, is that these reforms did not modify the logic installed by the Preferential School Subsidy Law, but instead further consolidated it.

The Preferential School Voucher Law in 2008 has been the main reform to the Chilean voucher system since it was implemented in 1981. The Preferential School Voucher's stated objective is to offer equality of learning opportunities by apportioning an additional amount of money to underprivileged students that are defined as 'priority students', which corresponds approximately to 40 per cent of the total enrolment (Mizala & Torche, 2013). The Preferential School Voucher was designed on the assumption that the school voucher was inherently problematic in its design. The problem was that the voucher was the same for all schools, a 'flat' voucher, and it failed to recognise the different costs associated with educating students from different backgrounds. Therefore, if the voucher was the same for all the students, this was in practical terms an incentive for the provider to exclude the students deemed 'harder to teach'. Conversely, this was also an incentive to 'select' the best students. To summarise, the Preferential School Voucher was designed as an attempt to eliminate these incentives and change the dynamics of the school system (Alarcón et al., 2015). In this sense, the Preferential School Voucher aims to correct the flat voucher system, by providing greater resources for the most vulnerable students, ensuring transparency and good use of resources by maintaining the quality of the education they provide. It also aims to instill a culture of permanent evaluation and continuous performance improvement of educational actors, by pressuring the schools for improvements based on the specific needs and demands detected by the members of the school community, intervening in the schools with consistently poor results in standardised tests, and limiting the exclusionary practices that are performed through selection or copayment (MINEDUC, 2010).

To sum up, the voucher policy takes into account commitments in different areas such as the exemption of payments, free admission of students without consideration of assessment, information for parents about the educational project, and a report to the school community about the Preferential School Voucher resources (Irarrázabal et al., 2012). This reform creates a systemic structure of linkage between public spending and school organisation, deepening a

relationship of allocation of targeted resources to the population that is defined as 'more vulnerable'. In the long run, this broadens private interference frameworks, at different levels, to the extent that the delivery of resources has secured income to institutions that profit from it (Guajardo & Jara, 2018). According to Weinstein and Villalobos (2016) the Preferential School Voucher can be summarised as being a specific measure, but with wider ramifications in three dimensions: from an economic point of view, asa measure of public finance that looks for more equity in education; from the educational process, as a policy which introduces a new mechanism to promote educational improvement; and, finally, as an educational policy, the Preferential School Voucher showed the new 'rules of the game' for schools and school administrators. The principles which underlie the Preferential School Voucher Law and the policies which followed it exacerbate a pattern that, from the policy maker's point of view, tries to meld equity and market logic in a virtuous way.

The Preferential School Voucher policy is voluntary for schools. So, if the school wants to be part of this policy and access its resources, the school must sign up to the 'Excellence and Equality of Opportunities Agreement' (in Spanish: '*Convenio de excelencia e igualdad de oportunidades*'). The Preferential School Voucher establishes that when the school signs this agreement, the schools will be classified, considering dimensions such as their respective historical trajectories, the outcomes according to a national test in language and maths, and the socioeconomic conditions in each school. The schools can be classified as 'emergent' or 'autonomous', and if the school does not deliver the expected results, the school is declared 'in recovery', and can be closed and excluded from the system if it fails to accomplish the stated goals (Mizala, 2007, 2009). It seems relevant to stress that the Preferential School Voucher's resources are conditional on accomplishing certain objectives and commitments. Considering these goals, the Preferential Voucher Law (Congreso, 2008) posits that the school should develop an action plan considering a diagnostic of the initial situation, withan evaluation of the school's human, technical and material resources. At the end of the plan's execution, the school should accomplish results in line with national standards. According to this plan, the school can use additional resources from the Preferential School Voucher to contract new professionals or to contract the services of an external agency to accomplish the statedgoals. As Ball states, sometimes the autonomy can be more apparent than real, introducing a solution: 'which allows the state to retain considerable "steerage" over the goals and processes of the education system (while appearing not to do so)' (1994a, p. 10). The commitments that the school must subscribe to are attached to the following three policy

technologies: market, performativity and management, which correspond to: admission, outcomes, and management respectively, as can be seen in Figure 3.
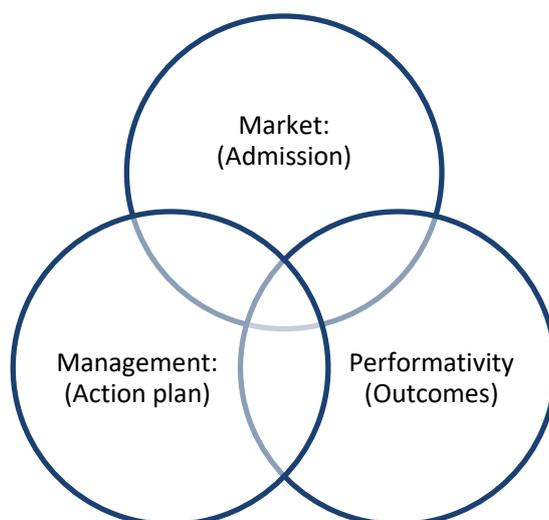
Figure 3: Policy Technologies in the Context of the Preferential School Voucher

The regulation of these dimensions (admission, outcomes, and management) aims to change how the system works as a whole, and there are zones of interaction between these policy technologiesas an attempt to change some problematic aspects that complicate the smooth functioning of the system. In this sense, the Preferential School Voucher Law represents the most ambitious reform of the school voucher and how it works since the introduction of the school voucher in Chile.

These policy technologies are present in the Preferential School Voucher. In relation to the market policy technology, the Preferential School Voucher Law changes admission policy, by eliminating any specific requirements that schools can impose on parents. In this way, there is a change in the way schools can develop processes of competition. So, if the school wants access to these new resources they should commit to a change to the admission policy, by eliminating any kind of pre-requisites, such as 'current or potential student assessment or the student' [or the] 'socio-economical background of the family of the student'* (Congreso, 2008, p. 1239). Concerning performativity policy technology, the law asks schools to commit in terms of achieving results and developing accountability processes. This involves establishing and accomplishing the 'effectivity goals in the academic assessment of the students, particularly considering "priority students", according to the Ministry of Education criteria'* (Congreso, 2008, p. 1240). Finally, in terms of the management policy technology, the schools must develop an action plan to address some of the key dimensions, such as developing specific

activities, and explaining how these additional resources will be used, under the supervision of a special agency.

There have been mechanisms that have been questioned in the context of the enactment of school admission. Requiring certain documents from families and interviews with parents have been the most questioned mechanisms (Atria, 2007). These mechanisms were a compulsory element of the admission process, including responding to surveys, several interviews, and psychological profiling. Through the use of the requested documents, the school developed the evaluation and weighting of different factors, such as the socioeconomic-level, the characteristics of the families and certain characteristics of the students that were considered to be desirable. The whole process was characterised by a lack of clarity; the objective of the interviews and documents was not transparent for parents, and it was presented as being a perfunctory diagnostic, but these instruments were identified as one of the criteria that schools used to select (discriminate against) students (Atria, 2012).

The new regulations concerning the school admission process, the SEP Law (2008) and the Inclusion Law (2015), affected schools in different ways, and they should be understood in the context of the school trajectory. For some schools that needed more students (schools that presented more supply than demand, for example) the regulations were able to formalise something that already existed de facto, namely that the school accepted all students. On the other hand, for other schools, this could mean tremendous changes when schools had more demand than supply, and school admission teams developed admission processes that were 'really' selective. So, for schools that were working in line with the new regulations, it is important to highlight that this did not necessarily respond to a conviction regarding the importance of inclusion, rather it could be associated with the position of the school in the educational market and the chances of selecting (Atria, 2012). In this sense, the SEP Law and the new Inclusion Law make school decisions in relation to the school admission process explicit, or as summarised by Elacqua and Santos (2013), this policy pushes schools to 'reveal their preferences'. The new regulations are based on a critical approach to the admission practices that were common to the majority of institutions a few years ago. It also denotes a change in the system and the role that the actors involved in its administration have played also represents an effort to control how the school admission process is enacted, in a context where the policy actors are involved in a mixture of decentralising policies and new ways of maintaining power and keeping control over the system. As Falabella points out, these changes can be understood in the context of the last four decades, where an omnipresent state has replaced the hierarchical state, trying: 'to orient the goals and results of a network of various

operators, from public and non-state sectors, from civil society, from voluntary, religious, and business organisations'* (2007, p. 16).

In Chile, the research on school choice and admission processes has traditionally understood them as being independent rather than interdependent processes; the research has considered these processes as independent but different – each of them as the reverse of the other. In the Chilean case, the research has considered this interaction only in an abstract way. So, although there are no formal limitations on the choice of parents, there is ample evidence that establishments have developed policies that have made the school choice process ineffective, and sometimes impossible, for parents (Congreso, 2008).

This relationship of interdependence between school choice and the admission process has been enunciated by specialists such as Atria (2007, 2010b, 2012), focusing on its discriminatory effects and the regulatory challenge that such a situation, which is considered unfair, represents. Nevertheless, this point of view refutes aspects related to the practices, and the contradictory effects that are generated from these processes. Atria (2010a) describes this scenario explaining that this interaction is characterised by the symmetry of individuals in the market, in clear contrast with the asymmetry that defines the relationship between the citizen (rights holder) and the State, 'the logic that must be protected is the right of parents to choose, not the right of the school to select'* (Atria, 2010a, p. 171). In this context, 'the parents, by being able to select a school, choose an exclusion criterion, whatever criteria the school has decided to impose' (Atria, 2012). Given this scenario, segregation is a product of the decentralised actions performed by each actor, and, without being deliberately desired by anyone, emerges as a result of the sum of individual decisions (Atria, 2010a), leaving similar students in the same schools: 'those who can pay 1000 with those that can pay 1000, and those who can pay 10 with those who can pay 10' (Atria, 2011). In this sense, the educational system 'not only allows, but facilitates the transmission of privilege'* (Atria, 2012, p. 35), transforming 'structural injustices into individual experiences of frustration and failure'* (Atria, 2012, p. 49).

This way of understanding the nature of the interaction between school choice and the admission process permits me to highlight two gaps in the educational debate, first, in relation to the research of practices and, second, concerning the international debate. First, this paradoxical relationship between the citizen and the institution is expressed theoretically by Atria (2007), but is not explored in practical terms. The absence of references to the sphere of practices becomes a major issue. In effect, according to Mansuy (2016), Atria has written hundreds of pages 'without ever considering a single effective community link: social rights

rest on a completely abstract sociability'* (2016, pp. 147–148). This also has been criticised as being part of an 'academic left', too abstract and moralistic; characteristics that have been associated with a lack of understanding of the current scenario (Herrera, 2019).

A second element that can be considered new about the Chilean case is that this system is highly decentralised and that admission was a selective process for the majority of schools, in contrast to the possibility to exercise school choice in a centralised context though a local authority as is the case in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Boston or Washington (Carrasco & Honey, 2019; Carrasco et al., 2019). The absence of research about the one-to-one interaction between school choice and the school admission process can be explained because, when the system works with some modality of school choice, this interaction is centralised in a local authority, and the parents-school interplay is not managed by the school. School choice and school admission in Chile, in this way, represent an anomalous situation from an international perspective. In effect, these processes are in no way whatsoever something entirely new; it is not new that parents conduct the school choice process following varying and sometimes jarring logics from the 'demand' side, nor that schools carry out admission/ selection procedures from the 'offer' side. Nevertheless, scholars have not researched the relationship between the 'offer' and the 'demand', and the relation which is presented as a product of its interaction.

In conclusion, in Chile, admission and school choice directly interact, and these processes are related beyond one being the reverse of the other. This is the reason why a policy that seeks to universalise school choice was promoted by a centre-left government – regardless of the fact that this policy would be usually identified with right wing governments and as part of a privatisation agenda promoting market mechanisms.

Returning to the very beginning, admission as a selective process threatens the idea of the school system as a market, placing in tension some of the premises of understanding the school system as a marketwhere schools try to increase their enrolment, school choice allow parents to choose schools freely, and the whole system improves thanks to this dynamic. Consequently, despite the approach of my research, the admission process is relevant from a critical perspective, casting doubt upon if the system is working properly from a democratic criterion, but also from a market perspective when the voucher mechanism calls into question the main driver to improve the system, school choice.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter has presented my theoretical approach to the study of the school admission process. It began describing the main elements of what can be characterised as a Foucaldian approach and govenmentality studies. With this in mind, I introduce the different approaches in 'lower case' and the enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012), explaining its relation with the policy sociology approach (Ozga, 1987), and the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a). Later, the chapter describes the different stages of the policy cycle, highlighting the stages where I will focus my study, the context of the practices, and the context of the policy text production. Finally, the chapter concludes by associating this literature with the study of practices from a Latin American perspective, with reference to some of the studies developed in the Chilean context.

It has been relevant to highlight that some of the deployed ideas have been created in other contexts or, in a wider sense, in a non-Chilean context and, more specifically, through studies of governmentality, especially through the use of concepts present in the education policy debate in the United Kingdom (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). It is important to keep in mind this origin because part of these decisions are increasingly related to specific problems with the Chilean context and its intense educational debate.

Chapter Three. The School Admission Process in a Middle-Class District

It is possible to see some synchronicity in the development of Chile, the United States and the United Kingdom during the last decades (Akram, 2020). During the 1980s, for example, the triad of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990), the government of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom (1979-1990), and Ronald Reagan in the United States (1981-1989) were early symptoms of what would later be called neoliberalism. Along the same lines, it is possible to see a certain parallel in those governments of the so-called 'third way'[14] and, probably something similar will be said in relation to the right-wing governments that currently lead these countries[15]. These synchronicities, which the Chilean literature has emphasised with a certain provincial spirit, make the confluence of certain aspects explicit, but equally obscure others that are equally relevant, showing as much as they hide. For example, we already know enough of what we call neoliberalism in Chile, with the preponderance of the market and the uselessness of the state as a slogan, the depth of the reforms, the privatisations and the role of this pairing between the Pinochet dictatorship, and the Chicago Boys; however, we have also had base conditions that tend to be sideways glances in the sense of how Chile went from being the last country to have agrarian reform in Latin America in the late 1960s to being the first in experiencing a true neoliberal revolution in the early 1980s. So, in less than twenty years, Chile went from the figure of the 'new man' (the so-called *'hombre nuevo'*) with Ché Guevara as the ideal, to the 'homo economicus' as the underlying ideal of most of the public policies developed during this period (Valdés, 1995). In this way, the sign of the reforms may be the same, but in one case they were carried out in an industrial society, with the welfare state, in contrast to the Chilean case, as an eminently poor and agrarian society, which exported commodities, such as copper, wood, fish or wine. In short, as states Ruiz Encina, Chileans went from the farm directly to the mall (J. Rodríguez, 2020). In this spirit, in this chapter, I try to reread and locate the particularities of the context where the school admission process has been carried out, with an emphasis on the problematisation of concepts, such as the school voucher, school admission, the middle class, and decentralisation. So, this context chapter explores some of these synchronies, highlighting which parts are useful but, at the same time, seeking to underline the dissonant elements in the use of these concepts.

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[14] Ricardo Lagos (Chilean President, 2000-2006), Tony Blair (Prime Minister, 1997-2007) and Bill Clinton (United States President, 1993-2001).
[15] Sebastián Piñera (Chilean President, 2018-), Boris Johnson (Prime Minister, 2019-) and Donald Trump (United States President, 2017-2021).

In this chapter, I introduce the context of the research, and I explain why Maipú can be considered an emblematic middle-class district. This chapter is organised in four sections. To begin with (3.1), I explain the singularity of the Chilean case on three levels, from an international perspective, from Latin America and its own history as a country,and then why Maipú is relevant as an example of a middle-class district in this context. Secondly (3.2), I introduce the decentralisation/ deconcentration process of the Chilean school system and the consequences for the school system until now. In addition, I explain why the dictatorship promoted a process which gave more power to the local level, as opposed to what a dictatorship would generally do; and I describe the Chilean school system and the evolution of the privatisation process, by explaining the differences between territories and the great variety of schools and highlighting the sources of diversity and placing the current scenario in a historical perspective. Third (3.3), I explain why the district of Maipú epitomises the educational policies during the last four decades, as an example of a new middle class, and why it is highly relevant to understanding the evolution of the school voucher and the school system, describing which characteristics made Maipú a relevant example, given the context of Santiago and Chile. Finally, in the Conclusion of the chapter (3.4) I summarise the contextual elements that were considered, and why Maipú can be considered a hot-spot in terms of the processes described during the last four decades.

3.1 Neoliberal Chile, a Triple Singularity

In this section I explain some of the peculiarities f in the Chilean case, and why the educational policies in Chile during the last 40 years are unique in at least three ways, with respect to the world, Latin America, and Chile's own history. First, concerning the global panorama, Chile has been located as an extreme case within the implementation of neoliberal policies, the relevance of which is given by the depth and permanence of these reforms. In Chile, a privatisation process was promoted four decades ago including not only public companies – such as: trains, electricity, sanitary companies –, but also public goods, such as education, health, and pensions (Monckeberg, 2015; Ruiz Encina, 2020). This process was radical in depth and despite the short time it took to carry out, it is considered an exemplary case worldwide. As stated earlier, there is a synchronicity in the implementation in the 1980s of a set of policies of what would later become known as neoliberalism, with Thatcher, Reagan and Pinochet. However, the parallels end there. These are very different contexts, since the Chilean context does not correspond either to the decline of the Keynesian welfare state, nor the emergence of a new order, such as the Schumpeterian workfare post-national regime (Jessop, 2000), as a way to highlight how the discourse of productivity and planning is replaced by the rhetoric of

flexibility and entrepreneurship, respectively. The Chilean context is a neoliberal process which leads to the most prosperous and stable decades in its history. In other words, Chile was a poor country and had never had a welfare state, thus the neoliberal reforms and the privatisation of public goods in Chile are presented in a context in which great inequality is combined with growth and increasing well-being.

Secondly, in comparison to the rest of Latin America, the Chilean dictatorship carried out in the 1980s the neoliberal reforms that the rest of Latin America would follow in the 1990s. In this vein, Chile constitutes an example of one of the 'most re-foundational experiences in Latin America'* (Ruiz Encina, 2019, p. 289). In Chile, these reforms were carried out in a dictatorial context, where the repression of any political expression was very common, in opposition to the reforms implemented by the rest of the Latin American countries, which developed this agenda in the 1990s in a democratic context. Therefore, in Chile these policies were applied without resistance more deeply and earlier than in other countries in the region; these countries developed this neoliberal agenda during the next decade, where democracy allowed the neoliberal agenda to be 'softened'. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that in Latin America there are no countries that have successfully combined both growth and equity (Fajnzylber, 1992; Ruiz Encina, 2019). Following this logic, the alternatives to the successful Chilean model have been equity without growth and, worst of all, inequality without growth. This is the context that explains the admiration generated by the Chilean experience in a regional context.

Finally, the situation in Chile is unique with respect to its history, because the prosperity and stability of previous decades are novel in a historic context characterised by inequality in a context of general poverty. This should be considered when we analyse the present inequality, looking at the past with the eyes of the present, and when reviewing the literature that discusses and problematises these concepts from other countries, as was highlighted in Chapter 2. Indeed, as Peña (2020) states, it can be said that Chile during the last three decades, after the advent of democracy, managed simultaneously to combine democracy and modernisation for the first time. In Chile, before the dictatorship, there was democracy without modernisation, and then during the military regime there was modernisation without democracy (1973-1990). In other words, inequality has been a persistent characteristic throughout Chile's history, but the growth and prosperity of the last few decades are new. This fact marks the passage from 'bare feet' poverty, because fifty years ago poor people did not have shoes,with the poor asking for 'bread, a roof and shelter', as the traditional slogan said, to a poverty of post-misery, where some material problems have been resolved and the

standard of life could be said to be better in some sense, but access to public goods – education or health – depends on individual effort/means (Ruiz Encina, 2020). In this sense, and maybe in reductionist terms, Chile exemplifies the passage from 'we are hungry' to 'we are afraid' (Peña, 2020). This is not just a metaphor, in Chile just a few decades ago, poverty was directly associated with undernourishment, and today it is more related to instability in access to this material well-being (Herrera, 2019).

Concomitant to this 'triple singularity', there are concepts commonly used in the context of the educational debate that require a detour to be applied satisfactorily to the Chilean reality, given that the context in which they were formulated is significantly different. This difference requires the construction of a critical reflection regarding the 'export' of concepts that are associated with particular historical contexts. This makes it relevant to locate some of the singularities of the Chilean case and to state why the use of concepts such as school choice, the middle class, or decentralisation can be slippery in the Chilean case. In this way, as Araujo (2016) suggests, these concepts must be reviewed with a critical perspective, in order to consider the empirical work which underlies these ideas in different realities, avoiding repeat diagnoses. Therefore, it is important to understand the genealogy of certain historical processes, how they are problematised by the literature, and how the concepts studied are embedded in different ways in our history. In this sense, as was developed in Chapter 2, there are concepts and distinctions that are very useful or even essential in educational research that, nonetheless, must be read with caution when these are applied to distinct contexts.

The admission and choice processes allow me to highlight the importance of policy sociology studies, in terms of the changes in the forms of provision, the patterns of access, forms of work, the inter-institutional relations and the values and ethics (Ball, 1997), revealing the importance of context, and how policies exist in permanent dialogue with different dimensions, such as the territory, the school, and the family. Thus, from the hegemonic perspective, the discussion is limited to whether more or less state control, more or less regulation of subsidies is required for this to work. However, the successive modifications to the school system that have been developed under this assumption have not meant less state intervention. On the contrary, they transform the state, creating a new one, but at the service of the dynamics of a regulated market (Guajardo & Jara, 2018).

3.2 Decentralisation and Privatisation in the Chilean School System

The centralisation and decentralisation models have had, at different times, an influential role in shaping the education system in Chile (M. Castro, 2012). The year 1980 represents a clear turning point in what corresponded to the transition from a centralised state to a

decentralised one. Until 1980, the state was the main provider through a centralised administration, but after a process of privatisation and decentralisation, the state became the main financier while the market was the regulator of quality and the number of private schools grew (Parry, 1997a). The dictatorship in Chile started in 1973, but the year 1980 represented the turning point from a 'normalising' role[16], to a 'programmatic' one; this was the moment when responsibility foreducational problems went from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Finance (Ruiz Schneider, 2010). So, if the 1970s for the dictatorship were the era of severe repression, the 80s were the 'ideological moment', when the dictatorship attempted to develop their ideas and shape a new model of society. These reforms in the educational field occurred in the context of neoliberal structural reforms that profoundly changed the country and implied, among other things, reforms to pensions, health, education, and the privatisation of public companies. These reforms changed the State, and the effect of these, and these 'rules of the game', are still substantively valid today.

The use of the concept of 'decentralisation' is usually somewhat confusing to analyse. As Kameshwara et. al. state 'it is a complex phenomenon which needs to be placed in contexts of society, locality and policy over time in order to understand its impact on the desirable outcomes or processes such as democratic participation and empowerment of stakeholders' (2020, p. 4). In the Chilean case, it is occupied in multiple senses indistinctly, either as deconcentration, delegation, devolution, privatisation and regionalisation (M. Castro, 2012; Parry, 1997a). The concept of decentralisation, for example, can be used either in a neoliberal way, a populist sense, or be associated with participatory democracy. Whatever the case, our preferences, and perspective, it is difficult to reduce these processes to a unique logic. In effect, as Arenas states, the decentralisation debate receives support from a 'variety of philosophies that are often at odds with each other in terms of mechanisms and purposes' (2005, p. 595). The decentralisation of education in Chile was part of a greater process of state decentralisation. For ideological and economic reasons, a large part of the social services, including education, were transferred to the municipalities (OCDE, 2004). In this way, the reforms were designed to foster competition between schools for the resources of the voucher and, consequently, decentralisation was focused on this end (Matear, 2007).

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[16] This included directives that stimulated espionage and the denunciation of teachers and students (Weibel, 2017). This also included 'informing the military authorities when school workers made comments or jokes about the policy of the military civil dictatorship or that distorted the "national values"'(Pérez & Rojas, 2018).

There is an apparent contradiction between the deconcentration of power and the dictatorship to the extent that an authoritarian regime is conventionally defined by its desire to concentrate it. Counterintuitively, the dictatorship promoted the process of decentralisation (Boisier, 2007a), but this process was always incomplete. A key phrase to understand the peculiarity of the Chilean decentralisation is attributed to Pinochet 'the administration is decentralised, power never'* (Boisier, 2007b, p. 200). This paradoxical process of decentralisation without power is one of the unconventional outcomes of the 'partnership'between the Chicago Boys and the military figures. So, if the Chicago boys sought efficiency, the dictatorship saw a way to divide the teachers' union. The teachers' unions were historically centre-left political actors, who suffered political repression. In effect, the outcome is unusual in the sense that the decentralisation presented from its origin a relevant dichotomy, insofar as the administrative and financial aspects depended on the schools and their supporters, and the pedagogical and technical aspects depended on the Ministry of Education (Delannoy & Guzmán, 2009), with the national authorities reserving for themselves a financial and supervisory role (OCDE, 2004). This 'Chilean way' to descentralise had quite clear consequences; municipalisation was not intended to develop local educational policies, nor did it generate educational plans associated with subnational entities (M. Castro, 2010). As Di Gropello summarises, it was 'jointly of a political nature (persecution of the neo-liberal model, reduction of the power of the teacher union), fiscal (reduction of the costs of provision), and efficiency (reduction of the costs of provision), in a non-participatory framework'* (1997, p. 44). There is a tendency to see the dictatorship in Chile as a monolithic government; however it was an authoritarian regime within which there were distinct positions which were disputed, among other areas, in the design of educational policy. These visions were represented by a 'State-centric or more conservative vision, represented by the counter-admirals who directed the Ministry of Education for continuous renewal, the linear development of the educational system'* (Pérez & Rojas, 2017, p. 18). A good example of this contradiction was the discussion about the national curriculum. In this case, the fact that the State had control of the contents of the curriculum was thanks to the protection of national identity, which is a very marked feature of the military identity (national identity, nationalism, geopolitics, etc.). This explains that privatisation was not complete, as per the vision of the Chicago Boys* (Almonacid, Luzón, & Torres, 2008). In any case, these tensions occurred within a general framework of confluence, and of little tolerance for nuances, which wanted the construction of an educational system that would give rise to 'good workers, good citizens, good Chileans', which was understood as 'socialising the learners in skills and functional values

for the neoliberal market, for civic participation, and the sentimental evaluation of conservative nationalism'* (Neut, 2016, p. 141).

Considering the multilayered and conflictive use of the concept decentralisation, perhaps the word that best describes this process in the Chilean school system is 'deconcentration', in the sense that the main characteristic of this process is that it gives responsibility for the provision of public goods to the local space, without offering capabilities, resources or the power to do it properly, considering the great diversity of districts. Or, as Boisier posits, 'there are no regional governments, only deconcentrated entities of the national government' (2007a). In practical terms, the decentralisation process was presented as a deconcentration and as a dismantling of the state, together with the advent of the neoliberal conception for efficiency and competitiveness in the provision of social services (M. Castro, 2010). The reform of the 1980s was in practice a 'mayorisation' ('*Alcaldización*' in Spanish), placing the mayor in a central role, but continuing to depend on the influence of the Ministry of the Interior, since all the mayors of the municipalities were 'elected' by the dictatorship (Almonacid et al., 2008). In summary, as Fernández illustrates, school education was a new item under the responsibility of the municipalities, 'in addition to delivering commercial patents or traffic permits, in addition to worrying about garbage trucks, cleaning and decorating public squares, covering holes in the streets, regulating trade fairs, etc.'* (2013, p. 88).

The deconcentration process was developed in a context of a great diversity of municipalities; in the smaller districts the educational cost can reach 30 per cent of the total budget. This is related to a high deficit, more than to any education conviction per se (M. Castro, 2010). All this is aggravated, considering that Chile has abnormally high levels of income and wealth inequality, by a pattern of concentrated territorial development (Solimano, 2012). Between 1980 and 1981, 87% of schools were transferred to the municipal administration (di Gropello, 1997), all of which faced 'common rules and obligations in all relevant matters' (Letelier & Ormeño C, 2018, p. 1499). In this sense, educational service performance is related to the size and wealth of the district. There is a great diversity of scenarios: educational policies do not recognise the heterogeneity that the territory presents by virtue of 'geographical location, local heritage or the attributes of the legal representative to manage the resources'* (M. Castro, 2010, pp. 208–209). In effect, 'Despite the Constitution [consecrating] "municipal autonomy" (Art. 107), the possibility of this principle being exercised in practice varies significantly across jurisdictions' (Letelier & Ormeño C, 2018, p. 1499). In this sense, 'municipalisation' was a 'de-territorialised' policy, which was built on an abstraction of the territory, as if all the communes had the same characteristics, which made it function as a

market without considering that supply and demand behave in different ways across different scenarios. In this context, the Chilean municipalities have the same functions and competencies, in opposition to their hetereogeneity. As Castro (2012) details, there are differences related to topics such as the great structural disparity, scarce fiscal autonomy, high financial dependence on the government, and the heterogeneity in the management of the administered services linked to the wills and capacities of its main authorities.

Finally, there are certain elements, such as the development of the system from a territorial point of view, the voucher value, and how the preferential school voucher is defined, that relativise how articulated these processes were in the contexts of this large-scale reform, and the change of logic that this supposes, and which suggest that there was no decentralisation, or deconcentration, but simply a lack of coordination. An example of this is the number of schools which are necessary in a certain territory, in relation to the actual number of schools.For example, between the years 2000 and 2012, 1,651 schools closed and 3,029 new schools were created (Grau, Hojman, & Mizala, 2017), and, according to Rodríguez (2020) more than 400,000 students in Santiago attend a school which is located in a different district from the district that they live in. Something similar can be said in relation to the size of each school or the number of students per class or number of schools. In effect, the school market is regulated by a mix of private and public authorities' initiatives without coordination. To sum up, the voucher amount has been closer to 'what we can pay' than to 'what's necessary', in the sense of a rational debate about having the education that we want.

The Chilean school system reneges responsibility for the instruments of planning and coordination, with these dimensions usually being absent from the analysis, and from educational research. In this sense, for example, the calculation of the voucher under the decentralisation scheme in its first version did not contemplate any difference with respect to the geographical situation of the establishments (with thirteen regions and almost 350 districts). The amount of the voucher simply corresponded to the total resources allocated to the maintenance of the schools divided by the total number of students (Almonacid et al., 2008). Another example is given in the case of the Preferential School Voucher. Mizala, who was one of the main proponents of this reform, which compensated the school for students considered more 'difficult to educate' by giving more resources to schools and eliminating what was considered an incentive to discrimination, explains that there are no studies about how much it costs to run a school, and these studies are very necessary in order to calculate the necessary resources. In the meantime, Mizala explains, 'it is appropriate to recognise this lack of certainty, and to consider the amounts with which the system will be started as

provisional, and evaluate over time whether these values are correct' * (2008, p. 217). It is interesting how 'linear logic', as was reviewed in the previous chapter, can be seen in this case. According to this perspective the 'lack of certainty' refers to to the amount of resources needed, but there is no doubt that these resources have had a positive effect on the educational process of students considered 'difficult to educate', or that these resources have helped to eliminate the incentive to discriminate against them. As Mizala continues, 'although these amounts may change over the years, their estimation should be based on technical instruments of proven quality. It is urgent that the Ministry of Education be in charge of carrying out this type of study'* (2008, p. 217). Despite this lack of certainty in relation to the 'meaning' of the amount of the school voucher or the 'perfect' amount of the voucher, the lack of information was not an obstacle to making all these changes. Moreover, after all these years, this kind of study has still not been carried out.

 The creation of a quasi-market school system in Chile via the voucher system during the previous decades and the rise in the participation of private actors in school provision became a potent example of neoliberal policies, combining policies of privatisation, decentralisation and equity. After these radical reforms, as was pointed out in the previous sections, the State abandoned its traditional role as the main provider, and started to strengthen its role to regulate, finance and evaluate the system (Verger, Moschetti, et al., 2017). Although these reforms show a general process of privatisation as an overall result, school provision works through a decentralised system which depends on actors and factors that are interrelated in complex configurations. Therefore, the analysis and the evolution of the local school quasi-markets are key elements to exploring the enactment of the school voucher and the admission process at the school level. In this context, the voucher system as a per-student subsidy has been the main driver of the evolution of the system. In this regime, funding follows the student to their school of choice without distinguishing whether it is private or public. In effect, equal financing for public and private subsidised schools, according to Parry (1997b), allows competition and enough resources to cover all school expenditures.

Although there is an overall process of privatisation, there is also great diversity in the configuration of public and private provision across the country. For example, there are some districts with one hundred per cent public enrolment. Conversely, there are some districts in which there are almost no public alternatives to private provision (Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional y Administrativo - SUBDERE, 2016). In this sense, the Chilean school system does not have planning or regulation in terms of its 'offer', which is created to respond to a given 'demand'. So, diversity within the school system can be understood according to the evolution

of the quasi-market configuration at the local level. To sum up, the Chilean quasi-market shows many faces across the country, and the school quasi-market has been growing without a clear path at the local level, showing great diversity in school provision (Donoso & Arias, 2011). Although there is no clear way to explain how school provision is distributed across the country, there are dimensions that can explain the situation of each district, such as rurality, socio-economic level, the population, and the demographic structure.

At this point, it is necessary to highlight the great diversity of realities that are housed in Chile, and the importance of considering the territorial dimension. The geographical situation of Chile –'this long and narrow strip of land', as it is often referred to by primary school teachers – becomes important according to the diversity of realities and landscapes that can be observed in the country. This is from the extreme north to the extreme south, which goes from desert to almost the South Pole. In this sense, beyond the anecdote, it seems important to consider this point, in order to avoid any kind of generalisation, prior to establishing any kind of comparison of the Chilean system, as if it were a homogeneous whole, or as ifthe previously sketched realities could be projected to the entire population. Just to give an example, the most populated region, the Metropolitan Region, concentrates 40.1% of the population, while the least populated, Aysén, situated in the extreme south of the country, has only 0.6% of the population (Waissbluth, Leyton, & Inostroza, 2007). At the municipal level, while private education as a whole concentrates nearly 70% of the total enrolment, there are still more than 100 communes of the 350 that only have public education.

A simpler classification considers only the type of provider and the source of its financing. According to this classification, there are just three types of schools: public, which is administrated by municipalities, private subsidised, and private, which operate without public resources. My research will focus on the first two types of schools which each work with the voucher system: public and private subsidised schools. These schools account for 93 per cent of total enrolment. This classification can be seen in Table 3[17]:

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[17] I did not include Corporation schools, because there are very few of them.

Type of School	Provision	Funding
Municipal	Public	Public
Private Subsidised	Private	Public
Private	Private	Private

Table 3: Types of Schools in Chile, According to Provision and Funding

The school voucher and market logic both changed the way the Chilean school system was managed. After this reform, private providers were free to open new schools and public schools started to depend on municipalities, instead of the central government and the Ministry of Education. So, on the one hand, public schools started to be managed by the municipalities. The school system went through a process of acute decentralisation. Municipalities show a great diversity in population, rurality, and socioeconomic level; and, to a certain extent, these districts provide education in close relation to their characteristics, reproducing the strengths and weaknesses of their respective districts (CIEPLAN, 1999; Gallego & Seebach, 2007; Larragaña, Peirano, & Falck, 2009; Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional y Administrativo - SUBDERE, 2009). On the other hand, private provision is represented by the private-subsidised schools, and private schools without public financing. In this regard, Almonacid (2008) classifies private providers as either private, social, or religious; Corvalán et. al. (2009) divides private providers between not for profit and for profit. Finally, Corbalán et. Al. (2009) and González et. Al. (2009) divide them into four categories: 'wage earners', to refer to providers that have just one school; 'small traders', that have a few schools usually situated in the same district or region; the 'investors', such as engineers and lawyers that develop an educational project as a secondary activity; and, finally, the 'ideological groups', which are connected to churches or big corporations. Finally, despite showing these classifications, I would like to stress the great diversity of schools within the school system. In this sense, with respect to the subsidised private sector, there is no territorial restriction to creating new schools, which may lead to an oversupply of schools in a district, and it is not necessary to demonstrate that there is an educational need in the community where it will be created. The majority of these establishments are located in the urban sector, and there are very few in the rural sector (Almonacid, 2006).

Since the 1981 reform, the enrolment path has changed dramatically and there has been a continuous decline in public schools, in sharp contrast to the rise of private subsidised schools. This means thatthe public schools, which had 79.9 per cent of the enrolment in 1981, fell to 36.5 per cent in 2015. Conversely, private subsidised schools rocketed from 15.1 to 54.6 per cent of the total enrolment in the same period. As can be seen in Figure 4:
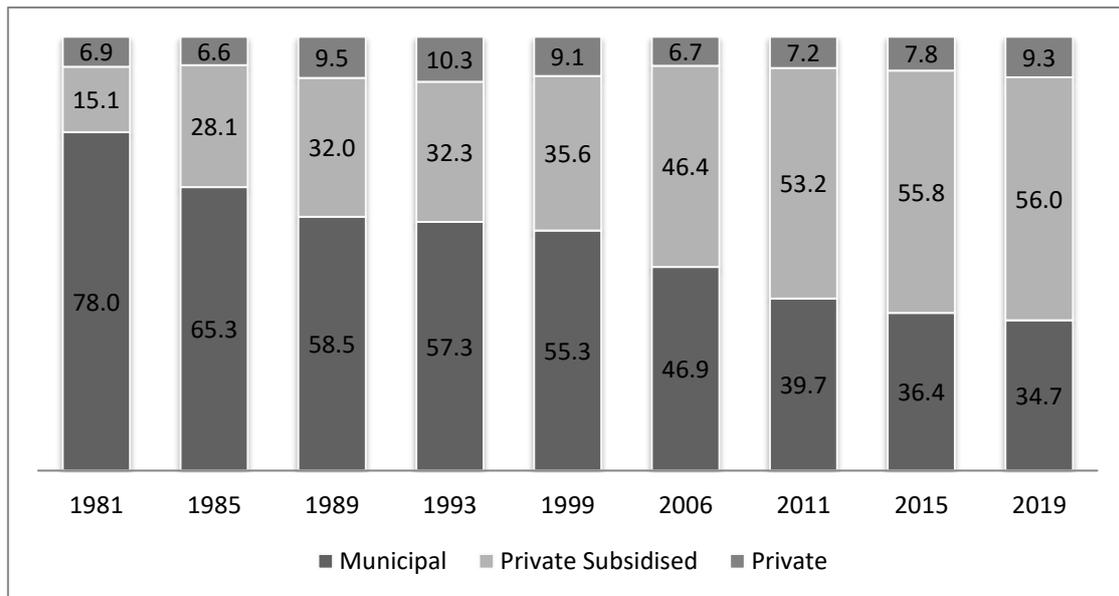
Figure 4: The Evolution of Enrolment in the Chilean School System (1981-2019).

So, after almost forty years of the voucher system, the enrolment path and the school system have clearly changed dramatically, and, nowadays, the most salient characteristic in the Chilean school quasi-market is that of enormous private participation (Bellei, 2015). As Contardo (2020) expresses succinctly, the middle class abandoned the municipal schools, and, conversely, the public schools were abandoned by the Government. However, the school market also shows great diversity. Thus, the analysis and description of the district and the local school quasi-markets are key elements to exploring the enactment of the voucher and the admission process. The introduction of new actors and market logic did not show immediate effects. The reforms showed a gradual and accumulative effect in terms of how the participation of private actors in school provision has been increasing since this new institutional arrangement was established by the dictatorship (Bellei, 2013). Depending on perspective, this process has been described by some researchers as a 'national challenge' (Bellei, González, & Valenzuela, 2010), as a way to stress the dramatic situation of public education and its centrality to the country's future; as a process of 'creative destruction' (Grau, Hojman, & Mizala, 2015), highlighting the dynamics of the school system; or, merely as an obvious effect of the bad results of public education (Beyer & Velasco, 2010).

In this sense, the Chilean experience has been considered an anomaly in the world and has been described as a 'neoliberal revolution' (Aguilera, 2015) or as an 'experiment' (Bellei, 2015). Decentralisation and privatisation have been entangled in an unusual way, but showing a great coherence, and without relevant changes to the logic imposed by the Dictatorship.

3.3 Maipú as a Middle-Class District

In this section, I explain the singularity of the district in which I conducted the research. My study concentrated on Maipú, a district of Santiago located in the Metropolitan Region. In this section, I will stress some of these characteristics and differences, putting Maipú in the context of Santiago as the capital city, insofar as this is a key element to understand why Maipú can be considered as expressive of the middle class in Chile nowadays. This is particularly relevant, considering that in the context of policy studies, the analysis of the territory does not seems to be something important, as Bacchi and Goodwin state: 'the geographic or spatial elements of policy are taken for granted or treated as self-evident' (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 96).

Santiago, just like many other Latin American capitals, accumulates much of its economic activity and population. Santiago is the main city of Chile, concentrating a population of more than seven million habitants (over a total of 17.5 in the country), and 56.9 per cent of the GDP[18]. Santiago shows great internal diversity. These differences are very acute and account, in micro, for the deeper inequalities that exist within Chilean society. Contardo proposes an exercise to understand the metropolitan cartography: 'throw a stone against a polarised glass and then observe the footprint of the stone in the glass. The map of Santiago looks like that as an explosion with an echo that escapes from the centre'* (2012, p. 10).

A feature of this modernization process, where the city is one of the main protagonists, is that the process is beyond what the citizens can control and 'bursts into everything that was or wanted to be. Whether they are families from the middle classes or from popular sectors, they are dominated by the perception that their identity projects tend to erode and abort in the context of this metropolis'* (Márquez, 2006, p. 71). Mixed feelings are recurrent when describing Santiago; Araujo and Martuccelli identify Santiago as the: 'beloved and the insecure, the collapsed and the dynamic, the hated and the source of opportunities; a place of social nostalgia and also of economic pride'* (2012b, p. 103). These contradictions are expressed as the perception of living in a modern, but deeply privatised city: 'without common spaces that allow it to take on collective or communitarian meanings'* (Márquez, 2006, p. 78).

Its urban history shows that Santiago has been segregated since its origin. First, the Mapocho river was the limit – the city of colonial settlement in the south, and the city of the aborigines in the north. Later on, when the aborigines started to live in the city, they did not inhabit the same city: 'the city itself, located in the centre and characterised by opulence, Christianity and

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[18] Gross Domestic Product is the total monetary or market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period.

intellectualism (education), and the city of the outskirts characterised as "barbarism", located around the edges and described as a concentration of poverty, sickness, and vice' (Márquez, 2011, p. 87). Although time has passed and its axes have changed, Santiago remains a highly segregated city and presents a series of borders that are clearly legible to any of its inhabitants. In this sense, 'urban fractures, the borders within the city, appear as the expression and resource of integration and identification within the group of belonging itself; but also of exclusion and distinction in relation to the rest of society'* (Márquez, 2006, p. 78). Returning to the figure of the map of Santiago as an explosion, as an 'echo that escapes from the centre', Santiago 'extends from an urban point of view in a more or less geometric order from its central area, the population explosion since the late forties demanded a growth that vastly overflowed the capital's radius'* (Lizama, 2007, p. 18). Given this context, as Márquez (2006) explains, in the middle sector self-segregation seems to be the desired option, which has been emerging since the early 1990s. Modern condominiums open new social and spatial boundaries in the city in traditionally popular districts. So, although Santiago residents live in a modern city and there is undeniable material progress, there are still 'borders and walls that make it territorially segregated and socially segmented'* (Márquez, 2006, p. 74).

The enrolment by district in the Metropolitan Region shows that in most of the districts, the proportion of private subsidised schools is well over the national average. Despite this general trend, there is great diversity. For example, in Maipú, La Florida, and Puente Alto, all very populated districts in Chile, with recent and explosive growth in the last decades, provision is more than 80 percent private. On the contrary, there are other districts where there is not a single private school. These districts belong to rural areas and only have public schools (San Pedro, María Pinto, and Alhué). There are districts with more private education without public funding; these districts are the richest (Lo Barnechea, Las Condes, and Vitacura). The enrolment rate in the city of Santiago shows an extreme diversity (as can be seen in Appendix 1). In summary, the consequences of the reforms developed during the last decades can be seen mainly, but not exclusively, in the Metropolitan Region.

Regarding the school system, educational policies and research assume that many processes are cross contextual. Nevertheless, there is great diversity with as many districts, providers and schools as the country is long. In effect, 'Space and scale cannot be taken for granted as unproblematic; rather, they are contingent, complex and constructed' (Clarke, Bainton, Lendvai, & Stubbs, 2015, p. 22). The debate on educational policy in Chile is usually posed in abstract terms, as if education was not related to the conditions in which it is produced and reproduced, as if schools could exist in a vacuum removed from the parents of those students

and, finally and most tellingly, as if education were capable of correcting society's ills. In this way, being dissociated from its history, linear logic has been imposed. Indeed, based on this assumption, 'Neoliberals contend that all forms of state action, beyond the minimal functions of the defense of the realm and the protection of basic rights to life and property, are dangerous threats to liberty' (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 182). My research is situated in Maipú, which is a very specific district according to the criteria outlined in Chapter Three; however, there are many differences in a country which is 3,860 km long[19] (North to South) with an average width (East to West) of 175 km. In the Chilean case, this has meant that uniform policies, such as the policies described in Chapter Two, have been applied to distinct contexts that, whether by scale, density, or socioeconomic level, can be tremendously different; these have been embodied in the territory as decentralisation, deconcentration, or decoordination processes, as was described in Chapter Three. Their consequences have not been problematized or, at most, they have been explored as unexpected or unintended effects of policies.

The concept of the district must be revisited to the extent that it presents a static situation and does not account for all the diversity of possible scenarios; and, more importantly, it makes it seem like a neutral concept. In this sense, as Bacchi and Goodwin state:

> The habit of treating "place" as a context for policies, rather than as produced, reproduced and transformed by policies, can be traced to the notion of government as consisting only of conventional legislative institutions and state-generated rules, regulations, provisions, and punishments (2016, p. 96).

One way to view this diversity is through the analysis of the school provision dependency in the Metropolitan Region, where it is possible to see the proportion of public/ private enrolment, as can be seen in Appendix 1. I highlight this hetereogeneity to give an account of how the diversity of previously established districts iadds a scenario in which the same policies present very different results to each other. In this sense, it is possible to see how, while there are communes that follow the national pattern (in which public school enrolment reaches 40%), there are other communes in which this proportion is only 15%.

As stated earlier, I am specifically interested in Maipú. This district has experienced explosive demographic growth during the last four decades (Maipú's population went from 114,117 in 1982 to 521,627 in 2017) and is representative of a new urban middle class. The population of

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[19] As a reference, the distance from London to Moscow is 2,500 km and from London to Cairo, 3,500 km.

Maipú grew almost 5 times, and private schools are predominant. Maipú does not exemplify the movement from state-centred to private-centred provision. Maipú illustrates the almost entire creation of a new context, from a rural district close to the capital to the second most populated district at the national level. Private subsidised schools have been the main response to absorb this demand during the last 40 years. To explore how the school system works, it seems particularly interesting – paraphrasing the paper of Maguire, Perryman, Ball, and Braun (2011) – to explore an 'ordinary district'. Maipú is not an extreme case. It is neither particularly affluent nor especially poor – people used to say 'middle-class'. Therefore, this district presents the perfect conditions for the implementation of market logic, and the interplay of decentralisation, privatisation, and equity; in contrast to a rural area, or a district that may not present particularly significant changes or developments. In this way, in Maipú, there are sixty-seven secondary schools[20]. My analysis will focus on this group of secondary schools in Maipú, because it is at this level that the school choice logic is more intense, and the proportion of secondary students commuting daily into other districts is almost twice the proportion of primary students (Donoso & Arias, 2013). The interplay between families and providers works in a space which is defined by national regulation, the specific characteristics of the quasi-market, and the specific characteristics of the local space – this has been called the geography of the educational market (Zancajo, Bonal, & Verger, 2014). In Maipú, sixty schools work with the voucher system – the municipal and private subsidised schools.

Maipú is a clear product of the growth model and reforms of the last forty years. In this space, the proposition of exploring how territory, establishment, and the family all enter into dialogue, in a district with a brief history, forms an attractive case study. To this we can add the dynamics of the market, accountability, and regulatory measures as questions to be developed, along with how schools connect with the imaginations of school choice, developing processes of admission where they try to meet parents' expectations. In this context, as was explained in Chapter Three, Maipú is an example of this development that has occurred during the previous decades and that has allowed the emergence of the so-called middle classes, with all the problematic baggage that comes with this label, and the adaptations that need to be made in the application of this concept to the Chilean reality, as a middle group which emerged and grew under the wing of modernisationand great inequality. In this sense, there is an evolution in the structural conditions: being poor today is different from being poor yesterday, and thus a sense of belonging to the middle class carries different nuances. The

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[20] There is a total number of 217 schools in Maipú. These schools offer pre-school, primary, and secondary education (plus adult education, special education, and others).

most typical classification contrasts an old middle class which grew up under the umbrella of the state, having related values such as austerity, stability, and meritocracy, with the current middle class, which is related to a wide sector of the population; as Matamala (2019) observes, ninety per cent of the population identifies themselves as 'middle-class'. Ruiz Encina describes the trajectory of the middle class, and how this is related to a wider scenario which relates the citizens with 'the acute privatisation of the conditions for the reproduction of social life, which goes hand in hand with the dismantling of the old state social services, ends up unloading the entire cost of it on the individual' (2015, p. 27); considering that, at the same time, this creates at the society level 'expansive private forms of accumulation, protected by state subsidy, which mainly flood education and health, through new forms of profit, and which replace the old space of social protection'* (2015, p. 27). As Peña summarises, referring to these new middle-class groups, 'Chileans feel that they live a bit out in the open and that well-being can also be a "house of cards" that can collapse at any moment' (2007, p. 39).

A new middle class is presented, which is becoming unwieldy, and is left in an improved life situation in which it perceives the precariousness of its conditions as poverty is left behind. According to Ruiz Encina (2020), classic parameters of 'barefoot poverty' –fifty years ago, poor people did not have shoes – are overcome by 'below', for which hunger was a certain threat[21], and wealth and opportunities are monopolised by 'above'. In the middle of both poles there is a middle class that has faced two waves of privatisations. The first was common to many countries, including the United Kingdom, and included state companies, and the second wave of privatisations – which due to its anticipatory and radical nature, had features that are specific to the Chilean case – involved the privatization of healthcare, pensions, education at all levels, water, and the roads and avenues of cities, privatizing living conditions and daily life. This is called the 'new middle class', which, according to Contardo (2020), is different from the 'old middle class', which emerged in the first half of the 20th century. The old one had ties to public institutions and built its identity around them: the University of Chile, the public high schools or jobs in the state. Today the middle class is a broad sector that climbs socially thanks to jobs in private companies, trades related to the service sector, or small businesses. The places the cities had in store for them were new neighbourhoods built as real estate projects on the edges of cities, neighbourhoods of identical houses with few public spaces, low-quality urban equipment, and poor public transportation. Gazmuri describes them this way: 'Arid

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[21] According to Herrera (2019), it is important to put the advances in the material sphere into perspective.As the author points out, in 1960 hunger affected almost 40% of children, while by the end of the century, it had practically disappeared. Today, in the context of the pandemic and the crisis caused by a social outbreak, 'hunger' is being spoken of again.

beehives of blocks and houses (with a small garden) without squares, dirty, disorderly, promiscuous, depressive, that extend for hundreds of blocks '* (2012, p. 507). How modernity reached its neighbourhoods was in the form of large shopping malls: the mall, with its bright corridors, its air-conditioned environment, new cinemas, and fast food. Contardo (2020) prototypically locates this new Chilean middle class in two metropolitan communes: La Florida and Maipú. Both communes have grown exponentially since the late 1980s and both have shopping malls as centrepieces of daily life. Therefore, there is a sociological difference between both 'middle classes', as summarised by Ruiz (2020); the existence of the 'new' presupposes the extinction of the 'old'.

The emergence of this new middle class has been linked to a diffuse malaise, which has been associated with various diagnoses, such as greater institutional control, expectations broadened by modernisation, the malaise of the elites for the well-being of the masses and as a result of a statist operation of left-wing intellectuals (Mayol, 2019). According to Contardo (2020), however, there should be fairly clear data that explains this discomfort: wages on one side, the cost of living on the other; access to credit, and high levels of debt. Peña (2020) points out that this instability and discomfort would be in some sense natural to a situation with a new middle class, since these groups are not culturally formed to remain in place, but are seduced and constituted by consumption and the effort of social promotion. It manifests itself in insecurity about one's socioeconomic position, which is not guaranteed. As Tironi (2020) summarises, the achievements and fatalities of life were left to the capabilities of each individual in the market, while the State focused on supporting the most vulnerable, with little and timid oversight capacity, and promoting investment and economic growth. Contardo (2020) points out that the second decade of the 21st century was dominated in Chile by the tension and disappointment of dissatisfied citizens, who demanded more rights and a better distribution of income, a wealth that from time to time was boastfully mentioned by an elite who thought that the best way to make the people conform was to remind them that, before, everything was worse. As Tironi (2020) illustrates, poverty is left behind and there are higher expectations: these are people who did not have a car a few years ago, but now claim for the cost of going through the car toll road of the privatised motorways.

There is some kind of 'middle-class feeling' which is in some way relatively unrelated to material conditions; Sebastián Piñera -current president of Chile, son of a ambassador and with one of the great fortunes in Chile – defines himself as "a middle-class" person (Matamala, 2019). On the other hand, results indicate a marked trend in the population towards the means of subjective status (Castillo, Miranda, & Cabib, 2013). In this context, the academic

credentials that were previously a guarantee of stability are devalued, which today are equivalent to gaining access to better consumption conditions, but in conditions of greater uncertainty. In effect, the notion of the middle class nowadays not only does not correspond to an international situation, but nor to the ideology that had been cultivated from the Chilean society itself in past decades, constituting a large grey area with high turnover (Ruiz Encina & Boccardo, 2014). To exemplify this perspective, the notion of the middle class, with which the inhabitants of Maipú broadly identify, has very different meanings than in the UK. It is a middle class stuck between not wanting to perpetuate privileges whilst actively struggling not to fall into the void, without the safety net of institutional support. In this sense, there is an extensive discussion in the Chilean context about what we understand by the middle class (Castillo et al., 2013) and what leads some to re-label it the middle sectors (Ruiz Encina & Boccardo, 2014), to avoid the connotations carried by the concept of 'middle class' and the link with the social structure of a particular society which it implies.

The working conditions yield before the tertiarisation of the labour force. Informality and labour flexibility, as well as their feminisation, are integral to the new conditions of wage-earning, which means a very different scenario from the one previously known. Just like the school system, the middle class is privatised, as Carlos Ruiz explains: 'The widespread privatisation of state enterprises and the dismantling of huge public services dismantle the structural bases for the existence of the most influential political and ideological fractions of the middle classes'* (2019, p. 76). In this context, according to Fernández (2020), the new middle classes fear the poverty they abandoned and seek a minimum of security and protection, but culturally their members, regardless of their characteristics, know themselves as connected to the elite: 'they can access the same music, the same movies, to the same infinite library available on the net. They do not expect answers, but they expect to be asked'*[22].

To sum up, this is a very broad and particularly precarious middle class, where freedom is often defined as the ability to make choices about prices, as opposed to freedom as the ability to make choices about the future (Ruiz Encina, 2015, 2019), as groups that are not poor, but

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[22] Some authors, such as Herrera (2019) and Tironi (2020), highlight the role of the members of a generation that has been able to study abroad, in particular through the '*Becas Chile'* scholarship program, which has offered them the opportunity to live in 'developed countries', where they develop expectations in accordance with the lifestyle in those countries. This has been a kind of intellectual defeat for the 'Chilean model', creating all these hyper-qualified people who face an economy incapable of absorbing all these postgraduates, who are 'stabbing' each other for minor positions in universities (Soto, 2020).

are deeply afraid of poverty (Herrera, 2019). Bachi and Goodwin explaining the singularity of such a common district, highlight why 'the designation of "places" plays a critical role in how governing occurs. (…), as if these "places" are natural, unified, and stable locales' (2016, p. 96). In this sense, once again, the Metropolitan Region presents a great diversity according to the types of actors and the characteristics of each district, and Maipú is an example of the recent reforms. Paraphrasing Gómez Dávila (2007), it could be said that the middle class emerges unhappy with what it has and satisfied with what it is[23]; which is, in some sense, similar to what the country is experiencing, as a proud guest at the OECD club of rich countries, but with the worst GINI index of all the club (Matamala, 2019).

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

The context chapter has shown the characteristics of the Chilean school system, in some of its similarities and differences with the international trends. I also illustrate why my research deals with a hot-spot in terms of the reforms referred to. In effect, there have been many changes that have affected the Chilean school system during the last decades, and these changes show many similarities with global tendencies, but also some dissonances which correspond to the peculiarities of the historical trajectory that Chile has followed. So, as part of the context, I have attempted to highlight some of these similarities and dissonances in relation to different dimensions, such as the Chilean school voucher in different moments; the Preferential School Voucher and how this reform has changed the school admission process; the decentralisation and privatisation of the system; and, finally, why Maipú can be considered a middle-class district. A second element is related to how my research has engaged with the most important policies in terms of the dimensions described and the educational policy debate. In this line, according to Bellei and Cabalin (2013), the radical transformations carried out in Chile can be divided into four main measures: school choice funding, the promotion of competition, the privatisation of education, and the decentralisation of public schools. Considering these criteria, my research –the enactment of the admission process in Maipú schools –deals with a hot-spot in terms of the reforms described and the prevalent dynamic during the last four decades. Finally, the context chapter has presented some dimensions –the school voucher, the Preferential School Voucher, the process of decentralisation, and privatisation and Maipú as a "middle-class" district – that will be explored in more depth in the

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[23] The original phrase is 'The bourgeoisie is any group of individuals who are dissatisfied with what they have and satisfied with what they are'* (Gómez Dávila, 2007)

following chapters. These dimensions will be problematised according to the evidence in the data analysis, and I will come back to these concepts in the conclusions.

Chapter Four. Methodology: Researching the School Admission Process in Maipú

Maipú was my district until I was 25 years old; I was never conscious of being a '*maipucino*' until I undertook my day-to-day activities 'abroad', away from this district, escaping the social matrix of my family routines and my school. My understanding of Maipú was retrospectively constructed. This 'normality' was something much more specific than I thought and I experienced as part of a middle-class district, or what was conceived as a middle-class district in Chile during the last decades. Part of this 'normality' can be seen in some writers who place their stories in Maipú, showing the peculiarities of this new middle class. Zambra, describing Maipú during the dictatorship through the eyes of a child in *Ways of Going Home**, says: 'adults played to ignore danger: they played to think that discontent was a thing of the poor and power a matter of the rich, and nobody was poor or rich, at least not yet, in those streets, then'* (2011, p. 23). Molina (2019, p. 35), in a book of short stories called *Ciudad Satélite*, the name of a neighbourhood in the west of Maipú, explains why her neighbors didn't want free education: 'things have to have a cost and everyone has to work hard to have access to minimal goods (...) they made their suffering a path along which everyone should go if they want to become "someone in life"'* These writers, Zambra and Molina, were 'born and raised' in Maipú and these descriptions make sense in the context of looking for what can be considered an 'ordinary school' given this middle-class district in the context of the last four decades. In this chapter I present the methodology.

This chapter is organised into five sections. First (4.1), I explain how the theoretical framework supports the research approach, providing an account of how the theoretical framework 'meets' the methods. Second (4.2), I present the research design describing how the schools were selected, the methods of data collection, and the sampling criteria of the school policy actors and the policy documents. Third (4.3), I detail the field work, explaining how I gained access to the schools, some contextual elements referred to in the interviews, and the access to school policy documents. I explain the data analysis process in its different stages, and how it is based on a Foucaldian-inspired approach (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Fourth (4.4), in the ethics section I explain some of the topics and dilemmas faced during the different stages of the research. Finally (4.5), I develop the chapter conclusion, where I summarise some of the implications of studying Maipú 'from' Maipú.

4.1 A Qualitative Approach for the Enactment of School Admission

In this section, I unpack how the theoretical framework is related with the methodology, explaining how the aim, objectives, and research questions are informed by theory and research methods, in dialogue with practical and contextual elements; exploring the

methodological consequences of defining the school admission process as a market policy technology (Ball, 2016a); and how, in practical terms, the admission process is part of a double selection process, where parents and schools choose each other (Atria, 2012).

The school voucher has evolved since its beginning in 1981, and it has been one of the most debated policies in the educational sphere. In this context, the research has identified that one of the main problems of the school voucher ishow the admission process has made it difficult for parents to exercise school choice (Atria, 2007; Bellei, 2015; Donoso, 2005; Elacqua & Santos, 2013; Mizala, 2009). Given this scenario, the Preferential School Voucher is considered the most ambitious attempt to fix and regulate some of the unexpected/unintended effects of the voucher system within schools. In effect, the Preferential School Voucher Law included measures in terms of accountability, management, and new regulations for the school admission process, trying to regulate discriminatory practices that were enacted through different instruments (interviews with parents, personal documents, or admission exams).

The school admission started to be understood as a double selection process by scholars from the 2000s, but this process has not been researched in terms of practices. In this sense, my research is a qualitative study which explores the enactment (Ball et al., 2012) of the school admission process, focusing on the two core dimensions of the Preferential School Voucher reform, focusing on two of the dimensions of the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a), which are identified as the 'context of practices' (Objective 1) and the 'context of the policy text production' (Objective 2). So, the enactment of the school admission process in these two dimensions of the policy cycle allows me to concentrate on the challenges associated with the processes of interpretation and re-contextualisation of the policies, and the multiple perspectives that present effects in how policies are shaped, according to how these policies are understood over time and different contexts.

Considering my interest in educational policies in 'lower case', I considered it pertinent to analyse methodological approaches from related theories. Indeed, just as it is possible to speak of market logic, through quasi markets, PPPs or New Public Management (NPM), it is can also be applied to lower-case policies according to different theoretical sensitivities. In this case I decided to work with policy enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012), a theoretical approach which implies mainly qualitative methods and, more specifically, a thick ethnographic approach. However, in order to justify this choice as opposed to others, a brief preamble pointing out other theoretical strands of policy studies in the 'lower case', such as the ideas derived from 'street level bureaucracy' (Lipsky, 2010; Zacka, 2017), or the study of practice

from a Bourdiean perspective applied to the educational field are also discussed. In particular I have considered the methods used in the work of Helen Gunter (2000, 2003).

The works focused on 'street level bureaucracy', problematise certain key aspects of what had been considered to be a series of assumptions that were not verified in practice. The focus of these analyses is to account for the existing gaps between the assumptions under which they are designed and all those aspects that are not verified in practice and do not appear as part of the analyses traditional policies. In effect, in the discussion raised by Lipsky and the development from which they derive, they call into question a series of topics which he examines in more depth, as we will see later, in the cases of both Gunter and Ball.

Indeed, the idea of 'street level bureaucracy' was relevant in order to refine my methodological approach, because it helped me to define, almost physically, my area of interest, that is to say a particular space. In this sense, Lipsky's seminal work was relevant to understanding the particularities of front line workers' tasks. Nonetheless, something remained insufficient when I was trying to explore the ambiguity or tension between certain logics. Whilst the work presented was illuminating, it proved somewhat rigid in terms of understanding the policy studied in its logics. In some ways, 'street level bureaucracy' was a first approach into exploring these issues, and a very analytical reading, in terms of exploring dimensions such as how workers manage the admission process and the use of documents.

The street-level bureaucracy theory places in tension the paradox in the exercise of authority, implying at the same time a set of rules and structures of "bureaucracy" and the absence of distance of the "street-level", emphasizing the 'gap between realities of practice and service ideals' (Lipsky, 2010, p. xvi). In this case, the focus is on policy actors 'the social service workers, police officers, counsellors, and educators who are responsible for delivering public services and enforcing the law a who, as such, effectively serve as the face of the state for ordinary citizens' (Zacka, 2017, p. 4). So, this approach was a way to access space and methods which I have considered relevant and interesting for my research. Nevertheless, my interest was not restricted to merely policy actors. In effect the main focus of street-level bureaucracy is on the dilemmas and contradictions that are faced by frontline workers and how they negotiate them.

A second approach, regarding policies in the lower case, comes from the work of Helen Gunter, under the theoretical influence of Pierre Bourdieu. In this sense, Gunter's work is more illuminating considering the problem that I was exploring insofar as it allows us to explore the

dimensions beyond her enunciation regarding the embeddedness of different processes in different organisations.

In this sense, a wider approach is offered by the work of Helen Gunter, in her attempt to explore and describe the interplay between theory and practice when policies are implemented within schools. Her approach highlights the challenges associated with the role of school actors and the relevance of context. She understands policy as a complex process and thus refuses to be constrained by a linear approach which states policy is designed by an educational expert and implemented by teachers following a 'top-down' logic.

Instead, Helen Gunter uses Bourdieu's concept of the field to describe school leadership research. Her research is focused on practitioners' habitus and their daily problems, highlighting how policies are embedded within particular contexts. The main interest of Helen Gunter is related to the school leadership field and the interplay between theory and practice in a wider sense. In other words, Gunter's research is concerned with the tension between theoretical frameworks and practice, or the tension between how policy 'should' work and how things 'really' are in schools. The work of Gunter explores the school leadership problem at three levels: according to the history of the field and how this can be analysed, how these policies are embedded in specific contexts and, finally, according to how practitioners, and head teachers in particular, balance what should be done and what they are able to do.

An example of her work describing the field can be seen in 'Researching and conceptualising the field' (Gunter, 2013). In this essay, Gunter attempts to problematize different educational leadership traditions, by examining the ways in which professional practice is conceptualised and the role of practitioners. In particular, she problematizes the role of academics in their interplay with political ideas and policies, as they define the problems and thus establish the boundaries of the possible solutions. In this way, she is suggesting that leadership research has, in fact, become a deeply embedded element of a neoliberal and neoconservative agenda, and (perhaps unknowingly) has played a pivotal role in constructing the crisis it purports to be seeking to avoid. In her words 'The colonisation of the field of educational leadership by neoliberals and neoconservatives has worked against a politics based on research, theorising, and debate, and instead selected ideas have become marketable products.' (2013, p. 209). Therefore, she states that reflection and research in the leadership field is relevant, but that it has been a field with more action than reflection. In a previous piece of research along the same lines, 'The Field of Educational Leadership: Studying Maps and Mapping Studies' (Gunter & Ribbins, 2003), Gunter explores the interplay between the field and research. She attempts to do this by building typologies of knowledge production in order to help different actors to

read and take action in this scenario according to different dimensions (organisational, cultural and social structures differences). In other words, by constructing this kind of typology, she is attempting to situate different actors and, at the same time, appealing to them to be conscious about where they are in this field and the consequences that this implied. For example, according to whom are the 'producers' or the 'position' that they assume.

In a distinct, and less abstract, type of work, Gunter researched how policies are embedded in particular contexts and how this particular context can affect the outcomes of policy. An example can be found in 'The discursive performance of leadership in schools' (Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2011), where the researchers attempt to understand how practitioners are influenced in their activities by the notion of "distributed leadership". Following this objective, they study the 'Bird tree' and 'Oak Tree' schools. In the former case, they describe the evolution of a "charismatic hero", who was compelled to change his style, because he was in danger of 'disempowering' the staff: 'I was there trying not be a charismatic hero. It's impossible frankly because I am one and its impossible' (2011, p. 34) . In the latter case, they describe the 'Bird tree' school, and how the leadership distribution approach, by giving more autonomy and responsibility at the same time, can be also related to what has been described as the performative school: 'once you've given somebody responsibility to take something on that you've actually left them to get on with it' (2011, p. 35). In this paper, the authors conclude that the same 'external force' can follow different paths depending on the internal values and beliefs of practitioners, 'anchoring' the same policy in different places with different meanings and outcomes. In addition to this, she is also interested in how these narratives travel through different moments and change in diverse manners at this mid-level, including the logic of the 'makeover' (Gunter & Thomson, 2009), representing how the logic of intervention in the leadership development during the New Labour governments assumed the characteristics of a mass media genre, as a way to solve problems by "transforming" and "modernising" the educational system, making changes through a salvation narrative. A second metaphor is related to the 'uberisation' (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2017) of the debate, as a kind of 'just in time' solutions for problems in a context of privatisation and deregulation. To sum up, both 'makeover' and 'uberisation' metaphors try to explain the evolution of neoliberal ideas nowadays as an agenda with concepts that 40 years ago were just starting to be developed.

Finally, there is a third area in the work of Gunter which focuses on the micro level. A good example of this research is a study looking at intellectual histories in the field of school leadership (Gunter, 2003). In this research, she develops her work through a purposive sample of 16 current and retired members of the field of education management in the UK. She

interviewed them between 1995 and 1998, and they were invited to talk about their professional stories after leaving school. According to Gunter 'This work allowed me to connect field outputs to the biographies of the producers, and so investigate the inter-relationship between their agency to read, to research, to write, to publish, to teach, with the structuring impact of private lives, careers, networks, and institutional goals and cultures' (2003, p. 337). In fact, in this research she describes a particular habitus, as the way in which actors develop attitudes and dispositions through their engagement with practice (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002), and the ways in which these particular actors perceive the field, concluding: 'we can describe and illuminate changes to the practitioner context in ways that eradicate silences, and combine this with a commitment to work on alternative approaches to professional practice' (2003, p. 347). In other words, Gunter describes how changes such as 'uberisation' can be processed in alternative ways by the practitioners. Thereby, Gunter highlights how biographies show the tensions between the teacher/manager /administrator and academic-research identity and the interplay between the policy debate in the academic field and the problems and the habitus of head teachers facing daily problems. In other words, she builds a link between two areas which are related only tangentially, in terms of how problems are perceived depending on your 'position' according to the typology developed by Gunter and Ribbins (2003).

To sum up, Gunter conceptualises the theory and practice conundrum on three distinct levels. These levels are connected to the same problem, highlighting why a strong reflection on the complexity of the implementation process and how the values and beliefs of practitioners are modelling these processes is required. Nevertheless, my main interest lies in her approach to policies in schools. Put simply, I am interested in her work at the micro-level and the mid-level, dealing with how practitioners, context and ideas continuously model the policy process. From the point of view of my research, this area of her work is more suggestive than her work describing the field at the macro level (i.e. "studying maps and mapping studies"). Therefore, I am particularly interested in her work in schools when she studies the problems that practitioners may face, according to the specific communities, and the particularities of teachers and students, and the ways in which they negotiate with these variables, considering the different discourses of school leadership which try to understand these processes in terms of ideas like "effective schools" and "distributed leadership" or to elaborate critical approaches to describe the current scenario, through concepts such as 'uberisation' and 'makeover'. Nevertheless, Gunter's work is concentrated on just one kind of practitioner, who works with the school administration. In this sense, her work is not looking at other school community

actors. In this way, the work of Stephen Ball, in its 'enactment' strand, shares part of the diagnosis in relation to why context is relevant, but he is working under different assumptions and methods than those set out by Gunter. More importantly, Ball researches the policy process considering all the actors who could be relevant and are engaged in the process. In conclusion, Gunter attempts to build a link between theory and practice, highlighting why it is necessary to develop an understanding of how the policy is working from the school perspective, the role of head teachers and how the field of school leadership has been constituted through history. In contrast, Ball researches the elements which are understated within the hegemonic point of view, which underlie most policies. In this sense, Ball attempts to explore and describe the elements that can affect the policy process, considering how power is distributed between different actors. As a consequence, he highlights the complexity of schools and all the contextual elements and actors which are implied in the policy process in schools. So, my focus should be wider than describing one particular role or habitus inside the school, and in this sense, I felt closer to the wider description of Ball.

Additionally, the predominant versions research in Chile, which were referred in Chapter 2, as an overrepresented quantitative view and an underrepresented qualitative perspective, do not enter into dialogue with each other at any point. In this sense, my approach is an attempt to build a bridge for this dialogue to take place. In a sense, 'policy sociology' and enactment have allowed me to stress categories of educational research which are used by both traditions, placing in tension concepts such as admission or school choice. Indeed, my research can be read from both sides. In contrast, as I mentioned, following the paths suggested by Gunter or Lipsky would have been to follow a path already inscribed in the Chilean educational tradition. To sum up, 'policy sociology' and 'enactment' provide as a balance between traditional research and something more innovative, without specific links to the existing body of Chilean educational research.

The main problem associated with this theory, in comparison to an approach based on policy enactment and, in a broader sense, the work of Stephen Ball, is exploring the tension and ambiguity of this policy in a broader sense. On a more personal level, according to my career trajectory and training, it seemed to me that Gunter's approach was more familiar and, therefore, that policy enactment could be more ambitious and challenging. In a retrospective sense, I think that the frame of 'street level bureaucracy' derived from Lipsky or the Bourdiean approach derived from the work of Helen Gunter would have made analysis more incisive to the extent that the type of conclusions are closer to those of the current public policy debate in Chile.

Considering these theoretical approaches to policies in the 'lower case' and the methods used, the Chilean educational debate and my own possibilities in terms of time and resources, I chose to focus on two dimensions that have been central. These dimensions are the process faced by the admission teams and the documents considered in the admission process.

I have chosen to limit the research to these dimensions, for a mixture of theoretical and practical reasons. The theoretical reasons are based on an attempt to call into question the hegemonic point of view in the research and design of policies, with emphasis on the outcomes, to the detriment of the practices. This perspective has privileged expert knowledge over other approaches and has been exemplarily represented by the phrase 'In the name of reason' (Silva, 2009), as a way of exploring the interaction between technocrats and politics. In this sense, exploring the practices through interviews and the policy text production through policy documents seems like the best approach to highlight a specific vision of the policy process, which states that implementation is never straightforward, and that policies always result in unintended as well as intended consequences. In this sense, exploring these dimensions is a way to highlight the gap between what has been prescribed and what actually happens in relation to the admission process.

Following Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, and Henry (1997), it can be said that the policy process is more than just the text and that it is multi-dimensional; education policy is value-laden, exists in context and is part of state activity; and, finally, education policies interact with other fields. In this sense, I use the concept of 'policy cycle' (1994a; Bowe et al., 1992) as a way to challenge the centrality of the state and vertical conceptions of power, based on the Foucauldian decentred concept of power (Casimiro, 2016). Considering that my research is framed in terms of practices, it is relevant to understanding how policy actors understand and interpret the policy process. In effect, a Foucauldian-influenced approach pays attention to the action-orientation of the discourses – as sites of resistance, struggle, and reformation –, the modalities of subjectivity promoted or proscribed by particular discourses and the forms of regulation and control (Burman et al., 2017). I will also consider the approach developed by Bacchi (Bacchi, 1999, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Bletsas, 2012), which looks forward 'to [shifting]the focus from "problem" solving to "problem" questioning – interrogating the ways in which proposals for change represent "problems"' (Bacchi, 2009, p. vii). I use this Foucaldian inspired analytical approach as a strategy to facilitate poststructural analysis– as will be detailed in the data analysis section, where I problematise the way the admission process is enacted and some of the unexpected implications in terms of the opacity of the process and timing as a key feature of the process.

There are also practical reasons. My research explores a process that has been increasingly regulated, as a response to what have been acknowledged to be unintended/ unexpected consequences (Mizala, 2009). In this sense, I am interested in developing a link between how the school admission process and school choice are traditionally defined, and the enactment perspective and critical accounts, placing these perspectives in tension and highlighting the role of policy actors, the practices and rationalities which are involved in the policy process. In this sense, exploring these dimensions of the policy cycle – the 'context of practices' and the 'context of the policy text production'– is a way to create a space where traditional and critical policy studies can enter into dialogue. This dialogue is given by the focus on a very specific process that has been considered as a key element for traditional policy studies, where the differents actors play a very specific role, but this process has not been explored from the perspective of the differentiated actors who are in a continuous process of interpretation and recontextualisation whilst enacting the admission process.

In this research, as was detailed in Chapter Two, I follow a Foucauldian approach. In this sense, this proposal is based on the 'last Foucault' and how he refutes the notion that social research can represent the world unproblematically: 'This has to do, in part, with the limits of social research, partly the opaque nature of the social world and also because of the problems around the language used' (Brewer, 2011, p. 311). According to Foucault, discourse works as a 'technology of power' and as a 'technology of the self' (Han, 2017) and 'these technologies potentially have both productive and negative material, bodily and spatial consequences for human subjects and communities' (Luke, 1997, p. 54). In this sense, discourses are key aspects to accessing the practices that constitute them; however, this does not mean that this is wholly unproblematic. As Ball states, 'we do not speak discourse, discourses speak us. Discourses produce the objects about which they speak' (2013, p. 20). Discourses imply meaning and social relationships, they constitute subjectivity and power relations at the same time (Ball, 1993), in which 'the most significant units are "serious speech acts", both written and spoken' (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 22). With this in mind, I am concerned with how policy actors do policy at the school level, but also with how a critical account can be produced about the policy enactment process. The explorations of the discourses of the school admission team will be achieved through semi-structured interviews and the analysis of policy documents.

My theoretical framework is based on a policy sociology approach, which is rooted in the tradition of social sciences, is historically based, and uses qualitative techniques (Ozga, 1987). My study highlights a specific vision of the policy process. To sum up, policy enactments are not linear processes and sometimes it is hard to know which practices will best accomplish the

desired outcomes (Ball et al., 2012). In this sense, I will assume a social scientists' perspective, in terms of an orientation 'towards improving existing theory; that is, a better understanding of how things work' (Ozga, 2000, p. 40), in opposition to the solving of a problem or looking for an answer or solution oriented by a client's definition or evaluating how well policies are implemented.

I will use the concept proposed in the 'policy cycle' by Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992) and Ball (1994a) as a way to challenge the assumed centrality of the state and vertical conceptions of power, based on the Foucaldian decentred concept of power (Casimiro, 2016). In effect, it will consider the different contexts of the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a; Bowe et al., 1992). My research focus is on the policy enactment process of the admission policy by policy actors at the school level (Ball et al., 2012); specifically the 'context of practices' (Objective 1) and the 'context of the policy text production' (Objective 2). This perspective allows me to focus on the challenges associated with the 'processes of interpretation and re-contextualisation' (Maguire et al., 2015).

This is a qualitative study that aims to explore and understand the meanings that individuals ascribe to a social problem (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is especially effective in exploring culturally specific information referring to values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Emily, 2005). As Kumar states, qualitative research is a useful design when looking for a holistic understating without claiming any generalisation to the population, providing 'an overview and in-depth understanding of the case(s), process and interactional dynamics within a unit of study' (2011, p. 127). In this sense, a qualitative approach is pertinent to accomplishing the aims of my research. Particularly considering that my research is framed in terms of practices, it is relevant to understanding how policy actors understand and interpret the policy process, and it is pertinent to take a more flexible approach than, for example, a questionnaire. According to Creswell, the research process involves 'emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants' setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of meaning from the data' (2009, p. 4).

4.2 Research Design: School Admission Through Interviews and Documents

In this section, I present the research design. This research aims to explore the enactment of school admission. In this sense, I explain how and why I selected the schools, and how I have planned to investigate these objectives, through the use of interviews with school policy actors

and the analysis of policy documents related to the school admission process that were created 'for and by the school.

I developed my research considering the public and private subsidised schools which work with the voucher system. This classification is based on the administration and the financing of schools, which presents a number of different implications in terms of how the schools are managed. In relation to sampling, I have selected 'pairs' of schools that work with students with similar characteristics, in terms of origin and outcomes. Previous to the field work, I did not have detailed information about the total number of school workers involved in the admission process in each school. Considering this uncertain situation, a pre-fixed number of schools was not possible, and the final number of schools was eventually related to the number of interviewees and the richness of the documents collected. Finally, I interviewed 22 members of the school admission team from four schools, as will be detailed later. In my sampling I looked for an 'ordinary school' (Ball et al., 2012; Maguire et al., 2011), as a way to stress that these schools 'were not subject to any 'external' interventions as a result of "under-performance" or which were "star" schools that may have enjoyed more than the usual autonomy' (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 2). In effect, I selected schools that are not, by any means, 'exemplary'. The research was carried out in the schools, because this is the context where the admission process is developed and where the policy actors interact on a day-to-day basis.

Public schools are financed and managed by municipalities, and these schools are more bureaucratic in the way they are administrated; meanwhile, private education is financed mainly by the state[24] but managed by private actors, showing a great diversity of managers and providers. In relation to the sampling, I selected two schools of each type that work with students with similar characteristics, in terms of origin and outcomes. There was not a pre-determined number of interviews. In this sense, I depended on the quality of the data and the number of actors who were involved in the process and were willing to be part of this study in each school setting.

In relation to the data collection methods, I worked with interviews and policy documents. I conducted semi-structured interviews with policy actors at the school level engaged with the admission process in each school. Following Kumar (2011), I chosen to work with interviews, because it seemed more appropriate to the complexity, and was useful for collecting in-depth information. I developed semi-structured interviews, which are a flexible kind of interaction, like a conversation, but, as an interview, '[they are] asymmetric in [their] use of these

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[24] Schools can receive resources from parents and other private actors and corporations.

resources, shining all the light on the interviewer and encouraging a particular kind of self-disclosure' (Packer, 2011, p. 8). Finally, being situated in the continuum of 'unstructured' and 'structured' interviews (Kumar, 2011), my interviews presented some rigidity in terms of structure and contexts, but also flexibility in the questions and their wording, according to to their respective context. In relation to the policy documents, I analysed policy documents which are enacted in the admissions process context. These correspond to two types of policy documents. The first one refers to documents that the school receives from the different institutions which regulate the school system, and the municipalities in the cases of the public schools. The second type of documents focused on the admission process is referred to as the policy documents that the school produces in order to enact policies. In the last case, these documents are produced by different people, with different ends, and for a different audience. In this sense, there are reports produced by the management team to answer the accountability demands from different institutions; and, on the other hand, documents produced to be directly referred to during the admission process. They are developed by 'transactors', who are in charge of the 'accounting, reporting, monitoring/supporting, and facilitating' (Ball et al., 2012, p. 49). Finally, there are documents produced by 'policy translators', who are in charge of the production of texts and artefacts (Ball et al., 2012).

In relation to the data analysis, it is hard to talk about a strictly Foucauldian method of analysis; as Foucault himself was very reluctant to set boundaries to his ideas/methods, encouraging their use as 'little toolboxes' from which anyone can use a sentence, idea or analysis (Fimyar, 2011). However, many researchers share a Foucauldian-influenced approach based on a critical attitude paying attention to the action-orientation of the discourses – as sites of resistance, struggle, and reformation –, the modalities of subjectivity promoted or proscribed by particular discourses and the forms of regulation and control (Burman et al., 2017). In this sense, they propose an analytical strategy, which enquires as to 'What is the problem represented to be?' (the WPR approach) (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016), to facilitate poststructural analysis, as a set of questions in order to access the policy problem's representations. Under the assumption that problematisations are the key elements of the policy, the authors state that we need to study problematisations, instead of problems, through the analysis of the representations which they contain, to scrutinise 'the premises and effects of the problem representations they contain' (Bacchi, 2009, p. 25).

This research presents two objectives. The first objective is to explore how policy actors at the school level interpret and enact the admission process in Maipú. The second objective is to explore how policy documents at the school level are enacted by the policy actors at the

school level, given the context of the Preferential School Voucher policy. These objectives present one overarching research question:

How does the admission policy enactment process configure, modify, and challenge the practices and rationalities of the school admission team in the context of the Preferential School Voucher?

The main research question is associated with three interrelated research questions:

Research question 1: How do school admissions teams enact school admission processes under the current regulations?

Research question 2: How is the admission process enacted by policy actors at the school level through its policy documents, created by and for the school, as discursive practices?

Research question 3: What kind of practices and rationalities associated with equity and competition can be identified within and between the schools in the enactment of the school admission process?

In relation to the first objective – I explored how the schools' admission teams interprets and enact the admission process in Maipú – I conducted semi-structured interviews with policy actors at the school level in each school. Following Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the interviewer can be distinguished as a 'miner' or as a 'traveler', as a way of highlighting the different conceptions of interviewing as a process of collection or as knowledge construction respectively. In this sense, the 'miner' metaphor works in the sense that my research 'unearths the valuable metal' (2009, p. 48), focusing on a tiny but very relevant process, like the school admission process. On the other hand, the 'traveller' metaphor is closer to my aims in terms of inquiring into the practices associated with the school admission process, here I explore 'the many domains of the country, as unknown terrain or with maps, roaming freely around the territory' (2009, p. 48).

I developed semi-structured interviews for the school policy actors, as can be seen in the interview schedules in the Appendices. The interviews with managers and teachers were closer to an 'expert interview' (Flick, 2009).

In relation to the interviews, I aimed for a non-hierarchical tone, between two equal people, rather than a top-down approach. In this sense, I tried to develop a conversation style in which 'we talk about the subject', which has the style of a conversation, without being a real conversation (Kaufmann, 2011).

The actors that accomplish some characteristics are teachers that are actively involved in the admission process, and the school management team, who are related in some way to the admission policy.

The second objective is to explore how policy documents at the school level are enacted by the policy actors at the school level, given the context of the Preferential School Voucher policy. In this way, I have analysed policy documents related to the admission process produced for and by the schools. In this research, following the approach of Prior, I consider that documents are not 'stable, static and pre-defined artefacts. Instead we must consider them in terms of fields, frames and networks of action' (2003, p. 2). In effect, the documents are related to 'creators (agents, writers, publishers, publicists and so on), users (readers, or receivers) and settings' (2003, p. 2). In effect, I analysed policy documents which are enacted in the admission process context. These corresponded to two types of policy documents: the documents that schools receive from the Ministry of Education and the different institutions which regulate the school system, and the documents produced in the school. The documents were created for and by the school, respectively.

There are a huge number of documents in the school context. In fact, schools are regulated by thousands of documents, a series of regulations and institutions that do not necessarily directly dialogue with each other (Aylwin, 2018). So, the sample is defined according to practical reasons too. In this sense, the texts analysed contemplated two sources. In the first place, there was a selection of those documents that were cited or referred to by the school policy actors that were interviewed. Additionally, those work documents that the same school had as part of their internal administration. In this sense, it was a compilation constructed from below, that is, from the documents referred to by the school policy actors, or constructed by them. In this sense, following Prior (2003), documents should be understood as: 'situated products, rather than as fixed and stable "things" in the world. (...) In approaching documents as a field for research we should forever keep in mind the dynamic involved in the relationships between production, consumption, and content' (Prior, 2003, p. 26). In this sense, in my research, I 'extend the category of policy text to include documentary or other materials that can be read as significant' (Ozga, 2000, p. 95).

Following the policy actors' classification and the 'policy work' developed by Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012), the first kind of documents are enacted by the policy 'narrators' who interpret, select and enforce meanings of the traditional policy documents. In this sense, they are documents produced by 'policy translators', who are in charge of the production of texts and artefacts (Ball et al., 2012). The second type of documents are focused on the admission

process and the policy documents that the school produces in order to enact the policy. In the last case, these documents are produced by different people, with different ends, and for a different audience. Firstly, there are reports produced by the management team in order to answer the accountability demands of different institutions. These are developed by so-called 'transactors', who are in charge of 'accounting, reporting, monitoring/supporting, facilitating' (Ball et al., 2012, p. 49). The documents 'for' schools are the documents that are created for the school by the policy actors from external institutions and used in the admission process; and the documents produced 'by' are the documents used in the admission process created within the school, by the school workers. The documents analysed per school can be seen in each school in Table 4:

Schools	Produced 'for' the school	Produced 'by' the school
Vallenar	1 Students enrolment per school 2 Students' admission 3 Special student admission form 4 Municipal education brochure 5 Information school report	1 Admission form for parents for internal use 2 Admission certificate 3 Spreadsheets per level. 4 School leaflets and information 5 Extra-curricular activities 6 School history
Talca	1 School mission – brochure school 2 School activities 3 Rules of the school 4 Municipal education brochure 5 Information school report	1 Admission form for parents for internal use – Rules of the school 2 Admission certificate 3 Enrolment control per level. 4 School history 5 Extra-curricular activities
Frutillar	1 School mission – brochure school 2 School activities 3 Rules of the school 4 Information about the school provider and other schools from this provider (*Sostenedor*)	1 Admission form for parents for internal use 2 Admission certificate 3 Spreadsheets per level.
Valdivia	1 Brochure school 2 School centre structure 3 Brochure of other schools activities 4 School rules	1 Admission form for parents for internal use - Rules of the school 2 Admission certificate 3 Spreadsheets per level.

Table 4: Policy Documents sampled per School

In the case of public schools, the documents were produced by the municipality (therefore the documents produced 'for' the school by the municipality are the same) and in private schools by the supporters.

4.3 Field Work and Data Analysis

In this section, I explain how I carried out the field work and data analysis. I carried out the research activities during May and June, 2019. During this period, I performed the interviews and I collected documents, having previously established contact with the selected schools.

Following Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012, p. 1) this is not a 'blow-by-blow account of the relationships between specific policies and specific practices'. In effect, I will mention some of the elements which affect how and in what ways the context affects the admission process, according to policy actors, 'those with some responsibility for and who were/are legally accountable' (2012, p. 1), in this case, for the school admission process.

Private establishments, then, are presented in a more structured way than public institutions. In both cases there was greater resistance to gain entry to the establishment. We could say that, while in public institutions there was a formal presentation and I presented in my documents, credentials and references indicating the research objectives and references; those papers were looked at and reviewed without any great diligence. In the private establishments, following exactly the same scheme -presentation, objectives and references- this was followed by a series of questions around -for example- who exactly would access this document, if it would be published and in what languages, even whether there was any possibility that some of this information could be leaked to newspapers. It is difficult to interpret what was the predominant feeling in the case of these establishments. Thus, in the public establishments there was a mixture of transparency, but perhaps even indifference. On the other hand, in the private establishments I perceived an excessive caution that became somewhat uncomfortable.

To describe the schools in which I developed my work, it is important to note that, when I say schools in Maipú, I am already saying a lot to someone from Santiago, and maybe from anywhere in Chile; due to the level of segregation and homogeneity which typify districts of Santiago. This social fragmentation is quite acute, as Ottone (2016) points out, Chileans can find out the social class, after knowing the surnames, the schools and their neighbourhood of origin. In this sense, there is a city of "perceptions" and another of "statistics." As Mehta points out, New York may seem like a multicultural paradise to us, but it is at the same time, the second most segregated city in the United States. In the case of Maipú, from a social class point of view, beyond the differences and nuances that I seek to establish and develop in this section, it is very homogenous, and lacking in diversity; and, at the same time, it is a neighbourhood that presents a great homogeneity in its population, from a statistical perspective.

The case study is a large school located near the centre of the commune, just a few blocks from the Plaza de Maipú, which is the place where commerce is concentrated and where the subway terminal station is located. The school is surrounded by old houses and is adjacent to a stadium that belongs to the Municipality, where there are tennis courts, an athletics track and

a multipurpose gym. Crossing the main avenue, there is a Private University just a few blocks away. These places are important points of reference for the inhabitants of Maipú. Both were created less than two decades ago and have an extensive network that is spread throughout the country.

These schools are located in areas of great added value today. This was not always the case, and it is possible to see a type of construction and environment of rural origin, in the streets and their gardens. Indeed, it is a space of great connectivity.

The Vallenar school has a long history within the district. It has one course per level and it offers a humanistic scientific education. This is a neat looking college with a wide entrance. The school has strong roots in the community and it is common that students' parents were themselves former students in past decades. Since it is a rather small school, with primary and secondary education, there is a family atmosphere that is reflected in the walls which show a series of extracurricular activities.

It is a school that houses secondary education and that stands out for its size, in relation to the Vallenar school. It is a school that has a greater infrastructure, tied to its higher enrolment and the extracurricular activities that take place here. It is a well-maintained school, but in relation to the Vallenar school, it appears less cared for in places and is structured in a way that seems outwardly less friendly - which perhaps is related to the absence of primary education there.

In the case of the private schools, taking the Plaza de Maipú as a reference, the private schools are located in opposite directions. However, both establishments, taking the Plaza de Maipú as a point of reference, the private schools are located in opposite directions. However, both establishments share some characteristics when it comes to their surroundings. In this sense, both are located in areas that lack access to services or green areas and are located in old residential neighbourhoods, in the context of a commune that has experienced breakneck development during the last 40 years.

As regards the Valdivia school, it occupies an entire block in a large four story building that includes some underground facilities. It is an establishment whose demographic is drawn from, according to the admissions teams, the sector and from nearby schools again made up of families of former students from the same establishment. In effect, there is a sense of community that is nurtured from the establishment, through a series of sporting and artistic extra-school activities.

The Valdivia school, for example, is a school located on the border with another commune. In this sense, this school receives a large portion of its students from contiguous districts from

which the Maipú schools are seen as representing a better alternative to those existing in the commune itself. In this sense, the school receives, to some extent, an inter-municipal migration. This, according to the interviewees, configures an identity that makes students feel proud of belonging to a school that is located neither in their own commune, nor far from home.

The Frutillar school, unlike the Valdivia school, is located in an area that does not receive students from other districts. It is an establishment that receives students from the same area. Unlike the other establishments, these are very neat and highly structured spaces. In this sense, on a surface level it appears very similar to public schools. The managers interviewed pointed out that there is a family atmosphere and emphasized that many of the school workers send their own children to the establishment and that so do their former students.

A relevant aspect, the implications of which would not become evident until later, is the number of workers involved in the admission process. In the case of the public establishments, the Talca and Vallenar schools, these are establishments in which there are many actors involved in a drawn-out process that occupies over several months of the year; in opposition to the private ones, Frutillar and Valdivia, in which there were a much smaller number of participating actors and the intake occupies a shorter period. These kinds of differences will be developed in the analysis in the following chapters.

I selected four 'ordinary' schools considering as criteria a mix of attainment and socioeconomic level. Attainment was calculated using the results of the school in the *SIMCE* [25], and the socioeconomic level using the Vulnerability Index[26] of the schools as a proxy for poverty. In this case, more than the specific "meaning" of the numbers, I want to stress how similar they are as can be seen in Table 5:

School	SIMCE previous three years	IVE 2019
Vallenar	236	86,3%
Talca	223	89,9%
Valdivia	280	89,4%
Frutillar	255	85,9%

Table 5: Attainment and Socioeconomic Level of the Selected Schools

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[25] *Sistema de Información y Medición de la Calidad en la Educación (SIMCE).* Available at: www.mime.mineduc.cl/ (National System of Education Quality).
[26] In Spanish: *Indice de vulnerabilidad educativa (IVE).* Available *at: https:/www.junaeb.cl/ive*

At a national level, it is considered that there are three levels, the initial level of achievement is 245 or less points, intermediate goes from 246 to 335; and advanced encompasses those with 336 or more points (the best school in Chile, for example, had 360 points). Under this scheme, the public schools -Vallenar and Talca- are located at an initial level and the private ones - Frutillar and Valdivia- at an intermediate level. However, beyond this classification, less than 60 points separate the first from the last establishment. In the same vein, the students vulnerability index (IVE) is a poverty proxy. This index is a mix of different dimensions, considering the school dropout risk and the vulnerability of the area and is used mainly as criteria for the distribution of food in schools. In this case, I am interested in highlighting that the differences here are minimal. For example, between the most and the least vulnerable there are only five percentage points of difference. Indeed, these are small differences, which confirm an intermediate space in which the establishments are located in the lower part of the middle or in the upper space of the lower category.

In relation to access to the schools, I called asking for the contact details to send an email and ask for collaboration with the research. Then, I sent an email explaining the objectives of my research, and when I didn't receive an answer, I asked my contacts to help me contact the aforementioned 'gatekeepers'. In two schools I received positive information from the beginning, and in the other two schools, I used the aforementioned gatekeepers. The interviews were conducted inside the schools. All the interviews were conducted in privacy in an office in the school, but on some occasions these interviews were interrupted by the phone or people knocking on the door. I carried out the interviews during May and June 2019, and I worked on the transcriptions and data analysis from July onwards.

I called each of these schools, and I also sent emails to keep track of the decisions taken. The selection of these schools was for a mix of political and technical reasons. Political, in order to exclude, for example, schools with problems such that could make the research inappropriate, and could make the school community feel reluctant to participate in a study (I am considering, for example, schools that have been under intense media scrutiny). On the other hand, there were technical reasons, such as classification according to the results in standardised tests. So, it could be said they were essentially very similar to each other, being part of the same group of schools. These schools present some specific differences, but they have many similar characteristics too. All the schools claim to be worried about student outcomes, and all the schools offer activities such as five-a-side football, table tennis or chess. Given the context of the district, these schools can be considered to be 'ordinary schools' (Maguire et al., 2011). The public schools in Maipú are accountable to the CODEDUC, which is

officially in charge of their management. The district controls 24 schools, following a semi-centralised structure. According to the current law, the public schools are represented by the district (in Spanish: '*Sostenedor*'). The public school system, as was described in the previous chapter, has one Local Authority per district[27]. There is a great diversity in the characteristics of the local administration, which are in direct relation to the characteristics of the district. This Local Authority, CODEDUC, controls the resources, but they are not part of the enactment of the admission process. Nevertheless, the curriculum and pedagogical policies are designed at a central level through the Ministry of Education.

Considering this scenario, I selected two schools that can be considered representative of public education in the district. First, Vallenar School was founded during the 1970s. It presents high levels of vulnerability[28], which are common to all public schools. The educational project has a focus on citizenship, highlighting the public role of some of its former students. The second public school selected, Talca School is a bigger school, which declares a focus on inclusive education. In relation to the private subsidised schools, I have chosen two schools that can be classified as part of the category of schools in which the owner (*Sostenedor*) manages more than one school. I have selected these schools because this level of development presupposes a higher level of organisation and a longer track record than schools that were created by just one person, a former teacher for example; in opposition, for example, to schools with a longer track record which belong to a church. In effect, this selection rationale is to exclude what can be considered the most extreme examples of privatisation and market-oriented logic. In effect, the schools selected present a similar track record, with between three and four decades of history. These schools are similar as to their results and level of vulnerability, but there are also important differences between them which can be seen in Table 6.

	Vallenar	Talca	Frutillar	Valdivia
Classification	Emergent	-	Emergent	Emergent
Students per class	30	30	40	40
Enrolment	700	1000	3400	1200
School workers	50	70	140	60

Table 6: General Information about the Selected Schools

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[27] There is a reform which is in the implementation process, which changes this logic. This change is in its first stage (Bellei, 2018b), and has been named as the main reform since the return to democracy (Bellei, 2018a)

[28] Vulnerability, through the School Vulnerability Index (*Indice de Vulnebilidad Escolar* (IVE), in Spanish) is the way poverty is defined in a broad sense in Chile at the school level.

In relation to the interviews, it is important to note the style that Chileans use to talk; citing Raúl Ruiz, 'we speak a fractured, painful Spanish, with a surprising syntax, that if one thinks it is a mixture of two languages, one might think that it is possible' (Buci-Glucksmann, Abdelwahab, Peeters, & Román, 2003, pp. 33–34). In this sense, prompting and probing played an important role, to give order to the dialogue and realign different ideas. In this sense, I have tried to 'encourage the respondents to extend or amplify a partial, irrelevant or inaccurate response, and/or to stimulate and assist them to answer a question' (Sarantakos, 2005, pp. 278–279). On the other hand, the interviews with school workers presented some additional complications, in terms of talking about complicated topics, or topics that are usually avoided: 'delicate issues for an organisation, also in competition with other players in the market, are mentioned' (Flick, 2009, p. 168).

In this investigation, the interviewees were school policy actors, and all policy actors have interests and feelings involved, and it is reasonable that they want to be, or more precisely also to be seen as 'good' school workers. In effect, in this kind of interviews, there is a high risk of collecting a myth rather than the truth (Kaufmann, 2003). In this sense, my main interest is related to practices and not to unveiling or destroying some kind of myth at the family or school level. So, I made mine the strategy pointed out by Kaufmann 'To avoid this deceptive rewriting, the trap was simply to fix the investigation at a precise moment'* (2003, p. 15). In this case, the precise moment was just prior to the entry of these students and the transit that the 'process' of admission involves. My strategy was to focus the interview at the moment when the student was not yet part of the school community; when the student is not yet one of 'our' students from the school worker's perspective. In this sense, there was a second tension related to the need to be located at an equal distance from two undesirable poles, in relationto which the policy actors stand and seek balance. One in which the admission process is 'discriminatory', and another in which an establishment allows 'everyone', referring to each student being allowed to attend without attention to any kind of criteria on the part of the school. The schedule of the interview with the policy actors can be seen in Appendix 2.

In terms of the analysis, the interviews were duly recorded and fully transcribed. The data was managed using NVivo. I conducted a total of 24 interviews according to my plan, which was to interview teachers and the management team. The interviewees' selection was made under the following criteria when arriving at the establishments: essentially identifying those who are involved in the admission process. Upon identifying these people an interview was requested . The number of actors involved was variable, a question that was part of the subsequent analyses. The diversity of school workers interviewed accounts for the diversity of actors

involved. Table 7 shows the actors involved, their approximate age, and their role in the admission tasks.

Schools	Management Team	Teachers
Vallenar	1 Ana (30): Adminstrative 2 Manuel (50): Head teacher 3 Elena(30): Counsellor 4 Alicia (30): Psycho oscial team 5 Victoria (50): Social worker	1 Jorge(40): Spanish teacher 2 Exequiel (40): Math teacher
Talca	1 Adriana (50): Administrative 2 Francisca (30): Counselor 3 Miriam (50): Psychosocial team 4 Mercedes (30): Psychosocial team 5 Carolina (50): Administrativbe 6 Melisa (30): Social worker 7 Francisco (40): Administrative	1 Hugo (30): Languaje teacher 2 Martin (50): Math teacher
Frutillar	1 Eugenia (40):Headteacher 2 Natalia (50): Administrative	1 Doris (40): Math teacher 2 Claudia (30): History teacher
Valdivia	1 César (50): Counselor 2 Ester (40): Psychosocial team 3 Rosa (30): Administrative	0

Table 7: Interviewees Per School, Age and Role

The procedure to find these documents was asking school policy actors about all the documents related to the admission process, trying to understand how and in what ways the policy actors are related to these policy documents. It is important to consider that my access to the policy documents was mediated by school policy actors, and my research is focused on the documents produced by and for the school. In a first stage, I considered all the documents, the precise number of which was uncertain. Afterwards, I made a further selection of documents, focusing on some specific aspects of the process, depending on the final number of policy documents. The main school documents analysed until now are related to: (i) external panel report, (ii) the school's self-evaluation report, and (iii) its plan of improvement. I developed observation guidelines that can be seen in Appendix 3.

In relation to the data analysis, after a first moment of familiarisation with the data, by listening, transcribing, and reading the interviews, and giving some order to the documents, I started the process of coding and searching for some recurrent topics, reviewing, defining and naming themes and taking into account the double nature of this research, according to the 'miner' and 'traveller' metaphors (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A first moment of the analysis was related to the transcription and a thematic analysis of the main topics and moments of the admission process. This thematic analysis was made using the NVivo software. There was a second stage, which included the strategy suggested by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) in terms of a Foucauldian analysis through the methodology that they identified as 'what's the problem represented to be'.

4.4 Ethics

In this section, I explain how I resolved different problems during the stages of design, analysis, presentation, and findings (Wellington, 2015), as issues that arose when I was developing the project and even after (Punch, 2009). This research follows the recommendations of the British Educational Research Association (2011) and the Data Protection Act (UK GOV. Department for Digital, Culture, 2018); and the research was conducted with the authorisation of the Ethics Committee of the University of Bristol, in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and the Code of Practice for Research (as can be seen in Appendix 3). Following these guidelines, I developed some ideas in relation to research access-exit, power relations, safety and wellbeing, the information given to the participants, and details about anonymity, confidentiality and feedback.

In relation to the access and exit, I knew some schools and school workers in Maipú prior to embarking upon field work. This contact arose from a previous job during the years 2014 and 2015. These school workers acted as gatekeepers in some cases and in many cases gave insightful comments about the context and possible risks tothe research completion. At the beginning of the research, all participants were informed about the right to withdrawal, informed consent, complaints procedure, anonymity /confidentiality (as can be seen in the 'Author's Declaration', and the 'Informed Consent Form', in Appendices 5 and 6, respectively). After the research completion, I promised to share the results with the school community; furthermore, I am considering hosting a seminar within the community including all the participants in the research.

Considering that the interview was one of the methods used, power and participant relations have been key elements. In effect, I was aware of the asymmetrical power relation during the development of the interview. In the case of school workers, they are used to participating in educational research (they have carried out some kind of research as part of their studies as teachers, and/or they have participated as interviewees or they have been observed on their practice) (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). Nevertheless, as Silverman (2013) suggests, one of the strategies is to develop a clear and detailed policy of confidentiality. In this case, the interviews were anonymised, and I was clear about the information required and its intended possible uses.

There were no discernible risks involved that could affect either individual participants or myself as a researcher, with regard to safety and wellbeing. Participants were identified through their general role, and during the interviews, they were free to not answer those

questions or to withdraw from participating in the research without giving any explanation. In this last sense, there might be ethical issues related to the personal information that policy actors at the school level share or in relation to their job and/or the policy analysed. I am referring particularly to how they perceive my judgement about these issues. As Maxwell states, it is impossible to think that the researcher approach will be free of any theories or beliefs. In this sense, 'qualitative research is primarily concerned with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations may have influenced the conduct and conclusions of the study (which may be either positive or negative) and avoiding the negative consequences of these' (2004, p. 124). Finally, this proximity is clear to me nowadays. But I do not know if I am perceived as an insider; since I left Maipú, I have lived in three cities which are far from Santiago, and nowadays I am living abroad. I lived in Maipú for 25 years and since I left the district, more than ten years ago, I have remained in contact with this district in different ways. Considering my biography, the potential for personal bias is an aspect to be aware of at all stages. This was an issue that arose during the data collection process, developing interviews and analysing documents. In effect, being an insider-outsider throws up some problems that were considered during the fieldwork, analysis, and the findings; and, in some sense, can be considered a limitation of the study. Conversely, in other aspects it could also be said to contribute in terms of unveiling and enlightening a reader unfamiliar with the context with hidden cultural and social nuances of the area.

All participants interviewed received the same consent form. The names of participants and schools were changed. In this way, the chance of identifying an interviewee would be reduced to their group – and to one out of four schools. Concerning the right of withdrawal, the participants were given the researcher's email. If they decided to participate, they were free to withdraw and without having to give any reason. After the fieldwork, the participants were able to withdraw during the development of the interview or up to six months after the interview. The participants who chose to take part in this research were asked to sign a consent form. In addition, they were given an information sheet to keep and refer to if necessary. In relation to the teachers and the management team, I verbally explained the research project, as a complement to the aforementioned information sheet. Some teachers or part of the school management team may have been reluctant to participate in this kind of research, because they may have been unsure about the uses of the information they would give, or they may not have perceived this kind of research as being something useful for them. To sum up, informed consent considers three elements: 'it should be based on adequate knowledge […], consent is voluntary […] and that people are free to decline to participate or

withdraw during the research without the fear of any adverse consequences' (Brooks, te Riele, & Maguire, 2014, p. 80). The participants interviewed were given an information sheet to keep and were be asked to sign a consent form. Finally, the participants had the chance to make suggestions or complaints; they were given the researcher's supervisors' contact information, so they could file a complaint by email (both were Spanish speakers).

To protect participants, the whole data set was anonymised, as well as the schools. Nevertheless, there is a chance that if someone from the school community reads my research, those interviewed might be identified. This is quite unlikely, and unavoidable, but this situation has been one of my concerns during my research, particularly during the data analysis. In this sense, in the case of the school workers, I do not make explicit mention of their specific role within the school. In relation to the data collection stage, each participant was asked to take part in personal interviews with the researcher. The interviews and the interaction between participants were recorded using a digital audio-recorder. However, participants were able to keep a copy for themselves if they so wished. These were semi-structured interviews with the participant in the local quasi-market. In addition, I gave participants the choice to check and make comments on the interviews' transcripts. I transcribed all the interviews; these interviews were carried out in Spanish and the transcripts are in Spanish. In relation to the policy documents, these policy documents were anonymised, and were identified according to some general characteristics. During the data analysis, the recorded interviews were analysed by the researcher in detail later to understand how the interaction happened and what characteristics it had. All the interviews were transcribed and N-Vivo was used to manage these texts. Finally, recordings and transcripts made during the research were stored on a password protected webpage. In relation to data storage, all the information gathered was safely stored on a computer with a password. As a backup, this information was saved on a password protected website (Google Drive). All participants were informed about the data collection, this information was detailed in the information sheet and it was verbally explained too. Finally, the personal data was used exclusively for research purposes. Personal data was not used in a way that caused, or would be likely to cause damage or distress to any participant; and the results of the research activity are not available in a form that identifies the participants.

In relation to feedback, the participants had the chance to add some comments to the interviews or make to some changes, if they felt that there was something wrong. This dissertation will not be submitted for any other academic award. The views expressed in the dissertation are my responsibility. The results of this research were reported in this

dissertation, and it is possible that the main findings of this research could be presented as part of conferences, papers or book chapters. In these documents the schools will be anonymised. The public documents, such as the documents produced for the schools by the state agencies, were not anonymised.

4.5 Chapter conclusion

The chapter has discussed and reflected on the decisions that configured the methodological design applied throughout this research. This chapter started by describing my qualitative approach for studying the enactment of the admission process in four schools in Maipú. Then, I detailed the research design, and justified according to my theoretical perspective –Policy sociology and Enactment theory – why I explored admission through interviews and documents. After this, I described the fieldwork and data analysis. Finally, the chapter ends with the ethics section, where I offer some detail about power relations, safety, consent policies and data procedures.

The school admission process can be described in two ways that follow different logics. First, when admission is at the end of the school year and the student starts at the beginning of the year, this is the 'regular'process of admission. A second process is admission 'during' the school year, which is when a student applies to join the school in the middle of the year.

Concerning the first scenario, in Chile, the academic year starts in March. In practical terms, the Chilean summer holiday runs from mid-December, prior to Christmas, to early March, when the academic year starts. The Chilean writer Pedro Lemebel (2018) wrote that we for the first rain at the end of summer in Chile, to 'take on the year that just begins in March, when the country comes back to its planned bureaucratic agenda, when, in an instant, we move from lazy February to a crazy race through stores looking for the school uniform'*. As Lemebel suggests, the 'serious' year starts in March and lasts until mid-December. Many decisions were taken during the final months of the previous year. This is the case of 'regular admission', which is understood as the process begun during the final months of the previous year by the school admission team, and which finishes when the students start their classes in March every year.

A second scenario is when a student applies to the school "during" the school year, as part of the rolling admission process which continues throughout the school year, the academic year between March and December. This process takes place on a case-by-case basis, which has usually been associated with family migration. Nevertheless, according to the school admission team, this process during the academic year is related to several factors and cannot be reduced merely to migration. Changing school in the middle of the year in the Chilean context is always due to special circumstances. In Chile, in practical terms in relation to the school admission process, a change in the middle of the year involves something 'irregular', or at least unexpected; an unforeseen event, a problem or some surprise, a new job, a dismissal, the split of a family, or, ominously, expulsion from a previous school. Part of this air of mystery and suspicion can be seen in the short story of Arelis Uribe, a Chilean writer who describes her first encounter with a new student who arrives at the school in the middle of the year:

> They asked you why you had changed school. I also wondered why you came to the course in the middle of the year. You gave a short explanation, not the one you would have given to your best friend (…). You said you had come to Santiago with your mother and that's why you had changed school, just that. Then, I found out that you had never wanted to change

at all, and that in fact your former school was much more expensive, bigger and more beautiful* (2016, p. 77)

The dynamics of these changes of school in the middle of the academic year have not been studied in detail in the Chilean context, and these processes have been associated by default to a family migration.

In this chapter, I analyse both ways in which school admission operates. Firstly, as the process which finishes with the students entering the school at the beginning of the academic year[29], in what I have called the "regular" admission, and secondly school admission 'during' the already commenced school year[30]. Depending on the schools' characteristics and their position in the local school market, this process is enacted two different ways, working as a 'procedure', when the demand is higher than the supply of vacancies, or as a 'campaign', in the opposite situation, when demand is lower than supply. In the case of the 'regular' admission process (5.1), I explain how the regular admission process works as a 'procedure' that presents a clear schedule, and where there are school workers who are exclusively responsible for theenactment of the process; this is a predominant case in private schools. Then, I present the second way in which 'regular' admission is enacted, when this process works as a 'campaign', which includes a process of several months during the final months of the academic year, with diffuse deadlines, involving a great variety of school actors and an active recruitment policy. This kind of process is predominant in public schools. Secondly (5.2), I describe the plight of students who have moved from one school to another during the school year, as a process that has become relevant to characterising the instability that students experience, and to the schools' need, mainly in public schools, to increase the number of students. I explain how these students are automatically 'under suspicion', in what the school policy actors call 'cultural exchange', as a veiled and subtly discriminatory way to designate the negative and/or unknown circumstances in which these students look for a new school. In the final section (5.3), I sum up the main findings related to understanding the admission process as a 'regular' process, or 'within' the year, and the central role of opacity and timing in the enactment of the school admission process. The specific characteristics of each school are related to how the school admission team is conformed, the use and relevance of policy documents, and the practices and rationalities associated with equity and competition. Finally, I conclude by explaining why the opacity remains a source of agency for the school admission teams. I also

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[29] In Chile, the school calendar runs from early March to mid-December.
[30] In opposition to the admission within the school year, which is when the school admission process takes place during the academic year. I develop this idea in Chapter 6.

explain how the described migration dynamic collides with the logic underlying the school's choice policy,explaining how some old tensions are enacted in new ways by the school admission team, and how the selection process is carried out by the school, due to the current regulation of the admission process.

5.1 'Regular' Admission as a 'Procedure' and as a 'Campaign'

The school admission process has been a source of tension for families and schools for a long time in the Chilean educational system. Ricardo Lagos, Chilean President 2000-2006, epitomises the middle-class families of the middle of the last century, who developed their life through the umbrella of the state and through republican values. After the dictatorship, except for Ricardo Lagos, all the presidents of the post-dictatorship were part of a relevant family in the public sphere[31]. He studied in the Instituto Nacional, the most prestigious public school in Chile, and Law in the Universidad de Chile, the faculty that has provided most presidents in Chile. As a politician in 1988, Lagos pointed to the camera with his finger, interpellating Pinochetdirectly, which created a massive media sensation (R. Lagos, 2013a). In 1948, seventy years ago, Ricardo Lagos was beginning his secondary education, and facing a school admission process. When he applied to a school, his mother suggested that, in order to impress the school admission team, he should bring all his treasures to school: his books by Emilio Salgari and Jules Verne, his herbarium, and also the collection of postage stamps. The result could not be worse: the stamp collection was stolen. After this bad experience, Ricardo Lagos' mother arrived the same afternoon with her son to demand an explanation, and after expressing her annoyance, she found him a new school through informal contacts with people related to education, in other words, through the so-called *'pituto'* links in Chile, which is the equivalent to the expression 'friends in high places'. In short, Ricardo Lagos' aunt coordinated an impromptu interview in order to 'jump the queue', Lagos finally entered this school and finished his secondary education there. This brief episode is highlighted in different biographies (R. Lagos, 2013b; Massis & Hidalgo, 1999) and it is relevant because of how it shows how these kind of practices were common even for one of the best examples of what used to be considered as the old middle class, republican values and meritocracy – values which aspire to be the opposite to what can be considered individualism and the negative effects of market values. So, his story is relevant to identifying the elements of continuity and

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[31] The father of Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994) was the President of the Supreme Court; Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994-1998) was the President of the country (1964-1970), the father of Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 and 2014-2018) was General of the Chilean Air Force; and the father of Sebastian Piñera (2014-2014 and 2018-) was an ambassador.

change that can be found in Chile during the 1950s; or how to get a place in a prestigious school, it was necessary to mobilise family networks with 'friends in high places' in order to 'jump the queue' and book an interview of admission in one of the most prestigious public schools in Chile. In short, even one of the most prominent examples of republican values and meritocracy is an example of the difficulties associated with the school admission process; and, undoubtedly, not all the problems with school admission started with the dictatorship and market reform.

As was introduced in Chapter Two, school admission in Chile is a process where parents apply directly to the educational institution in direct interaction with the school. The parents can apply to as many schools as they like, and the application process requires the parents to attach some supporting documentation. This application process is associated with a list of requirements which could include interviews with parents, tests of attainment, or even psychological tests. The use of these mechanisms has been first regulated (the year 2008 through the Preferential School Voucher Law), and then forbidden for all schools which receive public funds (the year 2015 through the 'Inclusion Law') in recent years in schools which operate with public funds (public and private subsidised schools). I posit that school admission works as a bureaucratic 'procedure', whereby the process is conducted with just a few school workers in charge and with a clear agenda and dates, in a situation which is facilitated by what some respondents called a 'captive public'. However, it also can work as a 'campaign', when the school admission team must work hard for a long time, with the objective of having enough students.

Regarding the papers required to formalise the registration process, at least according to the documents, there are no differences in the documents requested between private and public schools, or between when the process works as a 'procedure' or as a 'campaign'. These documents are the birth certificate of the student, the certificate from the last school showing the last level passed and the contact information of the families. These requirements are aligned with the guidelines proposed by the new regulation. Nevertheless, the enactment of the process shows that, although these are identical processes, admission is enacted in very different ways depending on the time of year when it takes place. In effect, the school admission process is enacted under different assumptions about the profile of the parents and families. The policy design assumes that parents choose the school under the same circumstances, choosing a school, and, at the same time, comparing the different schools' projects. Nevertheless, according to the school policy actors, the parents show a series of

strategies and rationalities, and schools must develop their projects considering these particularities, and each of these particularities is tied to a particular 'timing'.

The schools which conduct the process of admission as a 'procedure', understanding 'procedure' as synonymous with a highly formalised and bureaucratic process, carry out small activities explaining the school project, which may be equivalent to an open day or informative talks. In these schools, enrolment is not a problem for the school, and there is more 'demand' than 'supply' of vacancies. Technically, these processes are widely formalised and have evolved, year by year, according to the context of each institution. An example of this process can be seen in a private school, Frutillar School, where the process identifies a clear person in charge, who is named. As Eugenia explains: 'I am in charge of the process, but logistically, the personwho deals with parents is the secretary, who is responsible for admission'*. This is confirmed by Claudia, who explains the flux of documents and the enrolment confirmation, the process which allow them tocalculate: 'the percentage of students that will stay in the school in 2020, and the ones that may leave the school due to different situations, and also allows us to see our capacity'*. Eugenia, from Frutillar school (private subsidised), offers a detailed account of the 'regular' admission process, in relation to the schedule and the parents. She explains that the demand is high and the vacancies are filled very quickly. In this sense, the process is carried out in just a few weeks, and the whole process involves just three school workers:

> The parents are given the PEI[32] of the establishment so that they know it and know the key dates of the admission process. (...) That is my responsability, (...) and the two secretaries who are in reception. The first process was completed in September. It started in mid-August and ended at the end of September because the dates are set in the regulations. (...) Demand is high, so vacancies are filled very quickly.*

This process is highly formalised and is the one that better suits the assumptions that underlie the policy, which correspond to the idea of informed parents who choose their school by applying to different institutions. As has been highlighted in previous chapters, admission is not centralised or territorially restricted/ regulated (Donoso & Arias, 2011, 2013), and can be carried out at different times of the year according to school preferences and the criteria defined by each school (Carrasco et al., 2019). In effect, all schools start classes in March, but the admission process follows different schedules: some schools have a short admission process that can last two weeks and, at the other extreme, for other schools, this process can

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[32] Institutional Educational Project (*Proyecto Educativo Institucional* in Spanish).

last many months. Therefore, given this decentralised process, it is impossible for the school admission team in each school to know the schools that a family has applied to when families apply to their school –or apply to many schools; nor how many schools a family has applied to, or which order of priority they have established. In effect, the Chilean experience shows how the school admission process is managed by each school in direct interaction with the parents, in a 'one-to-one' interaction (Atria, Larraín, Benavente, Couso, & Joignant, 2013); and this interaction has been modeled through various sources of diversity derived from this situation, such as type of district (rurality), socioeconomic level, population, geography, type of providers, etc. (Egalite & Wolf, 2016). Considering this scenario, according to Carrasco and Honey (2019) the international experience, in places such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Boston or Washington shows, in contrast, that the school admission process is centralised by the local authority. The modality of a local authority that mediates this interaction between parents and school prevents schools from structuring their enrolment while maintaining their own criteria. In order to guarantee fair educational opportunities, local agencies use sophisticated quota allocation methods, follow the criteria set by legislation, and exclude all prohibited or discriminatory practices which have been present in the Chilean system.

According to the scheme described by Carrasco and Honey (2019) parents and the school admission team cannot see the whole scenario. This blindness can be seen as part of a process of governmentalisation of the system, where there is not a single rationalisation which explains the whole society; instead, the different technologies of government can be seen as partial rationalisations articulated with other rationalisations (Castro-Gómez, 2015). This is in line with the theory of neoliberalism, which avoids the idea that there is a 'plan', a 'consensus' or a 'contract' based on the repression of particular interests in the name of general ideals (Lagasnerie, 2015). To sum up, in school admission in Chile, schools define when and how they manage the admission process and schools can receive students from any district and parental choice is not 'anchored' from a territorial point of view; quoting the title of a paper, it can be said, 'I would walk 500 miles (if it paid)' (Chumacero, Gómez, & Paredes, 2011). So, when schools set a clear timing, this implies that demand is higher than the supply of vacancies, as is the case in Frutillar school. According to their position in the local market, the institution is comfortable enough to establish their own calendar. So, the chance of fixing a clear schedule of admission supposes, at least, that enrolment is not a problem in terms of finding enough students for the school admission team. Otherwise, as will be detailed later, the school admission team will be forced to develop a longer process of admission.

The documents and forms in Frutillar and Valdivia schools, both private subsidised institutions, follow a very similar scheme. The admission documents state a clear schedule and some general information concerning the school's characteristics and the educational project, and it also asks for very general information about personal data, such as name, phone number, address, and name of the parents[33] of the student. The documents given to the parents during the application process can be identical, but when admission works as a 'procedure', the approach to the admission process is passive in terms of the recruitment of new students. This way of understanding the admission process presupposes a specific kind of parents. The admission process as a procedure is closer to the image of parents who tackle the admission process by 'playing the game' (Olmedo & Wilkins, 2017), and they are configured as empowered parents who aspire to better schools for their children and they are trained as competent electors (Exley, 2013). In this case, the timing of the process implies that certain parents, understanding how the logic of the admission system operates in certain schools, will be able to apply to these schools. In this vein, empowered parents who 'play the game' will apply six months before the school year starts; meanwhile, others will wait until the last week.

In contrast to the admission process working as a 'procedure' in the private schools, the admission process in public schools works as a 'campaign', which is when the school admission team organise an extended process of school admission to recruit new students during the last months of the academic year. The admission process works as a 'campaign' when not all of the vacant places are filled, and the demand is lower than the supply. This is a prevalent situation in public schools, with a few exceptions[34]. In these circumstances, Vallenar and Talca Schools, like most public schools nowadays, are part of the category of schools where demand is lower than the supply of vacancies, and in these circumstances, these schools must develop efforts involving many actors, such as the management team and the teachers.

In Vallenar School, Ana explained that her institution had a low enrolment, and this situation made them develop an admission protocol aimed at enticing more students. As part of this plan to recruit more students, the first step was to call and visit other schools. The schools visited did not have secondary education, and schools are usually the main 'source' of new students. In contrast to school admission as a 'procedure', the school admission team is small and the process takes a short time (Eugenia from Frutillar school, describing the admission

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[33] In Spanish the word that is generally used is '*apoderado*', who is the adult responsible for the student.
[34] The exceptions are found at the so-called emblematic schools ('*Colegios Emblemáticos*', in Spanish), which have traditionally been, and remain, highly selective. In Maipú just one of the twenty-four public schools has been classified as emblematic.

process, said, 'it is my responsibility and two secretaries' and 'vacancies are filled very quickly'). When the admission works as a 'campaign', there are more school workers involved, and the process could finish the week before the academic year starts. As she detailed, 'After calling the schools, we go there. Sometimes the teachers have been before, and we organise a school fair to capture enrolment, and, on other occasions, leaflets were given to the parents who arrived'*. This strategy also includes the school community: 'We also give [leaflets] to the parents of our school to bring relatives or acquaintances'*. These strategies have succeeded and, as Ana details, they have filled their places the last two years, 'at the end of December and completing quotas in March, from February'*. In Talca School, the other public school, Miriam explains how the management team works in a very cohesive way with many other workers from the school and they develop marketing strategies which includes the participation of current students of the schools, as she details:

I helped to show the photographs which were on the banners (...) to publicise the school, which are placed in places in the commune. I sent this information, then I made a triptych, these brochures, then when they went to promote on the street, those brochures I prepared, I printed them, I helped with all this part as part of the management of the process. I have also had to go to schools[35] when these promotional visits are made, to talk about the school, (...), I have also had to take students to schools [when they visit other school explaining the school characteristics], accompany them in these talks, answer the questions that the students of this other school have, also check out the registration forms. When students come at the end of the year, that is, from the second semester on, at least once a month, this process is done so that new students come with the families and are informed about the process, so that they sign up, (…) well I am also involved with all this process, I am there in the courtyard with the director when they give the speech, with the inspector, then I help people to go to the rooms, I resolve doubts [with the parents], I download the institutional video, and I leave it on the computers to show it*

As can be seen in this detailed account, there are many activities of a clearly diverse nature, which the school admission team must carry out when the 'offer' is higher than the 'demand'. So, depending on how the process is enacted by the school, the admission process can be described in two lines (admission as a 'procedure') or in one paragraph (admission as a 'campaign')

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[35] These are primary schools that usually do not offer secondary education.

As part of the campaign, the marketing of the educational project is imperative, insofar as the voucher system stipulates that the resources that each establishment receives are directly correlated with the number of students attending each school[36]. In this way, when the admission process is referred to as a 'campaign', it is an extensive process, which includes a variety of actors –administrative workers, management team, teachers, and students – who are part of an active search for new students.

Talca School is a good example of how school policy actors enact the school admission process, and what was presented as the admission 'campaign'. In this case, the school created an admission process which is conducted once a month, through a logic of successive calls. Francisca, from Talca School, details that the process is conducted from August/September onwards, contemplated several milestones throughout the 'campaign', as she details 'once a month, parents come to meetings that are specifically organized for them, on a Wednesday almost always, and only they come to apply, to deliver documents'*. In this process, they only ask the parents about general details of the students, without considering tests or socioeconomic information. The process is kept as simple as it can be; according to Francisca, they 'only come to apply, to leave the name of the student'*. With that information, classes are formed and parents are duly notified: 'we generally never have major vacancy problems at the end of December, but by March the places that remained are already filled '*. Carolina, from the same institution, offers more details about 'several admission processes' that Talca School organizes: 'from August onwards once a month and then the truth is that at the end of December, at some levels we do not have full seats, but we always have vacancies for January, February or March'*. As can be seen, this is a dynamic which put the schools in a situation where uncertainty plays a big role, and just like in a political campaign, the results cannot be known until the election day; or, in this case the day when classes start.

The logic described for the enactment of school admission can be represented in some schools as a five-month-long process which goes against what the policy design states. An example of how school admission teams manage this process as a 'campaign' is documented in Table 8, which was created by the school admission team, in order to control and manage the flow of new students looking for available vacancies. In this table, the rows represent the year group, with the dates in the columns.

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[36] The resources that schools receive are the result of a mix of different criteria – vulnerability, rurality, level of education – , but the main criterion is associated with the number of students, through the voucher.

Level	30-ago	05-sep	27-sep	03-oct	07-nov	05-dic
1A	11	7	5	6	2	7
1B	18	13	33	11	12	6
2A	1	0	1	0	0	0
2B	2	0	0	0	2	2
3A	0	0	0	1	1	2
3B	3	5	2	5	3	7
4A	0	0	0	0	0	0
4B	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 8: Enrolment Control in Talca School. Adapted from a school document

This table is a key element that highlights how, even considering the same documents and requirements, schools enact the school admission process in different ways. This difference in timing involves, also, differences in the use of time and where resources are focused.

Finally, the schools that work under the logic of a 'campaign' adapt and develop their strategy to meet the characteristics of their 'public', extending the application process to the summer holidays, from mid-December and the end of February. This strategy of recruitment allows schools to increase enrolment in a period in which most establishments are closed. In Talca School, this is a process that is carried out with self-managed resources, which represents a strategy which puts the school in a position where the school is also in constant competition even with other public institutions. As Pía details, 'a school official is paid to stay during the summer enrolling students, during January and February. And there are not just a few children, last year in January about 100 children were enrolled[37]'*. This process presents some variations during the summer 'January is like stronger, in February it is already like a drip, one or two people per day, but in January it is not little, we deal with many parents looking for enrolment'*. Pía explains, through a phrase that sums up the dichotomous scenario that the schools that have more supply than demand face and why they started to develop these strategies: 'either you are looking for how to generate your enrolment or you stay in regret waiting for courses to close'*. The idea of someone staying during February in the school, in order to recruit more students, reveals how important it is for the school to develop a successful process of admission.

The interviewee does not know if this strategy is followed by other schools. Pía explains that she knows that the CODEDUC, the local administration of the school system, does the same during the Summer: 'the corporation has done this in the summer too, that is, if you are looking for enrolment during the summer they can attend to you there in the corporation'*. In effect, they know that the students can access enrolment during holidays. However, Pía details

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[37] The total enrolment of this school was 1000 students.

afterwards that they pay someone to stay at school: 'when the families are here, we make sure that the student stays here, because when the families go to the corporation they have 27 options, if they come here they are our child'*.

This situation illustrates how public schools end up competing with other public schools too. As we will analyse later, the rationalities of competition and cooperation are much more complex, but it is important to acknowledge the nuances in the enactment of the process. In this sense, the competition cannot be reduced to public schools against private providers.

Sometimes, these instruments have an ambiguous use. In Talca School, the admission test was presented as a selective procedure, but it did not have that aim. As Melisa explains, the admission process can be presented as several stages, including:

> We summoned the parents; we conducted an initial survey of aspirations […]. Following this part of that survey, they went to the link and they did it on the internet; then there was a part of the interview with the teacher in charge of the class where the students were applying to, with someone else or two teachers, and there was also the application of criteria regarding the profile of the student at first glance, with our educational project and what our school asks for *.

An initial survey of aspirations for the parents, interviews with the teacher in charge of the level which the student was applying to, and one or two other members of the school staff, and there was a presentation of the educational project and what the school asked for. The outcome of this process was the 'verdict ', if the student was accepted or not:

> we assigned a small rating to designate: if he was suitable or unsuitable. When he was unsuitable, it was an extreme and then we said "ah, no, then there will be no vacancy for him". And we published the lists of the students that we had selected, also considering their average grades, we asked for a 5.5[38], this survey plus this interview and the personality report we also considered; everything had a small score*.

In this case, the end of the school admission process was not clear for the different actors of the admission team. It was at the end of the interview with Melisa, when I was leaving her office and the recorder was turned off, she explained that they developed this admission process, a long process with many stages, because families 'liked the sensation of being selected'*, and reading the name of their child on the list of accepted students on the blackboard of the school. Even when –almost – all the students were accepted. As can be seen,

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[38] In Chile, grading goes from 1 to 7, with 7 being the the highest score and 4 the minimum to pass.

the school admission process and the role of the tests, never have a univocal meaning. Nevertheless, the lack of clarity in their use can be present even at the national level. The tests in the school system can play different roles, and have never been something entirely clear, even at the national level; as Tedesco (2003) states, we do not know if we are evaluating for efficiency improvement, orientating the demand, compensating the differences or checking for social segmentation. In any case, probably, there is no single right answer.

These tensions are seen through the lived experiences of school workers, in an evolution that is presented with important nuances between schools, even though they are facing, in theory, the same regulation. As explained by Carolina, from her job in a public school, some schools were more aligned with the new regulation: 'I had a good perception of the process before (…). The Law of Inclusion feels that it did not affect us mostly because we were already coming with that conviction'*. On the other hand, she explains that other schools have been dealing with a more problematic/ traumatic approach to the new regulation: 'there have been schools for which this was an "earthquake[39]" because it changed all the rules of the game'*. The most eloquent testimony of this 'transition' came from someone who had experienced the evolution of the school admission regulations from different schools, and had been working for a long time in the school system. Manuel, from Vallenar School (public), explains the enactment of the school admission process in a school where the school was, according to an old saying, 'accepted, but not respected': 'when I arrived, there was an admission system that worked to all intents and purposes as a selection (…). At that time, it shouldn't have been like that (…). Then, of course, I knew that it had existed.'*

Afterward, he refers to a previous experience in his former job, where he was part of the school admission team. This was a Catholic school, and as part of the survey, the student had to declare that they were Catholic. Additionally, as a way to confirm that they 'really' were part of a church, they were also required to the priest of the local church in their neighbourhood. Now, working in a public school, he reflects:

> at this point I examined myself and I said, "how was that possible?" Of course, I worked in a religious school and all that was allowed. So, today, I do not say that that would be an aberration, but evidently that attending to all citizens, regardless of their circumstances, probably excites me more than those instructions I received and whose machinery I was part of (...). Now when you see people in the press queuing in the streets, getting up at that

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[39] It is important to highlight that Chile is particularly earthquake prone and has experienced many earthquakes. For this reason, the word 'earthquake' carries a very particular cultural weight.

time, or watching these reports of children who are waiting for the result of the lottery, where they see that a companion from the same nursery school was... Hey, there are serious effects there. I do not want to get dramatic; I hope that the child is not traumatised for a lifetime, but there are situations that one sees as painful. Because applying and not being on the list […]*

For Manuel, the selection process, in the context of the school admission process, was unsatisfactory.

The practices described have acquired a level of relevance that they did not have before. This, however, does not mean that all the actors experience all, or even some of,the most unfair situations and practices described here. However, they do provide indicative examples which are symptomatic of the malaise within Chilean education. It is not a system of pure free competition, and competing logics are always operating at the same time. In sum then, schools are responding to a plurality of pressures, as Falabella states: 'Schools not only compete to attract parents' preference, but also to please the State, trying to meet national standards and be classified as a good-quality school'* (2007, p. 16).

Finally, there is a distinction in how the admission process is enacted, as a 'procedure' or a 'campaign'. This situation illustrates two points. First, this case shows the relevance of timing in the enactment of the admission policy, considering that the requirements are formally the same, but the timing and the outcomes of the same process are different. With this in mind, considering the scenarios described above, on the one hand, when the admission process works as a 'campaign', it is plausible that schools do not have the final number of students until the week before starting classes; this represents a problem because it makes it more difficult to plan the following year. This is relevant, because a question mark remains just days before starting the new school year. On the contrary, when the admission process works as a 'procedure', schools know six months in advance –the process starts by mid-August and is finished two or three weeks later – the number of students -and consequently, the resources – that they will receive the following year. The level of certainty is completely different in these scenarios. The documents required in both scenarios are the same. So, it cannot be said that this is a discriminatory process, or that goes against the current regulations. However, it is also manifest that the timing of the process plays a central and hitherto unacknowledged role in the enactment of the process.

5.2 Admission Within the School Year, Migration and Timing as Key Features

In this section, I explore the enactment of the school admission process in the case of those students who change schools during the academic school year, between March and December in the Chilean case. According to the school admission team, these changes are usually due to a change of address or problems at the previous school, as was exemplified at the beginning of the chapter. This kind of movement has not been researched in Chile, and there is not a clear idea of the 'paths' or 'patterns' that these students/families follow. From the school's perspective, this movement can be usefully conceived of as a 'revolving door', where students 'go in' and 'go out'. Underlying this general movement, there are a mix of entangled elements with a diversity of elements, such as housing, the job market, or the family structure. In effect, for several students, their stay at the school seems to be a fairly contingent decision, excluding these kinds of reasons, at the macro level, the chance of remaining in the same school is conditional on what could be summarised as 'good behaviour'. To sum up, concerning the students who participate in the admission process during the academic year, there is quite a clear distinction made between them and those students who enter by a regular route at the beginning of the academic school year, in March. In my research, this kind of admission within the year was not distributed homogeneously, and it was focused on public schools. For Manuel, as part of a public school and with a long experience in private schools, this rotation was unexpected:

> Here I came across the surprise, which was even stronger, because my colleagues, at a management/logistical level, had not done the study foreseeing a rotation of approximately one third of the enrolment. And this has already become a discovery that has been sustained over time: this school renews its enrolment by a third annually, and I am not considering the students who leave and the first ones who enter*

This is an attempt to understand how the flux of students is dealt with by the school admission team. Considering admission as a market policy technology (Ball, 2016a) allows us to understand why school policy actors try to establish control over the characteristics of the students, and why this process goes beyond admission as a 'one time' process. In effect, the governmentality approach is appropriate insofar as it sheds light upon how the system, instead of creating a solution, develops a way to deal with and manage the risks (Castro-Gómez, 2015).

The dynamic within each school, through the exit/entrance of students during the academic year, creates a sub-dynamic related to the previous one, and which presents divergent effects, as could be seen in public and private schools. In this way, the situation 'within' the school

creates a flux 'between' schools. In effect, a process that was originally considered as something that needed to be developed once a year takes the form of a continuum. In Chile, there has been a proliferation of accountability processes in recent times. So, scrutiny of the schools has been increasing during the previous two decades, including scrunity of the admission process. However, these pressures may have a different origin, which accounts for the differences between different actors and their administrative bureaucratic structure. These differences can be seen between private and public schools. Thus, while a subsidised private school is accountable to an owner (the *'Sostenedor'*, in Spanish) that can be private or a church, public schools are accountable to themunicipality, in this casethe CODEDUC. The regulation did not establish differences between public and private schools. However, this 'equal treatment' translates into differences that are abundantly clear in terms of 'how' and in 'what ways' the provision shows its differences, according to its place and track record within the local school market.

Elena, from Vallenar School (Public) explains that the admission process goes beyond what they desire and control, 'sometimes I would like to tell you that you cannot continue here'*, but they can they can't do this, because the family goes to the municipal corporation, and then, 'they send from the corporation, and they have no choice but to enroll them'*. This is a central form of government within the district and it must guarantee access to education: 'they come across, for example, our tuition through the internet and they say "hey, there is a vacancy on this course, there are thirty-six students and you have space for forty."' In this case, the school has no choice: 'we enrol people all year long until there comes a time that the class no longer holds any more there are forty-five [students], there is no space, we get there'*. In contrast, private schools are not accountable for their enrolment and their chance to receive new students. New students usually need more attention throughout this process of adaptation. Manuel, from Vallenar School, has another interpretation of this dynamic. He says that as a school, 'essentially we are serving a volatile population [...] so they go on a pilgrimage from school to school'*

From a policy design perspective, a change of school within the academic year has been traditionally associated with the migration of families. However, according to school admission teams, the admission of new students during the year is due mainly to other reasons, largely related to discipline and bad behaviour, reasons that have not been identified and systematically explored by the literature, which has focused on migration and daily commuting for educational reasons (Donoso & Arias, 2013; P. Rodríguez, 2020; Santa Cruz & Olmedo, 2012).

Manuel states that this must be considered and researched because this dynamic goes beyond what the school can do. This situation presupposes a conflict in which the school is interpellated by different people and agencies, and the people from these agencies –'people who come from the literature[40], and most of them, hopefully, come from research'*- visit them, and when they see these parameters and statistics, they 'feel that it is a school management failure'*.

Manuel, who in this case could be classified as a transactor, according to the typology developed by Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012), explains his difficulties in dealing with these agencies and institutions, 'they feel that it is a finding of "aha!, here is a problem, they are not able to maintain the loyality of these families and these young people"'*. As a transactor, Manuel understands this logic, the logic underlying the idea of the 'loyalty of the families', but at the same time, he suggests a different logic: 'I oppose the argument, although it seems reasonable, and we could study if they are leaving because we are not attractive to them. But no! There are many more powerful reasons, sociological, economic, worthy of being studied'*. Interestingly, Manuel is showing how the players of the game cannot see all the board. This idea is in line with the idea of governmentality studies.

This migration during the school year presents many consequences. One of the consequences of the high level of rotation during the year is the difficulty in consolidating student progress and achieving results over time for the schools that receive these new students. This movement of students is repeated every year. Melisa, from Talca School (public), says that from a base of 1000 students when the school year started, by June only approximately 850 students remained: 'What happens is that they have no sooner got through the front door that they they are already leaving. Some others arrive'*. She estimates that at the time of the interview the enrolment was at around 970 students, and 'Since April, the new students that have arrived make up almost 10% of student numbers''* [the interview was conducted in June]. Mercedes, from the same school, explains that there is a huge difference between public and private schools: 'I worked in private-subsidised and starting at the time of July, August [referring to March's admission process], there are no more vacancies and that's it'*. Elena, from Vallenar School, another public school, explains that according to their records, the main reasons 'are many changes of address and others that come because they have been thrown out of other schools (…) many people come from other schools because they have had disciplinary problems'*.

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[40] This expression connotes that these people do not have any practical experience.

Similarly, Francisca, from Talca School (public), highlights that it is very difficult to develop plans in the long run, and one of the reasons why is that: 'it has not been possible to install processes due to the constant rotation of students'*. She explains that sometimes it is possible to develop good processes, but these processes are under constant threat: 'if there are any problems, the family moves to another school, they will take their children, and thus other students can arrive in the same conditions'*.

The admission process states the same regulations for all schools, with the schools which receive public funds, — municipal and private subsidised — all required to receive students who change schools mid-year. Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, in practice not all schools are exposed to the same flow of students, which largely depends on the position of the school in the local market. This is particularly discernible in the migration patterns present, which, although not formalised, do not represent a surprise to the school admission teams. This is to say that the school admission teams are very clear about the profile of students arriving at these establishments, as well as the periods in which this migration is triggered. To sum up, the interviewees have a clear opinion about how this process has developed during recent years, the practices that have been consolidated over time, as well as a vision of the attitudes that surround this process.

As Elena, from Vallenar School, a public school, explains, she perceives there is a rotation pattern during the school year, and, as a product of this pattern, the public school receives more students from disadvantaged backgrounds: 'there are schools that select in the same commune, schools that say to the same students "no, you are not for this school", they have to go to another school. Then where do they send them?, They send them here'*. This pattern is replicated each year, as is detailed here: 'most of the students who enter our school in March, April, May, they already come with problems. They were kicked out of school, or they come with grades problems'*. In other words, they come with a very bad base and that has generated problems *vis-à-vis* progression to the following year. Some are enrolled in August, and it is obvious that there are inconsistencies, and that these are reflected in the standardised outcomes of the school. Elena, from Vallenar School, questions the logic of what seems like a pattern for her. A pattern where these students are 'absorbed' by public schools and private schools can reject them. As she details: 'why is admission for one public, without limitation, and why do others have the right to say "I have no space, go to another school"?. That generates insufficient schools [schools with bad results, according to the SEP]'*. Following this logic, she concludes 'I feel that the system *per se* is pernicious, downright rotten even.'*

Another member of the school admission team in Vallenar School elaborates on the case of a student who is migrating 'not for good reasons'* which exemplifies the tensions of this inherently 'malicious' system and ensuing repetitive pattern of admission during the year. Alicia, from Vallenar School (public), explains the 'script' of the different actors of the schools, through the case of a student who arrives in the middle of the year, after being expelled from another school because he was caught supplying drugs. It is interesting how Alicia analyses how all the actors are involved in this script, or how finally this is a script that each school must follow: including the parents who are applying, the families that are part of the school, and the teachers that belong to the school. So, the parents that 'are applying obviously like to be welcomed and accepted by the school'*. The parents who are 'inside' the school 'do not think in that way'*, and these families will ask 'why are children from other schools with bad habits being allowed in the school'* Finally, according to Alicia, the perspective of the school admission team and the school workers is that 'we must protect that child, guide him and, in the end, carry out the necessary educational and social reintegration process'*, but she declares that they know that this is not an unproblematic admission: 'the teachers know that when a child arrives in the middle of the year it is not for good reasons generally.'*

Consequently, these students represent a challenge for the school, considering a scenario of accountability policies, standardised tests, and an effectiveness logic. In this context, there is a spontaneous association between the 'entry' and the 'exit', between admission and the expulsion processes. In the case of the public schools, the process is facilitated because they work as a network, and the members of the CODEDUC –the local authority at the district level in Maipú – can visualise which schools have more 'supply' than 'demand', as Francisca details: 'There are children who have been expelled from other schools (…), sometimes they do not come here and they go to CODEDUC[41] and there they say, "these schools have vacancies"'*. There are other elements too, such as having over a maximum of forty-five students per class; private schools tend to have around forty students per class, and the public schools thirty.

The rotation element exemplifies a precarious dynamic. This is illustrated by Melisa, from Talca School, through the case of a -fantastic director- from another public school in the same district, who tried to break this equilibrium by trying to 'clean up everything', understanding this as trying to get rid of all the 'bad students', and establish control over disciplinary aspects. With this approach, he quickly expelled several students: 'all those children who were the most disruptive and who smoked marijuana and fought often'*. The outcome: 'it's a very quiet

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[41] The Municipal school administration.

school, and they have lost enrolment'*. On the contrary, according to Melisa, from Talca School (public), in other schools, including her school, the equity policies, such as the SEP (2008) and the Inclusion Law (2015), did not change anything, because 'we were inclusive before'*, explaining that their admission system is very simple: 'Our school has its doors open'*. According to her, the admission process they follow has very straightforward criteria 'are there any vacancies on the course? Okay, the student enters at the beginning of the year'*. Nevertheless, there is a longer process when they arrive in the middle of the year:

> the student enters, but they've already had an interview with the head of UTP[42], the class teacher, guidance and behaviour; because we try to give the school's student profile and the hallmark of the school to the student and the new parent, and they also have full knowledge of the rules of internal behaviour and the different protocols that govern the school. Because we assume, according to experience, that a student who is already in April, May, June, will be a disruptive student, who either adapts or finally has to leave the school*

As can be seen in the interview the student must have several interviews, the family must know the 'hallmark' of the school, and the protocol that governs the school under the assumption that the student either 'adapts' or 'leaves' the school. To sum up, the students 'enters, but…' he/she must accept and follow what is expected in each school community.

Here, again, the limits are related to the context; in this case, a member of a public school with a background of many years in private subsidised schools explains the situation. Manuel, from Vallenar School (public), is very clear about this situation: 'The admission of students during the school year, subsidised private schools, at least those I know, are quite reluctant to accept children in the middle of the year'*, this kind of admission immediately 'triggers alarm bells'*. This reluctancy can be tempered according to the background of the students: 'unless they showed you that the family comes from Coyhaique [a small city in the extreme south of the country], the father is an businessman who was transferred'*

Considering this background, Manuel concludes, 'therefore he is informally (and unofficially) categorised as being a fairly "safe bet". That is, there is no problem here, the child is excellent, and it is good'*. The idea of a 'safe bet' reveals that, in some way, the admission team is dealing with the risk, and they develop 'soft' or 'hard' strategies to deal with it'*. The soft strategy can be that 'the students are accepted but must go through several interviews with their family and they must know and accept the rules of the school'*. A 'hard' strategy can be

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[42] Pedagogical Technical Unit. In Spanish: *Unidad Técnica Pedagógica*.

related to refusing students with a risky profile, unless these students come from a tiny city in the south, and can be classified as a 'safe bet'. On the contrary, according to Manuel, the attitude in public schools is different: 'We have space, welcome, go ahead. How can we help? "Look, my son has some discipline problems" Ready, and there we started putting together the entire internal support network we could give'*.

This more inclusive admission policy is also supported by a more practical reason: 'here we cannot afford to be [selective] because tuition would go down – our income depends on getting people in.'* Here a clear difference is established regarding how schools face the admission process during the year. The students who arrive during the year are a source of uncertainty, and some situations imply reciprocity and informal types of coordination. This admission was not perceived to be a relevant topic for private schools.

The objective of selective practices in the admission context was related to the control of the characteristics of the students of the school. In the Chilean case, regulation has been focused on the 'entrance' of students during the school admission process. Nevertheless, this regulation does not make the underlying tension of selective practices disappear. So, considering regulations put every student in an equal position that makes entry much laxer, considering the prevalent selective criterion, the control of students' characteristics can be made through an alternative path, through the 'exit' option, as an auxiliary resource that could be referred to as 'ex post selection' (P. González, 2005). An example of this alternative path can be seen through what have been called 'cultural exchanges'. Adriana, from Talca School (public), refers to the so-called 'cultural exchanges' as a way of naming the students who arrive during the year from other schools, as a kind of reciprocity between the school admission teams from different schools: 'there are many "cultural exchanges". Some children are disruptive, sometimes they like it and they stay here. On other occasions no, it represents their final chance and they never adapt to the school system, ever'*. So 'cultural exchange' is a veiled way to refer to 'difficult students' who are accepted: 'The ones that ask you for "cultural exchange" are the complicated ones'. These 'cultural exchanges' imply reciprocity, as Adriana continues, referring to a case where her school received a new 'difficult' student in the middle of the year: 'I am called by the Inspector General of the other school and she says "open the vacancy for when you have to send me another"''*. According to the design of my research, I cannot state where this reciprocal relation occurs, but this coordination and this 'reciprocity' and these 'exchanges' can exist only when there are some links between schools.

Miriam, from Talca School (public), describes the type of student that they deal with during the year, explaining that there are some who arrive because of a change of address but 'the

majority have been thrown out of another school and arrive here, the majority of them are very disruptive, they have a hard time adapting to the rules, it's like starting a whole new process with them'. She explains that they cannot follow the trajectory of the students and their adaptation process one by one, but soon they start to notice these new students,

we can't follow up on each one of these children because there are many of them, but a month goes by and they cling to fighting and everything, and nobody tells them that it is serious, the consequences, they did not know, the children here know that if they fight, they will be thrown out but the new ones do not know them, and they come perhaps with rules from other schools *

This topic arises as a way to account for the insistence with which the interviewees referred to the 'Behaviour Regulation Manual' (*Manual de Convivencia,* in Spanish), and the 'Institutional Educational Project' (*Proyecto Educativo Institucional,* in Spanish), when the educational project is presented to the new parents, and how this internal regulation becomes a resource to deal with extreme cases that result in the expulsion of students, considering a path which considers minor, serious and very serious offences. Expulsion imposed during the year implies a serious problem, and a definition of the severity of the cases is carried out within each educational community. The path which leads to expulsion of students is clearly defined. Melisa, from Talca School (public), explains the whole path which leads to expulsion and why they establish this emphasis on the rules of behaviour, which is a set of rules that deal with problems such as: 'disrespect towards the teacher, towards their peers, disruption of the classroom atmosphere, issues of [drug] abuse, the issue of aggressiveness'*.

As was said before, expulsion of students was a recurring theme during the interviews with the school policy actors in the four schools considered in this study. Admissions teams understand admission as a market policy technology, as the chance to control the student's characteristics and manage the risks associated, allowing us to see a link between the selective process of admission and the expulsion process as a type of *ex post* selection, because both processes try to establish control over their students. So, if admission is weakened as a selection tool, at the same time expulsion can also be strengthened. Taking Foucault's perspective of power, looking exclusively at the mechanisms of the admission process could be equivalent to 'cutting off the head of the king', without understanding that the body finds other mechanisms to keep moving in the same way, the problem is not in the law, the problem is in the way we govern ourselves (Castro-Gómez, 2015). In this sense, although the 'entrance doors' are opened by the policy, a counterweight can be generated in the possibility of an 'exit'. That is, although the admission process is no longer carried out the way that it used to be, one could speak of *ex*

post admission, to the extent that the allusion to the dissemination of the school project and the Behaviour Regulation Manual is recurrent, which is the document that determines disciplinary sanctions and grounds for expulsion. In this vein, in a proportion that cannot be fully established through my research, admission and expulsion can be understood as part of the same movement.

These problems trigger a process that can be seen in the regulation that each school defines. Schools define as part of their school educational project, specific mechanisms to deal with these kinds of problems. In the case of Talca School, Melisa explains the stages that this regulation considers:

> the regulation goes through the formative stage, the interviews with the chiefteachers, the interviews with the different units (depending on the student), with the integration team; until we reach suspension one, suspension two, suspension three, which is for five days with a referral to community organisations. And finally, when there is nothing more to be done, we come to the School Council that is like a court in the school'*.

In the case of Talca school, the process finishes with a 'court' which is composed by the director, the parents' centre, the student centre, teachers, the student's class teacher, PIE (*Programa de inclusion,* in Spanish), and the management team. These 'courts' carry out an analysis about what happened to the student, as Melisa details: 'We look at what has happened during the year and there we decide whether the solution is: another opportunity, a trial calendar, a transfer to another institution, the cancellation of their registration for next year, and/or expulsion'*. The worst scenario must be approved by an external agency, *Superintendencia de Educación*, in Spanish, which analyses the legality of the process: 'If it is a cancellation of registration and expulsion, we must notify the Superintendence. They review the process, and if we're okay, ok, it doesn't say much; and if we are wrong, it establishes an administrative process for us'*.

Elena, from Vallenar School (public), explains that they also develop a highly organised and formalised process which could end with expulsion: 'There are very few expulsions, but students have been expelled, also in a fairly organised process, with well established protocols, with due process, guaranteeing the rights of students and their families'*. Again this measure –the expulsion — goes through many stages: 'there is a school committee that is made up of students, by parents, teachers, our principal, where finally we analyse all the background we may have of a student, and there, eventually, the final expulsion decision could be made'*.

This kind of description was a common thread at all the schools. I think that two ideas must be highlighted. First, when I asked about admission, as part of the same process, reasons for explusion were mentioned, just as if the 'entrance' and the 'exit' were part of the same movement. The second element is related to the description of the expulsion, as a process that contains many stages to be fulfilled, as a process that concludes with the expulsion of students.

This expulsion path could present a detour. The expulsion of a student is bad for both the school and the student –for the school, this means sending a report to the Superintendence of Education, and for the student, this could be a problem, in the context of facing a new school admission process with unfavourable past references. This detour is a product of the logic of 'adoption resisted', as a way to say 'I will do it, but I will do it my way' (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009). Elena explains that once they start this process, they must create a report and sometimes they advise families to follow an alternative path, a detour:

> when the expulsion or cancellation of registration is formalised, the school has to prepare a report and send it to the Superintendence of Education. But sometimes, when that instance is not reached and the parent unanimously decides to withdraw the student, the counselor always advises the parent regarding other schools*.

In this vein, the school and the family follow what can be considered an alternative path.

Every school defines their regulations as part of a process that includes different actors from the school community. According to the interviews, these regulations suggest a path to leave the school. In this way, it is a key element to consider, given the context of a level of rotation of students associated with reasons that go beyond the family migration.

In effect, the regulations present similarities, but also show some key divergences. In the next table (9), the distribution of the regulations is shown, according to theseverity of the fault: minor, serious and very serious offences.

	Minor	Serious	Very serious
Vallenar	9	8	16
Talca	14	24	19
Frutillar	13	15	15
Valdivia	12	14	32

Table 9: Regulation of Minor, Serious, and Very Serious Offenses

It is difficult to establish an interpretation in relation to the number of rules. So, it is hard to understand why, for example, Valdivia School has twice (32) the number of rules than Vallenar

School (16) or Frutillar School (15). Or Talca School three times the number of serious offences as Vallenar School. Nevertheless, it is necessary to understand that these rules are defined by each community.

Considering this legal framework, schools need to be familiar with this regulation. The need to create mechanisms of government within their communities has led to the creation of instruments which involve the participation of the management team and students. In this case, the facts that have led to establishing increasingly democratic criteria are narrated, in which the resolution of problems accounts for how the resolution of conflicts no longer falls exclusively on a single actor, but on the entire community represented by the School Board which raises and negotiates its own sanctions. According to school actors, the rationality which underlies this measure is more concerned with sharing the risks associated with making difficult decisions, rather than with deeply held democratic convictions. Melisa, from Talca School (public) explains the process that makes them, as a school, share this responsibility with the community: 'We realised that it was no longer the responsibility of the inspector to come to hit him, or the director to come to find him, but that the decision-making process belongs to everyone and I respect that'*. This kind of procedure places different actors on the same level as part of the community: 'the Student Council in that same meeting has the same voice as mine or that of the class teacher'*. Jorge, from Vallenar School (public) also gives some detail about the process which the students follow when they are facing problems: 'we follow what our behaviour manual indicates'*, this process includes many stages: 'they have to go through several stages because that's what the protocol dictates. So, if you have so many notes and need help, you have to go to the counsellor. Afterwards, if necessary the psychologist, as you burn your chances '*. The last stage of this process is expulsion from the school.

The idea of school expulsion as *ex post* selection is consistent with the role that has been given to the admission process in the Chilean context, as the way to control, through market policy technology, access to the school. This control presupposes the idea of control of who is 'in' or 'out' of the school. As can be seen in the description of the internal regulation (minor, serious, and very serious offenses), there is a structure that shows some common elements, but some differences, according to what has been defined by each school community. In sum, it could be said that whilst currently the 'entry' route appears easy, there could equally quickly be a clear path to the 'exit'.

5.3 The 'How's' of School Admission

Before successive reforms that sought to regulate the process of school admission, the Preferential School Voucher (2008) and the Inclusion Law (2015), schools followed opaque selection mechanisms that were largely unknown, based on the application of several discriminatory criteria based largely upon the vested interests of the establishment in question (Bellei, 2007). These processes were rigorously questioned by educational researchers and by ever widening notions of citizenship, particularly in the context of the popular social mobilisations of 2006 and 2011. In line with the idea of the school admission as 'market policy technology' (Ball, 2016a), González (2005) stated that in the Chilean school system, schools had maximised their selection opportunities; they did it '*ex ante*', through entrance exams, grade requirements and interviews with parents and all the selective mechanisms previously detailed; and they did it '*ex post*', through the expulsion of students when information that was not observable in the admission process emerged. So, while schools may have begun to be ostensibly less strict at the 'entrance' stage, considering that *ex ante* selection mechanisms had been outlawed, they could have begun to mirror this in the 'exit' processes too, as a way to establish control over students' characteristics. That is to say, the 'entrance' and 'exit' processes seem to be more fluid; and several cases of these admission processes may be the reflection of *ex post* selection. This is consistent with considering the admission process as a market technology, trying to establish control over what kind of students can belong to what educational community. In this sense, the pathway / permanence of the students in each school seems to be somewhat contingent.

In this case, the documents produced 'by' and 'for' the school do not account for the problems stated in the interviews with the school policy actors. The admission and expulsion processes are part of a flow of students which urgently needs further attention on a micro level. In this sense, the existing documentation ought to be read from its silences, rather than from its formal content. That is, in order to understand the logic that underlies the processes, the documents are useful, more than from their formal content, from the perspective of suggesting a movement that goes beyond what was declared (Prior, 2003), and can be associated with family dynamics or labour; or to the dynamics that are presented to protect the characteristics of certain educational communities, as some interviews would suggest. The best example is the case where a student must leave the school, and the school does not have to deal with a difficult student – but the student is not formally expelled, because this is not convenient for the school, nor for the student. These problems provide multiple possibilities and indeed a solid agenda for urgent future research, as well as understanding what the

educational pathways of these students are, and the logic that underlies all school changes during the year which are not due to changes of address. In this sense, the idea of a continuum perhaps not only refers to the temporal dimension in which the admission process takes place, but also to the possibility of staying in the same establishment, which seems to be continually tested by the school.

Understanding school admission as a market policy technology and the entrance and exit processes as part of the same movement puts the debate in a different space, coming back to Bacchi (2009), and allowing us to ask 'What's the problem represented to be?'. Indeed, the reforms of the 1980s had attendance to classes as their only formal requirement, under the assumption that the logic of the market and competition would be enough to ensure quality and the improvement of the system. However, when these beliefs were revealed to be erroneous, or at least insufficient, there were a second generation of policies which sought to address the various market failures[43], seeking improvements in their operation, through regulation indicators, transparency, incentives and measures; which do not necessarily represent more money, but do represent more incentives and demands (Mizala & Romaguera, 2005). In other words, here we are no longer merely talking about the neoliberal policies implemented by Pinochet's dictatorship. More precisely, we are talking about a more nuanced residue from those times developed by the centre-left Chilean government such as Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) or Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010). In effect, the evolution of admission goes hand-in-hand with the voucher and the 'problems' that the school system faced, as was detailed in Chapter Two. Nowadays, when 'entrance' seems, on the face of it and bureaucratically, to be more transparent and regulated than ever before, it is relevant to understand the tensions which were at the bottom of the discriminatory practices as practices that could be migrating to the 'exit'. In both ways, entrance and exit allow the establishment of control over the students' characteristics.

Given this context, there is a paradox: public schools seem to be more orientated towards the market and the private schools seem to be ignoring how it works.

From the school admission teams' perspective, this process implies a tension and a balance between different logics and ends. In effect, these logics collide on different levels, and schools

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[43] Mizala and Romaguera (2005) consider how these market failures are detailed as: (i) the existence of multiple educational inputs and difficulties in measuring their respective qualities or otherwise, (ii) teacher quality and the education provided is not observable and difficult to monitor, (iii) difficulties derived from the multi-product nature of education, and (iv) the principal-agent model with multiple principals.

are not looking exclusively to attract more students to their schools, as the policy design assumed when the school voucher started to be applied. Instead of that, they are looking for students according to their position in the local school market. In effect, ambiguity, mistrust, secrets, and lies, are all part of the delicate balance between competing logics which are in line with these practices. School interviewees recognise the selection of students as a common practice, not in their schools, but in the other schools of the district. This is a situation which brings to mind an interview with a Brazilian writer which said '97% of the population considered Brazil to be racist, but 98 per cent of the same sample did not consider themselves to be racist. This is to say essentially that it was a racist country, without racist people'* (Sanchís, 2019) – a nation in denial. Along similar lines, the interviewees and policy documents reflect this same paradoxical denial of reality.

In relation to the school policy documents, they do not demonstrate the logics that have been enunciated in the interviews. In this sense, the documents required as part of the admission process reflect the new regulation, and these documents do not show the procedures that were forbidden by the current regulation. The interviews, however, suggest that there have been different ways in which the selection process has been working in continuity with the wide range of mechanisms that were forbidden.

From a governmentality perspective, the system has been continuously creating ways to 'conduct the conduct' as a government technology. It is instructive to see that, according to the policymakers, one of the problems of the school system are parents and their lack of rationality, or as Elacqua summarises disadvantaged families who: 'do not have sufficient information about schools, because, as already noted, it is expensive to obtain and even more difficult to interpret. Therefore, herein may be the "Achilles heel" of the Chilean educational system' (Elacqua, 2004).

Indeed, the flawed teleological assumptions underpinning the current policy portray parents as having certain consistent and immutable characteristics, and thus goes about forming subjects in their projected image. So, instead of trying to rethink what the problem represented is, according to this perspective, the conclusion seems to be something along the lines of, 'the parents are not as they should be'. So, the policies have been designed as ways to correct the discriminatory mechanisms which are present within the admission process. Nevertheless, the tension which underlies these discriminatory practices is present in the system, adopting modalities that are often seen as unexpected. In this vein, admission as a 'campaign' in the case of regular admission, or as 'cultural exchange', when admission happens during the

school year show how it can be seen as a continuation of the discriminatory practices through – maybe – other modalities.

This chapter has presented the case of the regular admission process, which finishes with the entrance of the students at the beginning of the academic year, admission as an 'event'. This chapter has sought to reflect on the practices and rationalities associated with the admission process, when the admission follows the traditional path, which means when the students start from the beginning of the academic year, which is in March in the Chilean case. The interviews and documents reveal how admission teams face some of the complexities of this process and how some of the outcomes of this policy process were neither good, nor bad. Instead, the outcomes of the process were unexpected / unforeseen according to what was expected in terms of the logic that underlies the policy design. In this sense, it appears that there is ambiguity and opacity in the process, and the secrets and lies are part of the context of the admission process and part of the repertoire of situations that the school admission team must deal with during the process. In this chapter, the findings show a process of governmentalisation in which the school admission team must deploy different strategies to balance equity and competition logic, and they follow different strategies in line with the position of the school in the local market. So, when schools do not present enrolment problems, they conduct the admission process as a 'procedure' with very clear dates. On the other hand, when schools need more students, they conduct the admission process as a 'campaign' during the last months of the academic year, including an active policy of recruitment. So, even if schools consider the same requirements, timing is a key feature in the enactment of the admission process, and important to understanding what kinds of students – and families – can access each school, as can be seen in Table 10:

Admission as a procedure	A short time, clear schedule, school admission teams contain just a few actors, and in this research, it corresponds to private schools (Valdivia and Frutillar).
Admission as a campaign	A long time, many school actors are involved and, in the context of this research, it takes place in public schools (Vallenar and Talca).

Table 10: The March School Admission as a 'Procedure' and as a 'Campaign'

Finally, the regular admission process highlights how the opacity which surrounds the school admission process presents an element of agency for the school admission team. This agency can follow different ends and paths, different logics, and rationalities, and it is the moment/ place where the tensions and the balance of different logics are deployed. It seems paradoxical that limitations to the school choice are not imposed by the documents required to apply but nowadays are more related with the chance to take part in this process following the schedule

fixed by the schools. In this sense, understanding the admission process as a 'procedure' and as a 'campaign' implies, either way, an emphasis on the 'demand side', focusing on a certain demographic of parents.

This chapter has sought to reflect on the existence of aspects of the admission process within the school year, as an aspect that was considered marginal in policy design, but which has proven to be central in analysing the admission process in each establishment. The policy design assumed that changing schools during the academic year was a phenomenon that was limited and understood as migration; however, as we have seen, the migration of students within the school year is a daily reality for admission teams, the dynamics of which are complex and multi-layered, as has been detailed in this chapter. Indeed, according to the school admission teams, the admission process suggests that the admission teams seek to find 'alternative paths' to deal with 'cultural exchange' as part of a repertoire of solutions with which they seek to deal with the tensions, and solve problems that exceed the threshold of the tolerable. Crucially, the 'tensions' and what is 'tolerable' or 'permissible', in this case, are defined by each individual educational community. This situation is expressed as a tension ('not discrimination, but…') and then as a limit ('apostles but not martyrs') which may correspond to behavioural reasons, violent behaviours, drug use or trafficking, or when the safety of the expelled student is in question. The tension that these actors embody, considering the situation between schools, shows how they look for a semblance of balance between these clearly contradictory principles.

Admission during the school year is also an expression of a context in three ways. Firstly, it is the context where the tension and collision between different logics are deployed; as tension between the equity and market principles, which is illustrated through the phrase 'not discriminating, but…'; and, the tension which is transformed into a limit, when there is a boundary established between being 'apostles but not martyrs'. The migration of students within the school year is expressed through a continuous flow of students entering and leaving the establishment, students who are instantly under suspicion", and are known euphemistically by several members of the school admission team as "cultural exchanges, as a way to denote that migration of students is not always for good reasons. Secondly, it is clear that private and public schools face regulations under wholly different conditions. Private subsidised schools, having little or no enrolment availability, can reject these students with greater freedom; in contrast, public schools, in permanent need of students and acting as guarantors of the right to education, must, by definition, accept all students. The corollary of the situation described from a quantitative point of view is simple: essentially the logic of

choice and selection systematically favours private schools, skewing the results in their favour (Bellei, 2013). Thirdly, in a wider sense, a contingent admission process which occurs throughout the school year is wholly consistent with a society characterised by uncertainty and precarity, given the waning of traditional solidarity networks and structures associated with occupational, geographical and family mobility (Walzer, 1993), and the classic links of social cohesion: family, union, neighbourhood and community (Hopenhayn, 2011). In this sense, without entering into areas of general uncertainty about the provision of public goods, such as health, education or pensions, there are other issues such as family, work and housing, and the characteristics of this new Chilean 'middle class' who are particularly volatile and whose resolution is more contingent. These issues present a correlation with the educational pathways of the students and with the composition and dynamics of migration in each school and the local school market.

In a text of Arelis Uribe (2017), she explains that she studied in a working-class district of Santiago, La Cisterna, in a school with the English language name 'Chilean Eagles College Nro. 2'. According to her, in Chile, if you do not study in a well-known public school or a private school of the elite, 'the name of your school does not evoke anything, except the irony that it has a name in English in a district where nobody is bilingual'*. Following this idea, it can be said that the absence of references described by Uribe is part of what can be considered to be a normal school in a middle-class district in Chile, and the equivalent to an 'ordinary school' (Maguire et al., 2011), as a school lacking an epic narrative. These schools possess specific characteristics, as schools that are not part of any strong narrative; not especially poor, nor particularly rich. These schools are not focused on by public policies which attack poverty, nor do they have the narrative or attention derived from being the spaces where the elite reproduces. The absence of strong narratives in the middle groups can be seen as paradoxical, then, since it is the situation of the majority of Chileans.

In Chapter Six, I try to understand how the different practices and rationalities of equity and competition are present in the enactment of the school admission process, answering Research Objective Two and Research Question Three. The idea of crossroads in the title refers to the interplay between these logics, sometimes as a choice, as a collision or as a compromise reached. These crossroads can also be seen in relation to the enactment of the different policy technologies which are included in the Preferential School Voucher: market, admission and management; and how these three policy technologies intertwine with each other. In this enactment process, I focus on these practices and rationalities,which often pose dilemmas for the school admission team that are expressed in *The Way Things Are Done* (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009), oscillating between ambiguity and distrust, and, in extreme cases, between secrets and lies. The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, (6.1), I posit that school policy actors who participate in the enactment of the admission process oscillate between ambiguity and distrust when they face certain situations that are recurrent during the admission process, to the extent that there is a 'plot' that is nebulous, as well as distrust, when the subject understands that the current regulations in place are not being respected in reality (Martuccelli, 2009; Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009). Subsequently, I point out some of the situations that arise during the school admission process, particularly those which refer to secrets and lies, illustrating the logic that has been established across successive interactions. Second (6.2), I describe how Admissions teams interpret what it means to receive students from different backgrounds ('*de todo*', in Spanish),

and how the integration of these new students can be perceived as a threat, a situation which is captured in the oft-repeated phrase 'it is not discrimination, but…'. Later, I review the attitudes taken by school policy actors towards receiving these students, seeking to establish where the(ir) boundaries defining inclusion are (if there are any). The definition of these limits can be summarised when school workers define themselves as 'apostles, but not martyrs', drawing the line at what can be considered a threat to their own safety. Finally (6.3), I highlight some of the findings related to how admission is enacted 'within' and 'between' the schools, focusing on opacity, timing and transition as key features of the enactment of school admission, according to the school admission teams and the policy documents.

6.1 Distrust, Ambiguity, and Agreed Transgressions as Agency

In this section, I explain how in some circumstances the regulations are 'acknowledged, but not respected' (Araujo, 2009b); and how the admission processes –in both versions, 'regular' admission and admission 'during' the school year – are interpreted by school admission teams from a position that oscillates between distrust and ambiguity, where the regulations are formally accepted, but their spirit is not respected in several ways, even using secrets and lies in the most extreme cases.

Concerning this first pairing, distrust and ambiguity, there is a situation of distrust when the school admission team declares that the admission processes do not follow the stipulated rules, a situation which is recognised by all the interviewees. In the second case, when the members of the school admission teams are directly involved, distrust, criticism, and negative judgement of the transgression of the regulations are replaced by ambiguity and contextual explanations.. I review how this tension is present in public and private schools through some of their practices, explaining the different practices and processes that are developed in these schools, and how there is a gap between what is expected by policy-makers and practices during the school admission process.

Firstly, there are recurring stories about how the existing regulations are not complied with. In Maipú, nuances are established in relation to the processes that each school establishes, in line with the characteristics of its community. Elena, from Vallenar School, a public school, considers that private schools benefit from privileges that public schools do not have: 'they select students, and we also see that they have better results'*, and, in the same line, outcomes that can be explained 'precisely because of the quality of the students and the families that are behind those students'*. Nevertheless, Adriana, from Talca School, a public school, thinks that these privileges are not just for private schools. According to her, people

believe that 'they are all the same [referring to the public schools], although there is selection in some public schools(…) they [the school admission team] make a small selection'*. This process of selection involves asking 'for more documents to review, for example, official observations from the class register, personality reports'*. Corroborating the former view, Francisca, from the same public school, declares: 'What I do know is that what the law says today is that we mustn't carry out selection and that we must receive all kinds of students'*. Right afterward, she explains that this regulation is not the same for all the schools, 'I also know that there are schools that do, the schools that have a good performance are schools where they select and we have within the district at least three schools that make that selection'*. This selection process, according to her, is not public and transparent: 'although some say they do not select but if they do an interview with the parent, and when they have high demand they can afford to decide: this student yes, this student no'*

There are some 'papers' and information that are common to all the admission processes. This refers to asking for the student's birth certificate (*Certificado de nacimiento,* in Spanish) and signing to show acceptance of the School Educational Project (P*royecto Educativo Institucional*, in Spanish), and the disciplinary regulations (*Reglamento de disciplina*, in Spanish). It is important to highlight that these documents are created by the school's community in a process which includes all the actors involved in the school admission process: local authorities, schools teachers, students, and parents.

As could perhaps be expected, the admission school teams did not describe in overt terms how the admission regulations were not respected. The interviewees declared that the selection process is carried out covertly, and the documentation required during the admission process could not be linked to discriminatory practices, in the way that it could have been a few years ago. These selection practices were conducted by schools, but would be difficult to trace on paper. Mercedes, referring to her experience in a private school, explains that 'they ask for identity cards as documents. Just as they ask you the profession of the parents, what kind of jobs they have, if they belong to a church, if they are married or not, they still ask'*. Francisca, from Talca School, declares that there are 'grey areas', where 'if they are in high demand they select without any doubts. Now, if they don't have many students there, they ultimately accept any student that arrives, with whatever grades or discipline'*. According to her, this clearly depends on the position of the school within the local school market: 'in the case of those who have good performance and therefore a lot of demand, they select anyway (…) I think it is done in a more sneaky way, but it is done the same'*. Miriam, from Talca School, details her experience in her former job: 'when I was in another school and the grades [of the

student that was applying] were not good, the way to avoid that student was saying "no, there are no places ", that is the word'*. In this way, there is no chance to question the process, because the process goes beyond what the admission team can control: 'So, there may be places, maybe the class holds up to 45 and there are 40, but they say it's full; it is easy and if the parent is told that, he leaves, he will not insist'*.

There are issues around lack of knowledge among administrators. Natalia, from Frutillar School (private), participates in the school admission process, but despite this, she does not know all the stages of the process: 'I know they cannot be evaluated, but there are schools that have evaluations'*. She doesn't take part in this aspect of the admissions process and she does not know if evaluations are conducted at her school: 'I don't know if evaluations can be done here, I don't think so. I could not tell you… the truth is that I have not thought about it'*. Beyond this, administrative norms show limitations. Adriana details that discriminatory practices cannot be linked to documents as in the past, on the registration form, for example: 'there are no questions about religion, or parents' details, or by how many live in the house, or who they are, or how they live, or how much is their salary, that is no longer asked'*. On the contrary, Adriana says: 'the registration form is really generic: name, course, telephone and that's it'*.

This distrust is related to how schools can ask for some documents or definepriority criteria. Following the guidelines of the definitions proposed in the institutional educational project, the school can establish special regulations, such as asking for grades from the previous year, an interview with the parents, a certificate of vulnerability or a personality report. In effect, the schools declare different sets of requirements, as can be seen in Table 11.

Requirements	Vallenar	Talca	Frutillar	Valdivia
Grades from the previous year	X	X		X
Interview with parents	X			X
Socioeconomic survey	X			
Personality report	X	X		

Table 11: Admission Requirements

These requirements cannot be considered intrinsically discriminatory. Nevertheless, the use of these documents is opaque for the different members of the school community. According to this information; is Frutillar School more inclusive than other schools because they do not ask for any of the described requirements? Or, is Vallenar School more inclusive when it asks for all these documents – grades from the previous year, interviews with parents, socioeconomic survey, and personality report – to make use of the entire network of opportunities that they

can access, seeking to involve parents. Both interpretations may be correct in their assumptions. The right interpretation will depend, to a large extent, on how the educational market has been configured at the local level. It is not possible to answer these questions in depth here, but there is much more agency for these actors and how these requirements are enacted. According to my research, this is a problem that I can enunciate, but I cannot fully develop, and it should be researched through another approach.

There are other conditions whichschools consider to be a priority, such as the socio-economic vulnerability or the personality report, as can be seen in Table 12.

Priority criteria	Vallenar	Talca	Frutillar	Valdivia
Sibling(s) in the same school	X		X	X
Parent was a student in the same school	X		X	X
Parent is a school worker				X
Socioeconomic situation (vulnerability)	X			
Personality report	X			

Table 12: Priorities in the Admission Process. Based on School Documents

Again, prioritizing some students in the school admission process, according to some of the characteristics shown in the previous table which is established in the context of the school educational project that the school defined, must be understood from a discriminatory point of view. In this table, the first three conditions try to reinforce a sense of community, and the last two show how vulnerability or the personality report can be a tool to resolve this problem, putting these students as a priority for the system.

The preceding judgements, and how these are related to the documents, are nuanced when school policy actors are directly involved in the admission process. In this case, it is relevant to understanding the dilemmas faced by school admission teams during the enactment process and the situations which can be interpreted as breaking the law, or, at the very least, the non-observance of existing legislation. As has been shown, the admission process is riddled with ambiguities felt by families, parents and students, regarding the way in which this process presents as an outcome the acceptance of the student. In fact, some processes do not always present a clear objective. For example, if the school admission team conducts an interview with the parents, it can be a chance to present the school and the school project to the families, and to explain the 'rules of the game'. However, this interview can also be experienced by the parents as part of the selection process. Victoria, from Vallenar School, explains the admission policy of her school, a school where 'the doors are always open to receive students'*, and the objectives of the interview process, 'whose purpose is to have

clear guidelines'*. In this way, when the student is accepted, 'he knows that he has to demonstrate a certain attitude, with certain roles, that he cannot make perhaps the same mistakes he made in his other school'*. Nevertheless, when she is asked if everyone -parents and the school admission team – knows the possible outcomes or the purpose of these interviews, or if there is some ambiguity in the conduct of the interview, she replies 'I don't know if the director at some point told him "mmm, I don't know, we are going to evaluate with the team", I don't know but I don't think so'*. Jorge, another member of the admission team in the same school, details the objectives of this process: 'We always try to interview, to get to know them [students and parents]; it is not to discriminate against them'*. Nevertheless, the interview is not exclusively 'to get to know them', then Jorge details: 'Well, and make commitments if the personal reports are very weak, for example, commit to respecting and favouring school life (…) When interviewing, one indicates the "rules of the game"'*. In this line, the interview process sometimes works as a veiled threat, as a way to stress that if the students do not stick to the 'rules of the game', they already know how the story is going to end:

> in that interview, I explain to the parent what we consider to be serious discipline problems, what are the hallmarks of the school, what we see, and what requirements we ask of the students, which is part of school life. They commit and agree to adhere to our project. But when the student is not like that (…), the behaviour rules apply to that student. The parent has already been warned that this is what will happen if this situation occurs, because the document is given that says what the basic rules that a student should follow when entering this school are*.

Victoria and Jorge, from Vallenar School, are not clear if the parents know about the purpose of this admission interview and its outcomes, showing that there are reasons for a certain ambiguity about the outcomes of the process, particularly when they are trying to explain to the parents about 'clear guidelines', 'a certain attitude', 'certain roles' which are involved, and trying to explain the 'rules of the game' to the future students of the school.

It can be said that there is a situation of ambiguity in the enactment of the interviews and the use of documents that fuels distrust, but the interviewees point out that there are specific cases in where it is feasible to suggest that a school is not the best option according to the profile presented by certain students. However, it is made explicit that this idea has historically been a reason for excluding some students. Manuel, from Vallenar School, explains the circumstances that can justify suggesting to families that they explore another option:

It is true that through the conversation, in the interview with the parent or the student, [One] can perceive and it may seem like a euphemistic attitude, but one can recommend, given the nature of the record of the applicant, that perhaps this is not the most appropriate school. I say euphemistically because it is the diplomatic (and tricky) way of saying "we don't want them here, go elsewhere", but also, on some occasions, it is very reasonable.

In this case, there is an emphasis on the match between the school characteristics and the students, and that can be considered a problem. Nevertheless, this also can be 'reasonable', in terms of a judgement which is based on many years of admissions experience. To be clear, there is a market incentive, but, at the same time, it can lead to a greater role for orientation and counselling, as Manuel exemplifies later:

Students that for example, we have had here, who came from a very special school; students who had some difficulties, very small courses and with a flexible curriculum[44], had the aspiration to return to the school system again. And following some previous experiences, we told some of those children "look, study well, because if you have had difficulties in the relationship with your classmates and you managed to establish them well, you have been able to advance in your educational performance, and then you want to return violently to a classroom with forty classmates, there is a risk involved". Then, maybe there, a different alternative was suggested.*

The entire paragraph is worth using to show how in his words there is a tension between his judgement as an educator and the pedagogical point of view, and his interest in managing the admission process and complying with the current regulations. The tensions between these identities –between the teachers who guide parents suggesting what can be a better option and the administrator who is not complying with regulations and, eventually, rejecting who seems, very probably, to be a bad student – is projected at the institutional level. In this way, some instruments have ceased to be public, such as the personality report or the tests of admission, because they can be used in one way or another. So, instead of helping the students to improve in some dimensions, these instruments can be used to discriminate against them. This applies particularly to what in Chile is called the 'Personality Report', which describes the behaviour of the student. In this way, some establishments assume a formative role in terms of student rights once they leave the establishment and look for another

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[44] He is referring to 'non-traditional' schools, according to the characteristics of the educational project or other aspects, such as the number of students per class or an emphasis on arts or music. These schools usually work with students with difficulties in terms of behaviour.

alternative. Particularly controversial has been the use of this document as part of the admission process. As Eugenia from Frutillar School, explains in a context where the use of these reports was widespread, they took the decision to not give personality reports to parents to present to other schools because these reports have been used for discriminatory purposes and schools should not ask for them either. They are aware that not all schools respect the regulationws so they give parents a document that explains that there are no other documents which describe the behaviour of the students. This is a situation that reminds us of the 'legalistic' nature of Chilean society, as was explained in Chapter Two, in that it is possible to understand that there is a certificate explaining the lack of other certificates. So, in this case, the personality report is defined by the school as an instrument exclusively for the use of the school: 'it is for internal use with the family, but not for presentation, because there are schools that continue to demand it and that in some way or another continue to take this document to be able to select'*. According to Eugenia, they do not ask for any special documents: 'We ask for a birth certificate and the report that shows if the student failed or passed the previous school year to know what level the student is going to. Nothing else, nothing, is requested'*, she adds, pointing out that they have assumed a pedagogic role with the parents explaining how the system works: 'we have educated them on the system, (…) we fully comply with the costs and benefits and we also try to improve and learn to be able to solve the situations, instead of continuing to have problems''*.

The ambiguity and distrust referred by the school workers has been nurtured by a long history of selective practices during the school admission process, and a wide repertoire of mechanisms, some of them clearly discriminatory. Nevertheless, these tensions have the potential to become an open conflict when some of the situations of the admission process involve secrets and lies in the context of the interaction between the school policy actors and the parents.

These are striking situations related to transgressions of the regulations in the context of the school admission process, and also of the interaction between parents and school admission teams, that go beyond the situations described in the previous sections. According to the interviewees, these cannot be considered to be recurring situations, but they are relevant in the sense that they give an account of the problems and the dilemmas faced by the school policy actors of each school. These situations are related to the 'agreed transgressions' (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009), which are part of the way that some dilemmas are resolved in Chile, and, in a wider sense, in Latin América (Araujo, 2009b).

The value of the situations described in this section lies in the rationalities which underlie the description of why they do not comply with the current regulation as described by the school policy actors. In sum, the core of the problem has more to do with how the problem is framed than with the particular situation or the rule whichis being broken. That is to say, even when a process does not comply with the current regulation, it takes it as a reference in order to safeguard the achievement of a particular objective. From the perspective of the school policy actors what appears more clearly are the strategies that parents follow to avoid situations of discrimination, and from the school perspective, the strategies that school workers in schools follow in order to achieve real commitment of parents with an educational project. These circumstances highlight, specifically in this case, how parents do not declare some of the problems of the students, fearing that they might not be accepted, and from the other side, how the schools lose access to the larger subsidy offered, for example, by the Preferential School V oucher. This is a clear example of the role of agreed transgressions in the context (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009) and the use of smoke and mirrors in the context of asymmetrical interactions (Araujo, 2009a). Subsequently, more than highlighting the 'lie', or the situation itself, it is relevant to focus on how this situation was arrived at and what, ultimately, is its underlying logic. Indeed, situations occur that, although not widespread, are part of the 'repertoire of solutions' that define the different actors according to their place in this interaction and what they understand their characteristics to be. In some establishments there is a situation of relative ambiguity given the possible results of this process and the students who will be part of the school. Manuel details that the composition of the school is part of recurrent conflicts, particularly when there are underlying problems. In this case, he explains how a few weeks before a teacher who suffered aggression from their seven-year-old students, and then another teacher said: 'these children should not enter school'*. Later, Manuel explained his reaction:

> I said that this argument was a setback to everything we wereexperiencing, because it was
> not possible to refer to that (…) So, to attend to all the diversity of students, it is a scenario,
> particularly for colleagues who were trained thirty or forty years ago, within which group I
> also feel represented... Although obviously because of my responsibility, and perhaps
> because of my vision that I must have flexibility, I already adhere to the meaning [of the
> regulations]*.

As can be seen, these contradictions in relation to controlling the students' characteristics are inside the school and are also part of the careers of the school workers. According to the school admission team members, the parents seem to be aware of these contradictions and

sometimes they hide the fact that students present with some kind of problem/difficulty, such as psychological treatment, a language difficulty, a permanent or non-permanent disability, or if he/she was working with the PIE –Education Integration Program – in his/her former school. According to Ana from Vallenar School, this is related to the fear of non-acceptance, and this fear can also be related to many other aspects: 'they can be still in the process of accepting that there is a special situation and another is that they have visited many schools and [these schools] have not accepted them'*. Elena offers a dramatic example of this fear: a student with Asperger's was enrolled in late April, and their family never declared it. She explained that the school can access special resources if they recognise this condition: 'I told the family 'if you come with a condition of Asperger or Autism, that goes into a project''*. So, she says that later the family 'confessed'[45] the situation of their child: 'people didn't tell us and then told us later. They don't tell us because they went to another school and that school didn't accept it'*. Considering the advantages suggested by the policy design, this is an example where the families and all the school policy actors are losing, the family is losing the opportunity to access professional help and the school is losing resources. Elena says that this is a common situation, whereby parents hide some information and they are not transparent when the student presents with a complex situation, related to a diagnosis such as Asperger or an learning difficulty: 'they didn't tell us. Then as the first few weeks went by we realised that the teachers were telling us about these children who had these difficulties and then we did research'*. Elena associates this situation with the parents' fear 'Many times they come from other schools with bad experiences'*. In these cases, the parents refuse to be 'integrated' into a special program. Elena gives the example of a student, who from the first day showed signs of having some kind of problem, but the mother did not agree to 'integrating' the student, by means of entering the Education Integration Program:

In this case, we talked to the mother and the decision was respected and [the mother] also observed how she [the student] was doing during the year, because later, the next year, the mother was a little afraid again and we told her that in the end, she had already worked with her son practically, because she had already worked with the whole course and that there was no label like "look, he is Asperger so everyone else does not approach". No, neither by teachers nor by its classmates or anything. So, I think that the mother there, with that security, said "now, if I want my son to be integrated this year"*.

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[45] This word presents at the same time a religious and judicial connotation.

The inclusion criteria are not circumscribed by poverty, or academic or behavioural criteria. In fact, there is a new social agenda that has entered schools, which requires an adaptation by all actors. This shows how in the interaction between choice and admission, both processes have been evolving in tune with society and its debates and new regulations. Manuel from Vallener School explains how these changes are experienced inside an institution and according to the teachers' experience and how there is: 'an opening towards aspects that were not tolerated before; for example all these gender issues'*. He establishes that there is a gap between what is 'said' and 'facts', From a positive perspective, 'there is a certain similarity in speech, there are similarities when you expose reality. Even in a positive sense, from the point of view that this may imply an improvement in enrolment'. Nevertheless, on the contrary, 'when the circumstances later reach the "moment of truth, (…) there is the implicit criticism of the teacher who can say "twenty or thirty years ago these things were not allowed," or even until very recently'*.

These processes are part of recurrent conflicts within the school. They explain how inside the school there are always different approaches to the problems related to the encounters of equity and competition; and how different societal problems are also present in the school. The changes are related to a much wider process of changein Chilean society. In effect, education reflects society and its evolution, but, as was said five decades ago (Bernstein, 1970) and has been said many times since then (Nightingale, 2019), education cannot compensate for society. The conflict alluded at through these examples is directly linked with this area.

Considering lies as part of the school admission process, where parents can lie to school admission workers and school admission workers can lie to parents, is striking in several ways. First, it higlights how citizenship and market logic collide during the admission process in the parent-school interaction. The parents may have experienced successive rejections, as no school seems to guarantee the right to access education, the right to exert school choice. This is in opposition to the logic of parents as 'competent players' who go from school to school looking for a school place for their children, in a symmetrical relationship, that is, in which there must be mutual acceptance/choice, with parents choosing schools, and viceversa. Instead, both actors are involved in an interaction in a context of ambiguity and distrust, knowing and having as reference the existing rules and the repertoire of possible results. Alicia from Vallenar School, a public school, explains the topics which are part of the interview with the parents: 'family history, the interests of the boy, why he comes to school, what is expected of him, they are told about the educational project, the plans and programs, everything'*. Then, I asked if this interview is given in a context in which they cannot be rejected, if they

know that they are accepted, she explains that 'they don't know, sometimes the corporation tells [the parents] them to "go [there] because there is a place and you have to enroll them there". But we do the interview process because we believe it is important that the children know more or less what is expected of them'*. When I insist on the differences of each scenario, exemplifying the differences between going to an interview where one knows the outcome, for example, a job interview in which the outcome is yes or no, and another in which one goes to introduce oneself, and the outcome is not clear and depends on theresults of the interview. Then, she described the case of a girl who arrived in March and, by the middle of the year, she was having problems with a teacher, and then her father presented many documents showing that the girl had Asperger's:

> I asked her why when [his daughter] was interviewed at the beginning of the year he did not present the diagnosis, because for us there are benefits (special attention) that the girl is not receiving and she is undermined in that regard. Why did he not present it? He told me "Do you know why I didn't present it? Because this was the third school we had been to this year, and the other two schools, when I presented the diagnostic papers, the manager got up, went to an office, came back and told us that there were no places "*.

> They were very afraid of being rejected so they hid the diagnosis. The school missed out on a special grant for a child with that diagnosis. I told him that the school would welcome her, attend to her, we wouldgive all the help possible. We would not even receive a subsidy for her, but the PIE teachers would attend to her, they would do the same therapy because we are very concerned that she feels good here, because the school is open to all these children, it is a comprehensive school which attends to all children regardless of their condition, we have a team. The dad breathed calmly; he was even afraid of conflict with this teacher. At that level, the fear that the parent has of raising the problems, so I think they do not know that the school has a legal obligation to accept them. The public system has the legal duty; nevertheless, they had been rejected by two schools the same year.*

This case reflects the problems faced by the school admission team when the school administration presents the school without clarifying the nature and purpose of the interview and, more concretely, if the admission and acceptance of the student in the schooldepends on it. The outcome, as a product of the distrust that occurs from both sides, is that the school loses the additional resources that the policy determines, which are given to schools when they are working with students with special needs; and the student cannot access the benefits designed for them. To conclude, this is the worst case scenario from the policy design perspective; nevertheless, it can be considered that it is also a perfectly logical one. It is a case

which illustrates the naïve dimension of the policy design, and, as Dean suggests, there is a strangely Utopian element, in terms of believing that 'government is not only necessary but also possible' (2010, p. 44), and the assumption that 'government can be effective, that it can achieve its desired ends, or, to use the parlance of contemporary public policy analysis, that there can be a match between the outcomes and intentions of policies' (2010, p. 44). In other words, this notion overlooks the complexity of the policy-making process, and why policy making is a 'precarious business, the consequences of which are unpredictable given the complex interrelationship of contextual factors, different and sometimes opposing interests, linguistic ambiguities and variety of key players involved in policy processes' (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 17). In this sense, distrust and ambiguity, secret and lies are part of a repertoire of possible attitudes towards the admission process, part of what has been usually considered to be the undesired/ unexpected effects of the policy design. In effect, the admission process shows different logics depending on the school policy actors who are continuously enacting this process.

6.2 "Apostles, but Not Martyrs", Practices of Equity and Competition

The new regulation implies that the schools must accept all kind of students (*'de todo'*, in Spanish), some of whom were often denied entry until that moment. This situation, the alleged hetereogenity that the regulation has brought about in the school system, implies different scenarios for each school, but all the interviewees showed a feeling of ambivalence towards the new school admission process, which is crystallised in the phrase 'it is not a case of discrimination, but…'. So, in this section, I seek to put in motion what otherwise appears to be a static situation within the school admission process; as a movement that must be contextualised, to the extent that it arises in a specific set of circumstances, foregrounded by the history of each establishment, and the flux of students during the academic year.

As already stated in chapter Three, the Chilean system is decentralised and there is no territorial limitation on school provision, nor on parents' choice. In fact, there is no single pattern that can account for the school provision in each district or the level of rotation/ migration, in effect, there is not only sole territorial migration pattern (Donoso & Arias, 2011, 2013). Formally, there are no differences in the regulations to which these actors respond. In this sense, schools are nominally subject to the same rules. So, the 'good schools' always fill all their vacancies, and thus cannot receive students during the year. This is in contrast to the 'bad schools', which are systemically condemned to a repeatedly high turnover of (often problematic) students driven by the initially chronic lack of enrolment (and, consequently, resources). As explained by Manuel, from Talca School (public): 'Between 30% and 50% of our

students are new every year, so we have a large group of new students from year one to year eight, who we will keep because our goal is to have 1000 students'*.

Demands are growing for the regulation of establishments, through the consolidation of an evaluative state (Parcerisa & Falabella, 2017). This situation requires constant study and updating work which is carried out by different actors at the school level, who take on different roles according to the circumstances. As César, from Valdivia School (Private) states, they must be prepared, especially in the case of the behaviour policy: 'It is a big document. We work on it in extended meetings with teachers; however, we focus on certain parts that are contingent. Then we work as a group to later do it with the assistants'*. The situation of each establishment shows a series of institutions that support/supervise the work of the establishment, following a heterarchical logic. Many times, this 'support' is compulsory, and it is offered by a third sector institution. César, continues: 'we have a bi-weekly visit from a supervisor, we are in a Fundación Chile program, (…) we also have a consultant who supports us with the new PME-SEP[46] cycle'*. Beyond the regulations, school policy actors have a complete knowledge of the social environment their students face. These circumstances place the actors in dilemmas in which the context may add an additional layer of complexity. So, all measures are rooted in a specific social, economic, and political context that can make a significant difference to the demographic a given school is expected to deal with. Again, these problems show different faces, as Mercedes, from Talca School, states, 'These students that go to the house to make lunch for the younger brothers, all day working, then there is another social dynamic'*. In similar socioeconomic circumstances, the situation can become even more difficult. César, from Valdivia School (private), explains: 'our biggest problems are the children that arrive during the year. As they don't pay any attention or have any respect for us, they don't know us, we have to chase them.'*

In this context, 'inclusion' is always a contested terrain and there have been successive approaches to this concept in the school context, posed as a challenge that spannes the school community. Nevertheless, there seems to be no consensus regarding the difficulties presented by the existence of different contexts. Alicia, from Vallenar School (public), refers to how their efforts and difficulties are not recognised, explaining how in a meeting with members of the District Authority (the local authority which is in charge of the public schools, the CODEDUC), the staff from the public schools were confronted by one of the managers of the district, who asked why two schools had succeeded according to the standardised measures, in opposition

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[46] School improvement program (*Programa de Mejoramiento Escolar,* in Spanish)

to all the others which had failed: 'I wonder what the practices that they have implemented are, and why you do not share them, receive them and apply them in your schools to improve the SIMCE result'*. In this sense, school policy actors have described a dissonance between the issues declared as being priorities and the actions actually taken to tackle them. These objectives and actions are, in practical terms, in opposition, as the objectives of equity and outcomes can be if we are inclusive. The way to analyse quality cannot be associated with standardised results, and viceversa; if schools are evaluated in terms of outcomes, quality should not be evaluated through a lens of inclusion.

The benefits of inclusion policies are also posed by school policy actors, in relation to the benefits of accessing life experiences that are different, which has intrinsic value in itself. Natalia, from Frutillar School (private), explains how this process is carried out in private schools, as 'an admission process that fills up quite quickly'*. In relation to the admission process, she states that 'it should be a little more "demanding" when receiving students because we receive children from different contexts'*. This is described as a tension, as a contradiction that the school workers must deal with: 'I can see that this establishment wants to appeal to a sense of academic excellence or that it wants to raise the level of learning, but they receive students on a non-selective basis'* So, according to Natalia, this contradiction should be resolved, and otherwise

> then to a degree you must stop being a teacher, and look from where you can begin, and to the chasm of knowledge that children never learn or that they are left with a gap. I believe that if this school wants to appeal to a greater constituency, it must start by admitting children, perhaps in another way, which one? I have not thought about it yet, but if that is the objective as they propose it, I believe that admission should be a bit more demanding.'*

In this sense, the tension is part of a general contradiction between rationalities. Inclusion implies the unconditional acceptance of all students (on a 'non-selective basis') and competition ('academic excellence'), involves selecting as much as possible.

The issue of expulsion clearly represents a problem for schools, because they have to provide evidence and go through a long bureaucratic path to justify their decision; and also the students, who can face a difficult scenario in terms of finding a new school. Nevertheless, in order to avoid both scenarios, there are alternative paths which are also mediated by opacity. There are expulsions which are not bureaucratically or technically considered to be expulsions, because the parents move the students before the expulsion is officially enacted, because this (being recorded and on record) would hinder their admission to their next school. On the other

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hand, from the school workers' perspective, the school avoids looking bad by expelling someone and opening a process that borders on the judicial. Consequently, admission teams prefer to facilitate the migration of students. The outcome is the same, the students will be at another school, but the family has taken the decision to migrate. It could be seen as a win-win situation: the school did not expel the student, nor was the student expelled by the school – there are fewer problems for the school, fewer problems for the family. Hence, as has been said before, we talk about the movement of students as a dynamic of 'exporting' and 'importing', which arises as a kind of 'cultural exchange' situation, as an intricate network of cooperation that allows school admission teams to deal with the most problematic cases.

Miriam, from Talca School (public), explains how expulsions are carried out and of the existence of alternative methods: 'in general we tell the parents that the committee has decided to expel him/her [the student] and they prefer to move them on before that warning becomes a reality'*. Again, this is a process that escalates in terms of the type of measures: 'a cancellation of registration, testing calendar, and they do not like it so they take them out (…), it is not that we are taking them out so that they go to another school'*.

Another special circumstance is when student safety cannot be guaranteed by the school. In this sense, the whole school community can be involved in the school conflict. The main idea, which is present in this kind of conflict, is that the conflict is not going to end in the context of the classroom, or the school. In this case, the movement implies using a network to resolve the conflict. As Miriam continues:

> other cases that are very extreme, then you have to [ask them to] leave the school even for their safety, because if they stay then something can happen to them if the school suddenly threatens them, people come from outside, that is, when we know that the thing is not going to end there, we recommend that the family take it. We do not throw them out because, honestly, our regulations don't normally allow it. It rarely happens like "ah we are going to throw them out", no, but there are recommendations that one makes to the family, suddenly the children are threatened, so we tell them that here in the school we can assure you that it will be fine but rest assured that these people will not do anything here. Then, if they accept, they will look for a way out at some point, before we recommend that the child is taken out. And at this point, we help them, we try to make contact with other schools, with the child's welfare in mind. Here, there are always people who are concerned about the children, all of the guidance team, the directors, the teaching assistents, but when they leave school, we can't take them home. That's when the families decide to take them out and we help them to relocate.*

This way of proceeding is consistent with PNUD (2009) and what they call 'agreed transgression'*, which corresponds to the idea that different actors facing new regulations, skip their new responsibilities by developing parallel arrangements, without complying with their new duties. In this case, the school does not have to deal with a 'difficult student' and the student leaves the school. The word expulsion is not mentioned.

Technology becomes relevant, considering that there is a technological gap that policy actors assume will create difficulties for some groups of parents. In this sense, Manuel, from Vallenar School (public), identified some of the elements that would be an issue: 'you will receive a student who applied online that you don't know. Perhaps the real possibility, which will occur in many cases, is that you will meet the parent and the student on the first day of class'*. This would change how the admission process is carried out:

> Then you will have to welcome them with open arms and establish the bonds of trust, justas the admission system will allow schools to show what the project is, what the commitments required by the parent are when clicking and making the enrolment effective. But the human relationship of looking into the eyes of the child, the guardian, can be a "loss" in this period of readiness, when the student and the family join the school*.

Ema, from a private school, explains the collision of different logics, according to the profile of the families which go to this 'ordinary school': 'there are people who do not have the training and that, I think, complicates things with the parents because the process was to reach a school, to choose and to stay.'* Consistent with this, from another private school it is explained that it is not entirely clear how the school will manage the diversity of the school's families in the context of this new system. In effect, the definition of the current family is much more problematic that a few decades ago 'there are many families made up of a couple with another couple, but they have a kid and then another '* Here, the problem mentioned is that there are practical consequences in terms of communication with families, whatever the meaning of that word is nowadays. As Ema says, 'it turns out that this last name does not match this one here, there is a discrepancy, they are not direct family'*.

In this sense, the school team sees being able to manage the admission system as an advantage: 'We already knew the tangle it entailed, and everything then said "yes, it's true", this is the son, now, and we will place him'*. The problem is that it is not clear how the new system is going to work considering our, entangled and dynamic reality. Eugenia, from Frutillar School (private school) explains that they need a more consistent scenario, which can be considered equal for all the participants in the school admission process:

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One thing or another, but equal conditions for all. If the child wants to go to the *Nacional*[47] they should be able to do it but that I can also have the possibility to say to those who arrive "well, you" [can/cannot study here], because they are demanding results from me too, and they demand the same level as the schools they call emblematic. For me it is a disaster, I do not find it fair for anyone, because the emblematic teachers feel less "tension" because the children and the families are willing [to study] because they chose that school and everything they asked for, we can do it, but here there are parents that do not come, that are not even there, we have to more or less send the social worker*

So it is a vastly unequal playing field. As Exequiel of Vallenar School (public) explains it, he is optimistic because he feels that the system will now be more equal in a context where the system in the past was not fair for parents, who could not choose, nor for schools, which faced unfair competition:

'I think it will be much fairer. I feel that in one way or another in subsidised private schoolsor municipal schools, parents are going to have the same opportunities to apply for a municipal school or perhaps a subsidised private school. This did not happen before, I think that access for some families to subsidised private schools was very restricted. I have high expectations regarding this new system; I feel that it may be fairer for families but also for us, for the teachers who work in municipal schools. I have that hope, that it will be more equitable (…) because it is true, all of a sudden, in municipal schools that we serve very vulnerable students, and I believe that as long as the educational system serves these most vulnerable students, it will be much fairer and will generate more opportunities for these students, once they are only in municipal schools.'*

As Manuel from Vallenar School (public) summarises, the system as a whole is not necessarily going to be better. In some senses, this will be an amount to re-arranging the same problem: 'In the case of the admission system, I think it will amount to a rearrangement of the same problem. For example, it will not solve the issue of quality in any way, shape, or form'*. The changes for him will be limited to a solution of a very specific problem: 'it is going to solve, perhaps, the issue of the schools that are more attractive to the families (…), but the rest will go where they can and then drama will ensue.'* Exequiel explains that Vallenar School (public), stresses discretion as an element that was at the core of the previous system. In effect, the new admission system will eliminate this 'opacity': 'it seems very good to me because it is not

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[47] The most prestigious public school, where Ricardo Lagos studied, as was mentioned in the introduction to Chapter Five.

at the discretion of the people or at the behest of the institutions, but is a much more controlled and fair process'.*

Carolina from Talca School (public) details how the system affects her school. In this case it is interesting how she defines the community between families and schools, and how the new system is a 'game changer' in this sense:

In other establishments selection was carried out. And now they cannot do it, this that arises from the lottery and everything else, it is a perception of mine, I believe that the scenario changes because the audience attending is no longer the same as they had before. We continue to serve the same type of student; it has not been such a profound change for us. We hope that now with SAE we can continue having the same vocation that we had before. Well some children come because they identify with our project, others also come because it is the school they were closest to, others because they have siblings. I read that the SAE is going to warn when you are applying to an 'insufficient' school and we are like an 'insufficient' school. Even then that worries me a little, that I can lower the demand of the school because of that; and because it is different when you read on an [online] platform that is the same for everyone to when someone receives you in a school, smiles at you, looks you in the eye, shows you the project and allows you to see the facilities, it is different. I feel that this was our hallmark, our admission process was very human and the parent could come, get involved, accompany his son to the process, which was a face-to-face interview, that is, I am talking about the last three years. And the SAE is a faceless impersonal platform, and then if you only look at numbers and the data that the card is giving you, of course that data may not be as auspicious as if it were our process.*

Mercedes, from Talca School, explains her doubts, referring to the continuity of practices that have been historically related to this kind of proces: 'The truth is that I don't know if it's going to be so fair. I still have some doubts because we are not prepared for justice yet in Chile'*. Mercedes explains that this is a situation that goes beyond any particular policy:

In all the offices, in all the systems that are regulated, there is always a *pituto*, there is someone who is going to make the matter crooked, there is someone who is going to take advantage in one way or another*.

Manuel, from Vallenar School, explains 'The issue is complex; I am not sure what is going to happen. It generates more questions than concrete answers'. There is an ideological issue too, for example: what government it comes from, how it has to be executed now. The perception of the changes is often placed in a wider context. On the other hand, as Eugenia from Frutillar

School explains, there is a gap between what it is said and what is done, 'I don't know if it's fair or not. Many things can be said, but one thing is the plan, and another is the reality'*. For example, there is a clear evidence that the school is not facing the same rules. In effect, Eugenia highlights how private schools that do not receive public funds, which represent around the seven per cent of the national enrolment, are not subject to the same regulation:

> At the beginning there are some schools that you can also select, which are elite schools, surely many people will apply to those schools because they want to have good grades and they are elite because the best children arrive. If I tell you that, if we had that, as in the times when we could select, there were still better results because we knew that those who entered middle school were those who wanted to enter university, but not today. (…) For me, it is not a fair admission in the sense that, it would be fair if all schools could say "we are left with this", equal conditions'*.

In the words of Miriam from Talca School (public), there are processes that are going to be difficult for the school community: 'We believe that it hurts us if we don't see the child's face before he arrives here, or the family'*. On the other hand, she explains that these changes will make a difference in the future: 'I feel that we will return to the past, with the poorest child studying with the son of the mayor (…) I find that it will good in the long run, but it will cost us'*. Along the same lines, Manuel expressed the positive potential of this reform,

> I subscribe to that utopia in which the public school should be a neighbourhood school where the children are; where, with exceptions, because the school is full, it should be a school whose priority is to serve the children of the sector and there should be no problems with places. Now, if I study in Maipú and I move to Puente Alto [another district with similar characteristics], and I can just go to the public school of Puente Alto. I am unperturbed by that change because I should not worry that this school in Puente Alto has a very different educational quality to that of the public school of Maipú. I wish we could get to that utopia.'*

In effect, this measure does not present only winners, insofar as its effects will be manifold across the system. In the context of Talca School, Miriam expresses that for the most vulnerable 'it will be good because they will open doors to see other things, that life is not bad, that there are good things, that you can get ahead, that if someone else is like that, someday I can be too'*. On the other hand, she states that: 'the imaginary of the possible is going to be opened up, but those who are above, on the other hand, will be disturbed by this diversity,

because schools have been very selective'* She concludes that this policy 'may lead to something more egalitarian, but it will take a long time'*.

For members of Frutillar School (private subsidized), the positive effects are not so clear. As Doris explains: 'you receive students blindly and when you receive blindly you inevitably receive many problems'. Eugenia, from the same school, details the situation of uncertainty that they have been facing in the context of this change:

I do not know what the new process of admission for parents will be like, I am worried that they were happy that they could enter our institution so easily, now it is not so easy. The other day it happened to me that an administrative worker told me "Mrs. Eugenia, I want to enrol my grandson in pre-school", I told her that preschool is also part of the new process so it must be done online; it is different, and analysing with the school official, no. He didn't meet any of the three priority criteria so it is possible that her grandson won't be accepted here. It was once much simpler. So I don't know what it will be like for the parents who finally don't end up where they want to end up because they are not children of officials, because they are not a priority, because they are not alumni, in that sense, I do not know how it will be for them.'*

Doris described the uncertainty about how this new and transparent process of admission was working mostly as a 'procedure'. In this sense, schools were in a theoretically better position in the previous scheme, and the winners of the previous system felt that the new admission system is a threat. Doris, from Frutillar School, explains:

I felt it was losing autonomy and that is not good for me. It is a personal perception, autonomy, identity is lost, the parents feel insecure, even the closest people feel insecure with this (…), so that is why I see it more like a threat from the angle that you look at it. Educators are uncertain, we do not know if we are going to have all the training courses like in the last few years and along with that there is a big change, for the municipal people no because it was already there for them, with the education assistants, who are the ones who help us with the administrative part, which they say here ends on December 31, and that from then on, the school can enrol as many students as it wants.*

Receiving 'everybody' creates tensions within the schools, as has been analysed. In the current section, I analyse how school admission teams define the limits of 'receiving all kinds of students'*. Firstly, I refer to how the actors experience this situation, and subsequently the process that is triggered as per the regulations. It is interesting to highlight the variety of nuances established by the school admission teams: their distinct interpretations of the norms,

and how they are interpreted in a variety of possible scenarios. There is a consensus on the fairness of the regulation imposed, but this does not exclude criticism of the approach and the means preferred by regulation and policy design. In this sense, each admission school team understands and acts upon the diversity of interpretations in different ways, which highlights the dissonance between different schools. In this sense, these are issues that go beyond the school space, and 'land' at the school level in relatively clear ways. Nonetheless, all establishments declare the will to include every student; it is also true that they also define borderline situations and parameters. As one member of the management team succinctly explained, Mercedes, from Talca School (public), they are 'apostles, but never martyrs'. In effect, Mercedes is very clear that her school: 'is an open-door school for all those who arrive'* and she summarises the policy of admission as 'insofar as there are vacancies, you have to accept them'*. To emphasise this, she adds 'there is no objection to that, even if they come with bad references'*. Nevertheless, even in this case, there is an exception:

> We try not to accept a child who comes to do a lot of damage, [this refers to students] who have carried weapons or who have hurt a classmate, that is, we are apostles but never martyrs who let a child cause damage to other classmates, but we try to do our best*.

Alicia, from Vallenar School (public), declares that 'all students have the right to education', and that the 'issue of inclusion' and 'no-segregation' are positive. She considers that these are positive steps, but these statements are not accompanied by 'remedial work, which is not done in reality. As all students enter regardless of where they come from, they come with many differences regarding their educational level at the point of entry'*.

This hetereogeneity creates a big problem in terms of managing these differences 'there is a big problem because you have to start doing remedial work, teachers are behind with this content and in the end, consequently there is this huge gap with respect to results'*. In effect, there is a gap in terms of practical issues that go beyond the general ideas of more equity and excellence: 'The government demands something from us that the school is not able to deliver now'*. In this case, although the existence of a challenge is recognised, there is a development opportunity that can enrich the school community as a whole. There is an ambivalent attitude, in the sense that they work with one objective, but know they may well be evaluated by another. There may be few disruptive students in numerical terms, but this does not make them any less disruptive. In this sense, they are not necessarily very striking cases, such as violence or drugs, but rather everyday things, in some senses trivial matters. This affects the conditions in which the management teams and professors work. Claudia from Frutillar School (private) explains some of the ambivalent effects of these changes in the admission process.

On a positive note 'it allows us to have an important degree of diversity, to learn things that before, perhaps due to the selection process, were not covered at school, and this includes many things'*. Nevertheless, there are many problems which are associated with this new scenario, 'I feel that it is a challenge also because […] there is nothing to filter, anything could happen to us, it is as they said, equal education for all'*. This new scenario implies challenges that are also new for the school communities, 'within the establishment you have to work on certain aspects, since there are not so many requirements you will work in other areas that you did not have experience in before'*. In the same line, Francisca, from Talca School (public), explains this mixed feeling in the context of a school with 'high vulnerability':

> teachers and assistants, in general, say with great pride that many times we receive everyone, we are "inclusive", but also when you have to do catharsis it is said "but this is not possible because we have these children who, instead of helping us, knock us further backwards". Because we still have several students that have that socioeconomic vulnerability and with whom you can still work, but there is a small minority that goes beyond, where the narrow line between poverty and crime falls. Nowadays, for example, we have boys who we know that traffic drugs, boys who defend themselves with a knife, and we have others that do not, who are from very modest homes economically, sometimes very poor but do not give us as many problems as the others, because it is unlike the vulnerability that exists there. There is a really ugly word for the vulnerable good and the bad, of course, poor but from a hard-working family, or the vulnerable son of the offender who is in jail and who is more difficult to work with. Then the teachers and the assistants have mixed feelings, for one to say that it is a pride to have a school that accommodates all types of students, but they also do not know and, neither do we as a team, that it is much more difficult.*

In this case, a social problem 'enters through the window', to the extent that it is considered a relevant obstacle in the admission process. These problems are in constant evolution, to the extent that the situation requires some kind of intervention. Exequiel from Vallenar School (Public) explains how they must deal with a wide range of problems. Sometimes, a problem inside the school, a minor misdemeanour, allows them to notice problems of another nature which go beyond the school: 'there we discover that this boy or girl does not live with their parents, who is [living] with his grandfather, or with his grandparents, sometimes with guardians too'. This diversity of scenarios is something important, that goes beyond the characteristics of the school project, because it makes difficult to count on the support of a counterpart, facilitating communication between family and school. This is a situation which is

more widespread in some schools. Exequiel, from Vallenar School (public), explains that there are many students who do not have family support, 'there are not just a few of them, I would say that there are many students who do not have this family support, where there is a mother and a father figure concerned about the education of that student'* In effect, family characteristics have been evolving and families where there is a mother or a 'mother figure', are not as common they were just a few years ago. As Exequiel details, 'It's a lot, I believe that the condition of these children who arrive at the municipal schools is on the increase'*.

According to Doris, from Frutillar School (private), the problems that schools face nowadays are complex and nuanced; these problems are different from those of decades ago and there is a lot of scrutiny: 'we are very prepared, we have learned a lot to incorporate new ways of being able to deal with these processes with a very close follow-up in order to avoid [problems], to be able to contain [them]'* The ability to contain problems is related to their own teams and teaching staff, 'because recent years have been very exhausting'. As an institution, Doris considers that the school constantly deals with very challenging circumstances: 'We have had to face many disruptive children with many problems that we are simply not prepared for'*. Alicia, from Vallenar School (public), thinks that the school must develop strategies in order to deal in a better way with this diversity:

> 'Maybe (we could) categorise and see which students need more support or also select a little family theme. That is if the family is going to adhere to the project, it is committed to this educational project, because the main problem here is not the children, it is the parents. Most of the parents are not engaged [with their children's education]. If you see the statistics of theparents' meetings, here there is a lot of absenteeism. Then there is a lack of commitment from the parents to adhere to the educational project and to support their children.'*

On the other hand, some regulations have been established to deal with emerging problems that school do not necessarily have the tools to face properly. These processes come from the hand of accountability rhetoric, which translates into an increased workload that did not previously exist. Doris, from Frutillar School (private), details some of the problems that they must deal with in this scenario and with these accountability processes. As detailed in Chapter Two, the Preferential School Voucher stiupulates: 'today the person who teaches you says "you have to follow due process for each of the children who have been sanctioned"'*. So, she explains that they have to learn how to deal with these regulations that have been continuously evolving, as she concludes: 'We are ordered and we have evidence because we have been learning, but who guided you with these questions?'*

In effect, these kinds of processes haveexpanding rapidly: 'in numerical terms we have seen how the number of students with "extreme conditions" has increased every year, that is a key fact'*, that can be clearly seen in the composition of the student body and the school staff's perception of the work involved in the admission process:

> Last year 8 per cent of the students ended up as"conditional students"[48], there were 200 students, and before that, we had 100, 58, then finally we realised that the number of penalties that sub-direction applies is impressive and that also the penalties are for serious offences. Mild cases do not come to my office and that is a lot, we realise that it has changed and we cannot let our guard down because we want an environment, we tell students and parents, one goes to the playground at recess*.

Claudia, from the same school, Frutillar School (private), explains that this situation has been to the starting point for new kinds of jobs that did not exist before: 'it is much more work because things are being added that the school did not deal with before, because they did not have them incorporated'* Then Claudia explains why the school admission team did not have this type of work before. She describes a 'type of invisible "wall" that was made, which ensures some students do not enter the school; and now there is infinitely more diversity, of students, of parents, in every way, because finally, new things have emerged'. In this sense, there is a tension, which can be summarised through the image of the wall, between the school" as a space of integration for the whole community against the notion of the school as a space aspiring to excellence, and mainly good outcomes. For the school admission team, this tension appears as a calculation of the equilibrium point, which is given by the context and the biography of the actors. In this way, when and under what circumstances the students under suspicion become problematic is a topic that is defined locally by conditions and context. This definition takes the regulations as a general reference, but is then interpreted and enacted locally. Natalia, from Frutillar School, explains the difficulties of simultaneously reconciling inclusion and excellence: 'it is difficult for a school that wants to appeal to excellence and also wants to receive children from vulnerable areas, it is difficult, because there is family support that you do not have'*. She exemplifies this situation detailing the prevalent attitude among the parents: 'when it comes to commitment in relation to students' learning, there is little reception, it is always the "yes teacher, I know I have to do this"'*. Nevertheless, she explains that this attitude is not followed by real changes and support: ' weeks, months go by, and you

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[48] 'Conditional students' refers to students who did not comply with the regulations of the school and they can be expelled,if they do not follow the recommendations of the school.

see that there is really no change in the child and you see that the commitment that the parent promised you was never really there'*. In this way, the borderline delineating where the apostle ends and where the martyr begins enacted locally.

César, from Valdivia School (private), expresses this discomfort through the idea of a student that must present certain characteristics, 'not thinking about what type of student arrives, but what kind of people are we to face the new generations?'* He sums up the prevalent attitude of some colleagues when they talk about their students saying, 'It's like we have to face an enemy that comes from outside, no, their enemy is us, we have to know how to face it, prepare ourselves and not prepare them for us'* In any case, this is a widespread concern, with Alicia (Vallenar School) detailing that her main issues are related to supporting children with absent parents: 'How do we manage to move this large group from our country forward, with nominally the same rights as other children? How, if we don't have the support of the parents? That is the concern'* Finally, Carolina, from Talca School (public) details how the practices of competition and equity are in tension 'on the ground', when she says:

> 'I feel that the schools that have the highest demand for tuition have been affected the most. Inclusion is not an easy thing to deal with on the ground, in the discourse it all sounds great, but doing it is not so simple. I feel that it goes there, because the schools that select students, of course, it is easier to move forward with them than with children who already have more deprivations from their cultural capital.One dealswith all the problems they have, attendance, family problems, economic, endless situations that are affecting the whole process, and as a school, inevitably, you end up taking care of those situations and trying to be the protectors of these children so that they can not only be educated but also inhabit a sheltered space, of another behaviour and of having different experiences in their lives. That is more difficult when you have a greater volume of children with these problems'*

In this last sense, there are different elements of the left and right confluence that have been detailed in Chapters Two and Three, particularly from the perspective of the Preferential School Voucher Law and the decentralisation processes. It is a paradox that is presented as a confluence of different visions, or as the struggled and problematic co-existence of disputed visions, which can enter into a consensus with those who arrive from different paths, where each one takes what he/she wants to take.

6.3 What is Really Happening: Agreed Transgressions, Admission and Risk

One of the findings is related to the logic of competition and the logic of the market as a policy technology which does not emanate from schools as education policy implies. All school admission teams recognise a type of 'public', accounting for its stratification, along with the logic that governs its operations, questioning the operation of the market as a system, or even as a market. In this sense, the establishments develop admission processes that cultivate and reproduce the access of certain students. An example is the regular admission process, as it is propagated as a 'procedure' or 'campaign'. In effect, since admission is a formalised procedure, it by definition favours the integration and permanence of students whose conditions are more stable in a broad sense; in other words, in terms of housing, family structure, or socioeconomic level. Conversely, by developing admission processes as a 'campaign', we can infer that the inclusion of more 'volatile' students is encouraged, as they are drip-fed through the system.

Along the same lines, when admission is presented as continuous, that is, within the school year, these logics are exacerbated. Indeed, the timing of the process plays a highly pertinent role that indirectly accounts for the possibility of exercising choice. In this sense, timing is part of the game as is the development of ad-hoc responses to problems in each context. In this sense, maybe as part of the prevalence of the technocrats in the policy debate (Orellana, 2010; Silva, 2006), in opposition to the policy sociology perspective (Ball, 1997) or a more complex understanding of the policy cycle (Ball, 1994a), the existing regulations have concentrated on procedural and legal issues, and have paid less attention to effects on practices when these procedures take place. Thus, following the previous example, the establishments that have developed processes as a 'procedure' work with a 'captive' audience, vis-à-vis future enrolment, which can allow them to plan for the coming year, configure courses and distribute teaching staff accordingly. Conversely, those establishments that develop admission processes as 'campaigns' must balance enrolment with results and establish the necessary measures to process diversity. The implementation of the reforms and the application of a centralised admission process present differentiated results, since for the schools that normally resolve this situation in August, this reform opens a scenario of uncertainty; for the establishments that used to experience admission as a 'campaign' it means that they will know the number of students much earlier, but, at the same time, it significantly reduces the possibility of influencing the process.

In this case, there is a delicate balance between competing rationalities, and the different incentives that are positioned as the main drivers of the system are not necessarily coherent.

Thus, although there is an important incentive and pressure to generate improvement processes, this may be balanced against increasing enrolment and impetus for improving the equity of the system, both in the regular admission process and in the one that occurs during the year. This leads us to reflect on how the admission teams of the establishments face a process in which the school policy actors can be simultaneously favoured and disadvantaged, combining rationalities and dilemmas that may be located on different levels, as with the the logic of this process within the school, as a balance between equity and competition, and the logic outside the school, as a mix of the desire of to admit more school students and to succeed in terms of results. In this way, theories that believe in the idea of competition between schools and school choice as their engine have turned from a form of rationality to a form of governmentality. As Dean suggests, the concept of choice changes, being 'no longer the rational response of the economic actor to the calculation of one's natural interest' (2010, p. 186), but instead becoming something different, 'a fundamental human faculty that can be made calculable and manipulated by working on the environment and spaces within which it is exercised' (2010, p. 186).

As was previously mentioned, in their interactions, the school admission teams follow both an 'internal' and 'external' logic. The internal logic is one of continual improvement in performance and enrolment at the same time, even when these seem like contradictory goals in practical terms. This is presented as a balance, or a dilemma, to the extent that integrating new students is seen as a source of uncertainty which threatens the obtention of the desired academic results. On the other hand, the external logic is related to competition and the position of each establishment within the local educational market. Both logics present different mechanisms but they account for the same tensions, and the problems seem to be formulated in terms of both a limit and an overflow of students. In effect, school policy actors declare both inclusion of, and discrimination against, students to be, to some degree, desirable. However, the allusion to a kind of border or limit to the inclusion is also recurrent, against which it would be considered to be threat to the members of the school community. In this way, school admission teams have weakened the entry barriers for students, but at the same time they have weakened the 'exit'. In this sense, other studies should be used to explore if the exit mechanisms have been strengthened in a wider sense. In this sense, 'inclusion/ exclusion', and 'inside/ outside' are in continuous definition/ negotiation. The admission process is not presented once and for all, but is also presented as a continuum. It is presented as a bond that can be characterised by its weakness.

Concerning the practices of school admission according to the current regulations, a preliminary finding relates to the enactment of this process. A first point is the relevance of enactment in analysing the paradoxes of equity and competition, and the inherent balance that this process implies. Following this idea, the problems which have been emerging as undesired/ unexpected reforms are not a surprise for the institutional actors and, in fact, they seem to be obvious in the context of how parents and schoolsinteract. Opacity and agency emerge as obvious characteristics of the enactment of the admission process; and studying the practices related to the admission context becomes a double challenge with regard to the complexity of understanding diverse logics and understanding the double movement regarding the distance between the practices and the rules that guide them. As concerns the policy actors, different practices and rationalities coexist in the admission process, which are modelled according to each establishment, and which are presented as a tension that involves balancing different factors, which are exemplified in phrases such as 'it is not because of discrimination', or 'we are apostles, but not martyrs'. Indeed, there may be a counterintuitive interpretation to the new regulation of the admission system. In fact, being "fairer" eliminates those elements of discretion which characterized the admission system, reducing the options for the parents counting on 'playing the admission game' and leaving them on equal terms with those parents who do not. With this in mind, proposed changes to the system are viewed with caution by school policy actors, seeking to balance student interest with the possibility of democratising access to school. For all the actors, the process involves 'gains' and 'losses' but, above all, risks. In this sense, there is no interpretation that is univocal or linear.

Thus, in the admission process, the actors are locatedin terms of a balance, rather than as part of a dilemma with clear alternatives. Indeed, the interviewees are placed in a specific context that does not allow for simplistic readings. Particularly expressive of this situation were aspects such as regulations which were recognized but not complied with, and agreed transgressions. Summarised with an element of cynicism, it could be argued that the system encourages and values lies (Martuccelli, 2009), to the extent that school admission teams are not certain that, even accepting all students who apply, they will be able to guarantee job security or even the physical safety of the staff. An interesting aspect concerning the assessment of this opacity is that it can also be understood as a form of agency (Araujo, 2009a), since these are responses that do not necessarily observe the existing regulations, but that grant agency and allow elasticity for 'playing the game'. The new centralised admission system, with its transparency and technical characteristics, negates the informal type of agency that the opacity of the previous system allowed. In this sense, it is legitimate to ask to

what extent the democratic and egalitarian ideal is anchored both in the parents and in the existing legislation.

The admission process is enacted through its documents which are created by and for the school. Nevertheless, the practices indicated in the interviews frequently cannot be traced back to the documents. First, there are practices that can be somewhat ambiguous and mistrustful, in that policy documents do not necessarily account for the reality of the decision-making process. In this sense, the documents offer only a superficial account of the processes that occur in schools, and these documents may be read more effectively from their silences than from their content, and more insightfully understood from their function in the bureaucratic structure which is defined by the regulation, than from what has been declared. Associated with this is the complexity and diversity of 'roles' with which each institution works. In this sense, given the existence of multiple agents, there must be a series of mechanisms and procedures to process documents for different purposes. This paperwork is a very demanding dimension in the operation of educational establishments, to the point that, according to what was stated by some interviewees, bureaucratic work could consume much of the day. In this way, the documents stop offering relevant information and appear as formalities devoid of content. In the first case, in the face of the large burden of administrative work, it is reasonable not to pay much attention to the results or to the substantive content of the same, since it is a typical case of an agreed violation of the rules, in which 'some pretend to work' while 'others pretend to supervise' (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2009). The second case may correspond to the game that is presented in terms of the ambiguity and mistrust that surrounds the process. In this sense, the use made of personality reports is interesting in considering how an instrument which can be used for the benefit of students, adopts new meanings and ends up falling under suspicion, given that as a product of a fairly widespread practice, its use is reduced to discriminating against students.

An important part of the challenge is to analyse the place and time that documents occupy as the support that allows the process to be followed and to guarantee the legitimacy of the processes that are put into place. Admission can be viewed as a market policy technology that allows us to draw the line that divides those who remain inside from thoseoutside of the school admission process. A point that emerges naturally from those auxiliary instruments is that of the *ex post* admission, which appears in the school rules and in the educational project. Indeed, the prohibition of the most notorious practices of exclusion in the school admission process does not mean that the circumstances that gave rise to them will also disappear. Thus, while the discursive practices surrounding entry processes seem to refer to a series of

questions that are no longer politically correct to pose -such aswhether the parents are married, or if it is possible for students to undergo psychological tests- or that people are careful not to declare publicly. Conversely, expulsion seems to be a theme that is resolved on a case-by-case basis, as a case in which there can be multiple influencing factors, such as great instability in the family context.

The decisions taken by policy actors at the school can be traced through their documents. The opacity of certain processes extends to their documents, which manifest themselves as being a heterarchy. In this sense, we return to the Preferential School Law as the legislation which facilitates dialogue and the articulation of different policy technologies. In this sense, the regulatory illusion persists, which assumes that the actors comply with the script that the legislationprovides. In this sense, regulation becomes a regulatory nightmare, or the seduction of hypervigilance (Falabella, 2018), to the extent that it becomes an increasingly complex framework, which faces deviations from the original script, with consequent unexpected/ unintended effects (Ball et al., 2012). In this sense, the response has been to increase those aspects that seek to take control of the school, creating an entire institutional apparatus that dialogues poorly with the reality of each establishment. In this sense, the decisions of policy actors do not necessarily dialogue with existing legislation. However, they exist as a reference to be formally complied with. In this sense, the enactment of politics shows logics that are present in establishments beyond what the policymakers envisaged. In the case of the admission process, the logic of double choice, with parents choosing schools,and viceversa, presents elements of rupture and continuitywhich circulate along alternative paths. These are paths that go unnoticed or unaddressed by policy designers and the principles which underlie this design, under the linear logic that is at the base of policies such as the Preferential School Voucher and subsequent legislation.

Analysing the policy enactment from the policy documents itself is presented as a paradox, insofar as they are no longer expressive of the admission process in the sense that theyought to be, given the existence of practices that do not necessarily observe the regulation, but do have it as a reference ('the regulation is recognized but not complied with'). In this sense, if we refer exclusively to policy documents, these seem to crystallise all the existing regulations and the school admission normative, and if they were not compared with interviews, one would think that everything was in order, and that the policyhad been implemented fully. Notwithstanding, it is precisely from this intersection that the 'enactment' of each establishment can be traced to processing these new rules. This can be seen in how the documents that guide the process lose their centrality, constituting a reference but not being

able to account for the process. In this scheme, it is advantageous that certain processes are not recorded on paper, or that they are sufficiently, but not comprehensively, recorded on paper. A second point, given the level of paperwork surrounding administrative work in a school, is that these problems are omitted. In effect, there are practices relating to school admission that are absent from the documents circulating in schools. In this case, the documents were not expressive of or consonant with the practices described in the interviews. Furthermore, the documents did not reveal large discrepancies regarding the admission process itself between schools, which is consistent with the fact that almost any information that goes beyond identification data can be grounds for discrimination. Indeed, it is key to understand that many of the instruments are read, built and analysed out of mistrust, either to protect the establishment's ability to compete, or for the protection of the characteristics of the school community.

The centrality of education has been notably reflected in Chilean academia in recent years. Not only education researchers but also legal scholars, economists, sociologists, philosophers, historians, and psychologists have been debating and writing about education policy in a wider sense. Therefore, when we talk about education, we are always speaking about something with a much wider resonance. Previous to the Chilean uprising of October 2019, education was the main area where the most incisive critical accounts were deployed. In this sense, there are two main strains of analysis. Firstly, there is a strong consensus that there is an unfair educational system where equality of opportunities seems to be a chimera. A second point of view suggests a linear descent into current educational inequalities, juxtaposed against an imagined utopia in the past when provision was largely public and higher education was free. Nevertheless, this cliched dichotomy does not stand up to any rigorous scrutiny. For example, in 1960 just a third of all possible students attended secondary education and higher education was for less than five per cent of the population (Serrano, 2018). In contrast, fifty years later enrolment in secondary education had reached almost 100 percent of the population; and, similarly, seven out of ten higher education students are now first generation (R. Lagos, 2010). In view of this, maybe the most sensible attitude is that '[we are] at an equal distance both from a mythologised mawkish view of public education and the denial of your progress, which are equally wrong'* (Orellana & Miranda, 2018, p. 95). In effect, it is possible to say that today we are better than yesterday, and that there has been significant growth, albeit in a context of deep-rooted inequality. Mansuy (2016) argues that the progress and development of Chile are not wholly a 'neoliberal' invention. The abundance enjoyed today is impressive for those who knew what Chile had been before. Indeed, nothing should lead us to idealise the previous Chile. Today, there is a marked malaise, where the promise of development is a subterfuge to manufacture consent for the consolidation of neoliberalism according to the most pessimistic, or if we are more optimistic, a feeling that we are living better, but submerged in a situation of deep uncertainty (Peña, 2017). In short, education is a central topic, both as the key to plotting the future and as being fundamental to understanding the past.

In this general context, the results chapters account for contesting rationalities and mixed feelings in relation to how best to mix egalitarian principles and equality of opportunities with personal progress and the wealth of the country. This final chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly (7.1), I posit the importance of analysing the Chilean school system's problems through a policy sociology approach, and why I consider a micro-focus on the school admission

process is particularly relevant from this perspective, after four decades of neoliberal reforms. Secondly (7.2), I explain some of the peculiarities and nuances of the admission process, and the discursive shift from a 'complex practice' to a 'complicated choice' according to the perspective of the school admission teams, and I detail the contribution of this research. Finally (7.3), I conclude with a personal reflection, placing my lived experience into dialogue with the topics addressed in my research.

7.1 The Policy Sociology Approach and Enactment Theory in School Admission research

In this section, I describe the value of policy sociology and what the policy cycle approach brings to research on the school admission process, and particularly to two of the contexts of this cycle, the context of practices and the context of policy text production. Most of the evidence for public policy has been built from economics as a hegemonic discipline (Herrera, 2019; Joignant & Guell, 2011; Valdés, 1995), but education and the school, in particular, cannot be viewed exclusively through their results, whether they are understood as coverage, segmentation or learning, but also as a vital experience (Serrano, 2018). As was stated in Chapter Two, the policy sociology and the policy cycle, and the Foucaldian approach which underlies them, are very pertinent in analysing the shift from the macro-political to the micro-political, to understanding power in relational terms rather than as a substance, and to understanding that, along with its repressive nature, there are productive elements (Lemke, 2012). This is particularly useful for investigating an area that, as stated earlier, appears underrepresented, in relation to research based upon outcomes.

The policy sociology approach (Ball, 1997; Ozga, 1987) is very suggestive for the Chilean context. In this sense, the perspective of policy sociology allows me to approach admission policy in a rigorous and relevant way, focusing on a tiny process, like the process of admission from the perspective of the school policy actors, to negotiate between what Bellei (2014) identifies as the risk of a division between great theory which appears disconnected from reality, as 'unproductive speculation', and the atomised private investigations that, given their level of specificity, lack significance, as a 'myopic empiricism'. This judgment presupposes a double criticism, from the qualitative point of view, with an investigation that has remained in pure discomfort, which has shown the limits of 'trying to understand the daily life of school only from that everyday experience, without locating it within major socio-historical processes, for example, educational policies at the national level'* (Assaél, Acuña, Contreras, & Santa Cruz, 2018, p. 282); and in opposition to an investigation that is situated with great technical sophistication, in quantitative terms, which has been the hegemonic approach in Chile, but which lacks theoretical substance, and which, when entering public debate, brings to bear a

strangely utopian element, in which 'there can be a match between the outcomes and intentions of policies' (Dean, 2010, p. 44). Herrera (2019) argues that this criticism has implications for the right and left equally. Both diagnoses are at the base of a crisis that is not only social but eminently a crisis of the way we understand our problems. I believe it is possible to build a bridge between research traditions, in terms of how questions of political economy and the cultural practices of schools are related (Taylor et al., 1997). For this research, the Foucauldian notion of criticism is fundamental as 'we need to problematise (interrogate) the issues uncovered in public policies through scrutinising the premises and effects of the problem representations they contain' (Bacchi, 2009, p. 263). Indeed, my research corresponds to the exploration of a small space within the dimensions that compose the enactment of policies at school. In this sense, my research explores a mechanism that was considered central to the national debate, such as the admission process, but which, given the above, must be understood foregrounded by the multiple specificities of the Chilean context.

Following the perspective of Bacchi (2009), this specific proposal reflects and reveals how the 'problem' is understood. In this sense, how the problem is understood is a key element, and 'problematisations' can be more relevant than 'problems'. So, more than a 'reactive approach', problems are actively considered in the creation of policy prescriptions. In effect, how the 'problem' is represented by the policymakers and throughout policy design carries multiple implications (Bacchi, 2009). The admission process rather corresponds to a mechanism that has not been addressed by the international literature in terms of practices, and the focus has been in on school choice (Berends et al., 2020), since it involves transparent, centralised and geographically restricted processes. In Chile, on the other hand, this process was decentralised but opaque, showing an interaction between school choice and admission which is absent in the international experience. In this case, the Chilean debate has followed international trends and was unable to define both the specificities and the centrality of the admission process, as a process conducted on a one-to-one relationship basis, in a double movement which consists of (i) parents choosing schools, and (ii) schools choosing families. In this way, the school choice process and the admission process have been explored, and questioned, from a variety of approaches. Nevertheless, these processes –school choice and school admission – are inextricably linked by a relationship of interdependence associated with specific practices. Thus, research needs to go beyond considering one as the reverse of the other. In effect, this double movement is highly conflictive, ridden with contradictions. To sum up, there has been a two-way interaction between parents and schools, but, as was stated earlier, educational research has thus far neglected to consider it as a relationship of interdependence or mutual

influence. This contrast with a 'problematisation' linked to international debate, in which admission has been viewed from the opposite viewpoint', from a problematisation that understands it in the context of difficulties that prevent the exercise of school choice. And this interaction has been explored from a purely theoretical perspective in national debate (Atria, 2007, 2010b, 2012).

In this sense, it is imperative to understand how the problems of this time have developed and what are their own problems, and how the present and future of the system, the interaction between school choice and admission, are anchored in the successive reforms of the years 1981, 1993, and 2008. Indeed, it is important to analyse how these problems are projected in the new system and also in the dialogue between school choice and admission. As Ball states 'in relation to my own interest, the history of education policies, is precisely, a history of problematisations of education set within a broader social field' (2013, p. 28). In effect, the enactment of this new regulation will depend largely upon whether the new selection process is read as an egalitarian achievement, as a freedom that seeks the freedom of others, or as a threat to the privileges achieved by some. Whatever the outcome of these processes in the long run; in this case, we are also talking about how we conceptualise and operationalise problems and their solutions, and what we are talking about when we are talking about admission. So, regardless of the characteristics of the system that finally prevails, the admission system will continue to navigate these tensions. For example, although opacity is a problem that triggers ambiguity, distrust, secrets andlies,it is a problem that does not exclusively present negative aspects. It presents a productive dimension, in some sense positive, insofar as it allows everyone a degree of agency.

Chile has undergone a modernisation process, tied to a cycle of an unprecedented period of growth. In the educational field this has resulted in Chile largely having overcome its traditional coverage problems, bringing to the fore problems associated with equity and quality. In this sense, it is important to analyse where such a privatised system is going, and what happens in districts such as Maipú, where the levels of privatisation are particularly acute and less than 20% of students are enrolled in the public system. Given this context, it is insightful to explore the 'importation into education of instrumentalist values, grounded on such motives as the self-interest of the individual, and concepts such as "provider capture", "opportunism" and "bounded rationality" or "rent -seeking behaviour" (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 192). And also to explore how these policies are echoed in the population, and the kind of questions posed in the governmentality literature: 'by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and

rule accomplished?' (Dean, 2010, p. 42). In particular as regards the problem of admission in the Chilean school system, there is a great opportunity to decipher how these processes of governamentalisation play out, and how the school policy actors balance these tensions and rationalities; the process reveals a level of richness that usually goes beyond the criteria that the policy defines and the policy design supposes. This is always with the understanding that 'power, from this point of view, is not a zero-sum game played within an *a priori* structural distribution. It is rather the (mobile and open) resultant of the loose and changing assemblage of governmental techniques, practices and rationalities' (Dean, 2010, p. 40).

Finally, the Preferential School Voucher seeks to eliminate all restrictions on admission, in order to resolve what we have described as this double movement dynamic between parents who choose schools and schools which choose parents. The Preferential School Voucher Law defines deeper and stricter rules in terms of management, accountability, and the market. However, all the laws commented upon follow the matrix defined by this policy. The paradoxical balance is that, given the Chilean context, this law appears as an achievement, while in almost any other country, it would be understood as a mechanism of privatisation. As Guajardo and Jara (2018) summarises, a radical turn was not necessary to achieve these reforms, but rather to persist in deepening the trend of solving the problems of private actors providing public goods with further regulation and technical procedures within a market logic. So, when the market alone does not produce what it promises, state regulation through technical agencies should force it.

7.2 Main Findings in the Enactment of the School Admission Process.

In this section, I explain the three main findings of my research, relating to the opacity and timing of, and changes to the school admission process in the context of the Preferential School Voucher. Addressing the overarching research question about how the admission policy enactment process configures, modifies and challenges the practices and rationalities of the school admission team, the findings are set out on three levels which refer to the main objectives of this research.

-The first objective is to explore how policy actors at the school level interpret and enact the admission process in Maipú.

-The second objective is to explore how policy documents at the school level are enacted by the policy actors at the school level, given the context of the Preferential School Voucher policy.

In the Chilean context, the notion of 'transition' is loaded with meanings that go beyond its dictionary definition as the process/ period of changing from one state or condition to another. This plurality of meanings is derived from its association with protracted debates about the transition between dictatorship and democracy. The use of this word takes on an additional complexity when we consider the difficulty in defining the transition as a linear process with a clear end-point. For example, the first democratic government, after the dictatorship, was nominally 'transitional' (Aylwin, 1990-1994). Since then, there have been further milestone moments that have been used to mark the alleged end of the transition. The transition ended in 1994, when the first democratic government finished its period, then it ended again with the arrest of Pinochet in London in 1998, and once again after that with the election of Ricardo Lagos in 2000, the 'first socialist President' since Salvador Allende. An alternative version sees the transition end with the reforms to the Chilean Constitution in 2005, or even with the student protests in 2006 (Herrero, 2020). Amidst this contested chronology, the credibility of this phrase was severely diminished, with the transition spanning a period as long as the dictatorship. In effect, there is a line of debate between the 'self-complacents', who are satisfied and proud with the path followed, and the 'self-flagellants', those uncomfortable with the reigning capitalism without sufficient checks and balances (Politzer, 2011). For some people, the transition was an inflection between the 'dark night' of the dictatorship and the arrival of democracy, while others saw in the elements of continuity and change of this process 'an exemplary exercise of social hypocrisy' (Franz, 2005).

Whatever the case, the parallel with the debate around transition is useful to describe the changes made to the school admission process, since the discursive terms of the debate and its tone assumes some of these characteristics, given the difficulty of putting a clear final point to the dictatorship's influence over educational policies, and the contested meaning of these reforms. With this in mind, the echoes of the word 'transition' seems a useful way of thinking about the changes to the admission process, and of exploring this space where the actors are facing/dealing with these tensions, considering the reforms to the regulation as 'the end of a dark night', or as an exercise of 'social hypocrisy'. Both interpretations are present in the accounts of the changes to the school admission process, as part of the Preferential School Voucher Law (2008), or the Inclusion Law (2015). In this way, the literature relating to these reforms shows these approaches; some scholars highlight how these reforms constituted an improvement to the regulation and a correction to the market failures (Cox, 2012; Mizala & Torche, 2013). On the other hand, other studies remark how these reforms were unable to

eliminate market logic, and that the reforms have operated as an incentive to segregation (Atria, 2012; Bellei, 2020; Valenzuela, Bellei, & de los Ríos, 2014).

These changes are perceived in a variety of situations that generate concerns for school policy actors; these range from the uncertainty generated by the use of technology and the loss of face-to-face contact to the rearrangement that this new system will imply. In this sense, I attempt to understand the school admission team's perception of the changes of the new school admission system and 'all the more or less explicit, purposive attempts to organise and reorganise institutional spaces, their routines, rituals and procedures, and the behaviour of actors in specific ways' (Dean, 2010, p. 43).

From this perspective, it is important to consider the ambiguity surrounding these processes. Some changes play a pivotal and sometimes unacknowledged role, becoming a factor that modifies the degree of certainty regarding the enrolment of the school. For example, before the reforms some establishments –such as Frutillar and Valdivia Schools, both private – knew more than five months in advance the enrolment level they would have the following year, considering that classes would begin in March and the enrolment process would end in October. On the other hand, other schools such as Talca and Vallenar Schools, only found out the total enrolment just weeks before, after a lengthy process. There are other elements of the previous systemwhich the current system does not recognise as relevant criteria for being prioritised, such as the diversity of families or the distance to the schools. In this sense, these changes are perceived as being a loss, both in terms of autonomy, and even the possibility of working on the same problems that are to be corrected. The school admission teams consider the loss of face-to-face contact to be negative. In relation to the change and the role of technology, there are some challenges in terms of what can be described as losses within the new system by the school admission team. On the other hand, from a more positive perspective, the new admission law is considered to be a project that can restore some of the characteristics the system had in past decades, in relation to the social composition of the school. However, there is also distrust about how this process will be carried out and if it will be possible to change some of the characteristics that have been prevalent in the admissions process.

The new system sets up a scenario that echoes in different rationales, either from a narrative that values individual freedom given the possibility of choosing a school, or from the perspective of equal opportunities as all are formally qualified to choose. However, it is important to note that the proposed changes are not breaking with the current logic. The new admissions system seeks to make 'really' work as a market; I feel the proposed change is much

more modest. In this sense, its progressive content is that parents can be placed on a level of equality with respect to their choice-making. Put in an international context this would be a neoliberal policy, in the sense that these are policies that reinforce market logic, but at the same time, when this policy is situated in the Chilean context, this reform shows democratic content; putting the parents on an equal footing to exercise school choice. This reform was promoted by the centre-left government and, despite the market logic which underlies this policy, the Preferential School -voucher has been seen to highlight the equity effects. On the other hand, this reform was perceived as a threat to the autonomy of schools, which are not now supposed to develop their own admission processes according to the criteria that they define autonomously. In this sense, the proposed change, beyond the technological dimension, means the existence of the possibility to remove schools from the decision circuit on admission processes. In some sense, this process is aligned with the desire for a more equal system, in the sense that it allows the reordering of competition, but without questioning competition itself as the hegemonic modus-operandi. The regulations are perceived by school policy actors as representing progress, despite the higher administration costs and greater workload for the different actors. Nevertheless, this impact is differentiated, according to the characteristics of each school and the place where these policy actors are situated. In this sense, for the school policy actors there is an identity that is evolving, as these new regulations are processed, and the tension between opposite logics –equity and competition, for example – are resolved.

Finally, the changes in the school admission process stress their differentiated impact, according to the specific circumstances of the school and its place in the local market, taking into account the balance between supply and demand, and between equity and competition. Again, in this case, it can be seen how the admission process is in dialogue with the characteristics of the district. From the perspective of the school policy actors, there are visions of the future of the school admission process, accounting for the elements of continuity and change. An interesting point, from the perspective of the subjects, concerns their relative ability to deal with diversity, understanding that diversity is desirable. On the other hand, beyond the mechanisms that are created, these processes are viewed with scepticism. The interviewees consider that these new regulations will be inevitably mocked by different policy actors, such as the school admission teams and parents; or that they will be subject to political considerations that will jeopardise their success, affecting their long-term viability and maintenance. Another point which is also highlighted by some interviewees, is the fact that paid private schools have been left out of the system.

Scepticism seems to be, according to some members of the school admission teams, a feeling that goes beyond the education policy. Despite the doubts expressed, the interviewees recognised the democratising potential of this policy, by making school choice explicit and transparent. The proposed changes can result in the system operating under a new logic. In this case, this policy is projected, and it is considered that this could be the first step, showing a new logic.

The new regulation of the school admission policy will put all the school admission teams at a national level in an equal situation, in the sense that everyone should follow the same timeline. This is a new situation that generates concern for school workers as it creates a scenario that may be of greater uncertainty. Although it is an achievement from the perspective of creating a centralised, clear and transparent,process of admission, this change does not present the same effects for all the schools, and for some actors, it will generate widespread uncertainty and thus anxiety. That is the case of those who experienced the admission process as a procedure, and who lost their autonomy and the certainty that they felt in the previous scenario.

Each school presents a different track record consistent with the new regulation, which is in tension and defines an identity for the members of the school admission team. Finally, the understanding of the circumstances and the conditions for the implementation of the existing regulation is presented in a complex way by the policy documents created by the policy-maker and the different authorities, whose interpretation is constantly evolving. Indeed, the visions of policies at the school level appear chaotic from their conception. This is clear bringing it into dialogue with Eugenia, from Frutillar School:

> -Finally, things are changing in education, but we feel that the others are not tied up, so we
> change here but what happens with what is here [moves one hand up, and the other down,
> like moving tools with her hands, juggling], and we have to manage.
> -That image is very good, it's a puzzle at the end.
> -Sure. That's why each school is finally solving it in its own way because the gears are not
> there.*

This coincides with the evolution of the state and reinforces the relevance of policy enactment theory studies and how these policies have changed the roles of actors and how decisions are taken.

Exploring how the school admission process is enacted through interviews and documents has been a way to analyse practices and rationalities related to the Preferential School Voucher. In

this context, the repertoire of practices in the school admission process in Maipú, with their nuances and peculiarities, puts the debate about the rationalities underlying the school admission process, the 'market logic' and the neoliberalism in a wider sense, from a perspective which attempts to go beyond 'economistic' and 'moralist' points of view (Herrera, 2019), and between 'unproductive speculation' and 'myopic empiricism' (Bellei, 2014). In this way, enactment theory and policy sociology studies offer the chance to research the school admission process, breaking this dichotomy (economistic/ moralist, or empiricism/ speculation).

The contribution of my thesis following the metaphor of Bellei (2014), is located at the intersection of "myopic empiricism" and an "unproductive speculation". Indeed, this research contributes by placing investigative traditions in dialogue which appear divorced in their questions and methods.

By paying close attention to the admission processes at the school level, this research allows us to observe an under-investigated process that, in the best of cases, appeared as the reverse of the school choice process. In this way, through interviews and documentary work, it was possible to observe how the policy enactment of schools admission was in a constant interaction with the admission process, and went beyond being merely its reverse. In this sense, being a school choice process that is not territorially limited and which appears to be depending on the capacities that parents are capable of mobilizing. It is a process that, unlike the centralised and standardised international context, places establishments at the centre of the debate.

The results of this research present different implications for policy-makers, practitioners, parents and other related institutions. For policy makers, this research shows a gap between what has been written and what is done when this process is managed by school workers. This "gap" is not shown as a failure and is instead presented as constituting an attempt to gain a more nuanced understanding of how things are really done in schools developing a more complex vision of policies and thus helping understand the inherent limitations and possibilities of different approaches. Along the same lines, this research can be useful from the practitioners' perspective, showing how the policies are managed at the street-level. In this case, this point of view is not constructed as being a mistake, or stressing how things should be done. In effect, this research becomes a way to understand their own role inside the institution and how they interact with the policies and how they are able to play a relevant role.

There is a severe disconnect between Chile and the international experience in relation to the role that establishments play in admission. According to the role that the schools play in the school choice process, attenuating it and affecting it through the admission process, in a way that does not present parallels in the world. Additionally, the schools have been direct interacting with parents for four decades, and this situation shows an evolution which is unique in the world. This is how, for example, both topics are absent from international debate even in the most complete and recent research (a recent handbook of school choice is an example (Berends et al., 2020). In effect, the educational research tradition in Chile has been a tributary of international research and has undergone important developments under the previously described coordinates. Nonetheless it has not been conceptualized according to the specificities of the Chilean case, as I have stated in this research. In this sense, the research has been in a monologue with international debate, unable to connect its own specificities. Indeed, putting schools and parents on a plane of interdependence seems to be one of the side-effects of a decades-long drift in terms of a dynamic that was left to *laissez faire*. It is a situation that has been unique in the world. In this sense, the voucher has been a solution located at the extreme end of the pole of market solutions. However within that extreme, according to the possible voucher varieties, Chile is again at one extreme, having the most marketised variety voucher system among the possible ones - as explained when classifying the vouchers according to the criteria proposed by Egalite and Wolff (2016). And, in this scheme, the voucher in its Chilean version, the product of its spontaneous evolution, escapes from international conceptualization, creating a new and, to some extent, unique space for interactions to take place.

Ideas like 'policy sociology' and 'policy cycle' have been developed over decades in the United Kingdom. In this sense, there is a debate that has reached a significant degree of development and maturity. In Chile, these ideas are relevant for a variety of reasons. In effect, the public policy debate using a quantitative approach had been predominant, with technocratic visions, placing a great weight of research from the economy and "numbers". However, since the "social outbreak" in Chile in 2019, alternative visions have ceased to be on the fringes of public debate, remaining at its centre. The adaptation of these ideas to a context for which they were not intended represents an effort to account for a reality that, with the emphasis already indicated, is not being properly understood by educational research. In Chile, in this sense, 'policy sociology' and 'enactment' have great potential in their application to the Chilean context.

The conceptualisation of school admission in my research process, accounts for the importance of qualitative studies, which are underrepresented in the largely positivistic educational research tradition of Chile. On the other hand, from quantitative studies in the educational sphere overrepresented in Chilean educational research, it allows the opening of a debate on the relevance of problematizing them according to an investigative tradition based on assumptions that are not verified in the Chilean context. For example the assumption that parents can really choose their establishments or that establishments develop selective processes under equal conditions. To be more precise, with regard to the case of Chile, I think that I was able to define the research problem by fixing my gaze on a process that from a certain point of view had not been looked at carefully enough or been covered with sufficient rigour outside of the traditional investigative practices of Chile. When looking at the admission process, which differs other countries as it works with school choice politicians, a process of high variability is found, both in terms of its timing and its high levels of opacity. This analytically informed definition has its complement in a discussion starting from qualitative elements which problematize the analytical definition and question and redefine them from this point of view. For these reasons, I established that enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012) was the best choice for my research.

7.3 Final Thoughts

Closing this study, it is pertinent to acknowledge that this work is deeply rooted in my own life experience, and that this has been a key element in enjoying the sinuous path of research. In the development of this work, I was able to see how my thinking was shaped by the spaces in which I have worked and studied, and there has been a shift in the ways of understanding my own interests, from the predominant approach in the policy debate in Chile, working on the 'implementation' and study of educational policies,to what I gradually came to understand as being a broader turn towards the study of practices and the enactment of policies. From this perspective, it became more important to ask about the way power relations operate than to ask what it is or who holds it, and, that said from my research, knowing how the policies, rules, and principles are interpreted, instead of wondering who owns them. In this sense, I have assumed that the policies and contexts described: 'are both out there, in the system, the institution; and "in here", in our heads and in our souls' (Ball, 2016a, p. 1050). This process has occurred in dialogue with my role as a mature student undertaking a PhD in a second language in the United Kingdom. This, inevitably, has been a challenging process in a variety of ways which are neither necessary, nor relevant, to detail here. Nonetheless, it is worth acknowledging that they have embued me with a level of enthusiasm that I hope shines

through in this text; and when it does not, I am sure it will nonetheless greatly enrich my professional and/or academic practice in the future. Finally, despite the human capital goals of my country and the Chilean tax payers' hopes, this research has been mainly a way to reflect on my family and friends, my neighbourhood, previous jobs, my children and the future, as a context to which I feel committed, in a reflection that includes me, but that goes beyond myself as an individual and my experiences. To sum up, it has been a way of reflecting on my life and on Chilean society from the perspective of my mid-thirties.

The school admission process challenges us directly as the parents of two children, creating an inherent tension with what van Zanten (2016) exposes as the dilemma that parents – mainly 'intellectuals' – face, between the desire to maintain their social status by sending their children to socially selective public or private educational establishments and their moral and political convictions about the educational mix. By placing ourselves, specifically, between the poles and ambiguity of putting our children in a school where "anyone" could arrive, to a realisation of the potential risks involved for our children, and the 'it's not out of discrimination but', as a clichéd expression of discrimination that has been naturalised, and is valued by parents. Taken in our case, we do not know if in the future we will 'do social policy with our children', and end up putting them into a non-selective establishment, as friends and family have sarcastically suggested we might; or, conversely, if we will justify ourselves with self-indulgent explanations like 'we would not like them to lose their English' or 'we believe in a tolerant and inclusive educational project' and we will take our children to where English and tolerance have been commodified. Both alternatives leave us, until now, equally uncomfortable. These reflections are part of the challenges and tensions that we must face daily in Chile, with their parallels in health and pensions. This allows us to return to Foucault and how: 'normative questions are not theoretical problems, but practical matters. They admit justification only within the historical context of praxis to which they belong' (Lemke, 2019, p. 378).

As Bossuet's paradox summarises, according to which we 'complain bitterly about social ills that we consent to through our individual actions'* (Rosanvallon, 2013). More crudely, this challenges us in personal terms, by 'revealing the hypocrisy, the bad faith or the false conscience of all those who, taking advantage of the goods of the market and the pleasures of consumption, do not cease in their eagerness to revile them'* (Martuccelli, 2018, p. 361). In this sense, I am not oblivious to the paradox that I spent all my school life in a private school; and that I was granted a scholarship from a government whose neoliberal policies I deplore, but whose benefits I have enjoyed. As the epigraph of this thesis says, 'We all have decent and

well-paid jobs (…), our bosses smile at us and we also smile at them (…) [and] our salaries are good and we can even save', as the context which has allowed progress that, to the generation of my grandparents, would seem mere science fiction[49].

I would like to conclude by pointing out that, from my own point of view, one of the main challenges is to offer new frameworks for understanding certain problems, which involve, in this case, seeking a definition of what is wrong with the admission system or what the voucher represented. Returning to the paragraphs with which I began this thesis, a few weeks ago, on October 25, the plebiscite for a new constitution was held. In this election, 78.2 percent of Chileans voted for the creation of a new constitution to replace the one created in 1980 by the Pinochet dictatorship. Today's challenges are different, as different as the context in which we have had to live. Thus, considering the current scenario, there is a multitude of new challenges to be added to the same old problems, whether these challenges are posed as being a peasant, a worker, a revolutionary, a professional or a bureaucrat – or, maybe, a mixture and product of all of the above.

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[49] These mixed feelings were strengthened by two unexpected events which occured while I was concluding the writing process in October. The first one: the school where I had studied my whole school lifewas forced to close; the school administration could not resist the economic pressure derived from the combination of the social outbreak and the onset of the pandemic, which was translated into costs that parents could not afford, and that they were not paying (Sepúlveda, 2020). A second element was that the Chilean scholarship program which has allowed me to study in the United Kingdom and that every year sends hundreds of students to study abroad, was going to be 'suspended', which is the sometimes euphemistic precursor to permanently closing any government program (Guerra, 2020).

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Appendix 1: Enrolment in the Metropolitan Region

The enrolment rate in the city of Santiago at the district level according to school type.
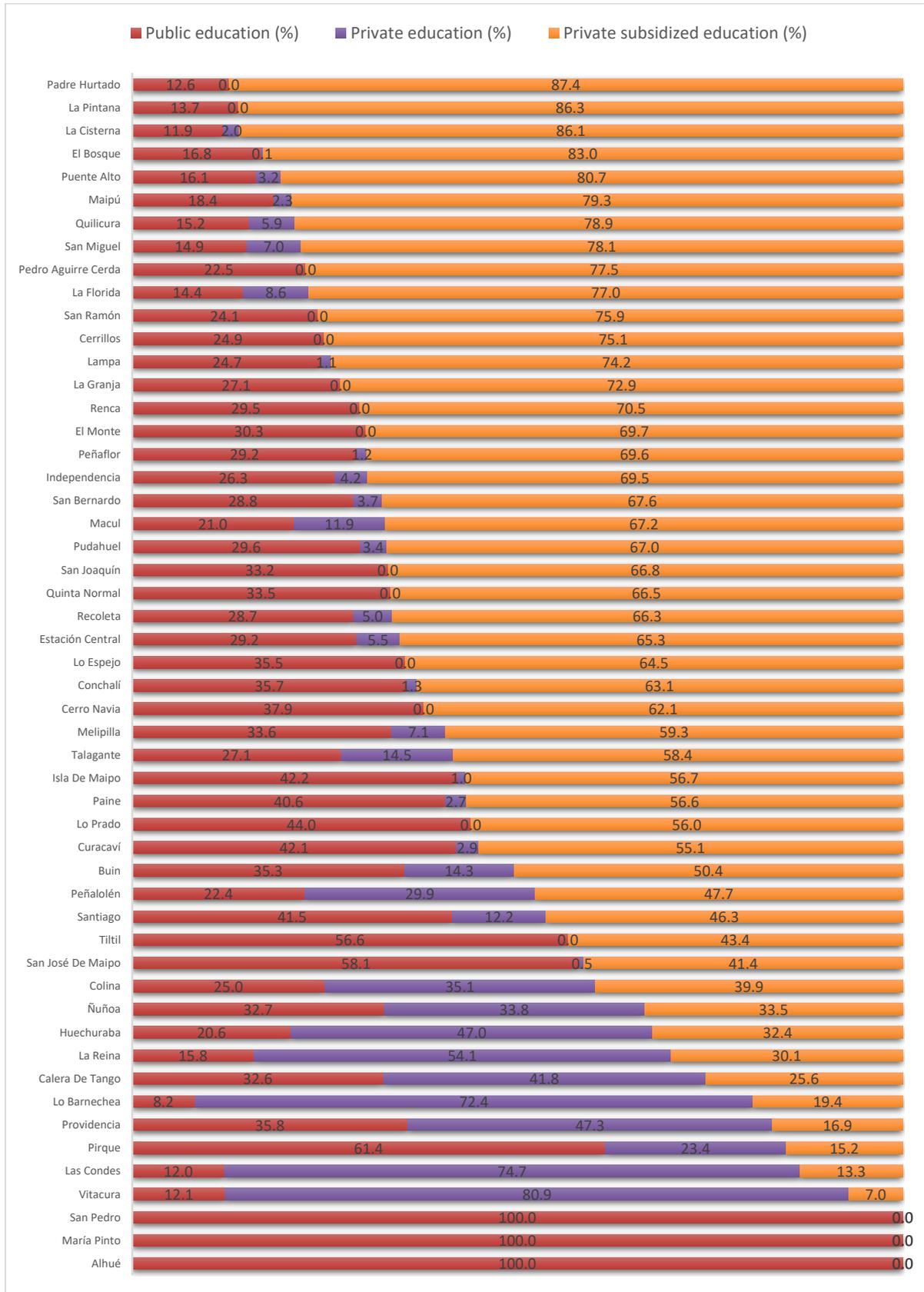

Legend: ■ Public education (%) ■ Private education (%) ■ Private subsidized education (%)

District	Public education (%)	Private education (%)	Private subsidized education (%)
Padre Hurtado	12.6	0.0	87.4
La Pintana	13.7	0.0	86.3
La Cisterna	11.9	2.0	86.1
El Bosque	16.8	0.1	83.0
Puente Alto	16.1	3.2	80.7
Maipú	18.4	2.3	79.3
Quilicura	15.2	5.9	78.9
San Miguel	14.9	7.0	78.1
Pedro Aguirre Cerda	22.5	0.0	77.5
La Florida	14.4	8.6	77.0
San Ramón	24.1	0.0	75.9
Cerrillos	24.9	0.0	75.1
Lampa	24.7	1.1	74.2
La Granja	27.1	0.0	72.9
Renca	29.5	0.0	70.5
El Monte	30.3	0.0	69.7
Peñaflor	29.2	1.2	69.6
Independencia	26.3	4.2	69.5
San Bernardo	28.8	3.7	67.6
Macul	21.0	11.9	67.2
Pudahuel	29.6	3.4	67.0
San Joaquín	33.2	0.0	66.8
Quinta Normal	33.5	0.0	66.5
Recoleta	28.7	5.0	66.3
Estación Central	29.2	5.5	65.3
Lo Espejo	35.5	0.0	64.5
Conchalí	35.7	1.3	63.1
Cerro Navia	37.9	0.0	62.1
Melipilla	33.6	7.1	59.3
Talagante	27.1	14.5	58.4
Isla De Maipo	42.2	1.0	56.7
Paine	40.6	2.7	56.6
Lo Prado	44.0	0.0	56.0
Curacaví	42.1	2.9	55.1
Buin	35.3	14.3	50.4
Peñalolén	22.4	29.9	47.7
Santiago	41.5	12.2	46.3
Tiltil	56.6	0.0	43.4
San José De Maipo	58.1	0.5	41.4
Colina	25.0	35.1	39.9
Ñuñoa	32.7	33.8	33.5
Huechuraba	20.6	47.0	32.4
La Reina	15.8	54.1	30.1
Calera De Tango	32.6	41.8	25.6
Lo Barnechea	8.2	72.4	19.4
Providencia	35.8	47.3	16.9
Pirque	61.4	23.4	15.2
Las Condes	12.0	74.7	13.3
Vitacura	12.1	80.9	7.0
San Pedro	100.0		0.0
María Pinto	100.0		0.0
Alhué	100.0		0.0

Figure 5: Enrolment by District in the Metropolitan Region

Research Questions	Questions
RQ1: How do the school admissions teams enact the school admission processes under the current regulation?	How would you explain what the Preferential school voucher does?
	Who is part of the admission process?
	How do teachers, managers and administrators participate in the admission process during the year?
	Do you know which students are participating in the Preferential school voucher scheme?
	Considering the last decades, how you would say that admission policy has changed the school? How has the admission process been related to the school project? Considering the last decade, how you would say the Preferential school voucher has affected the school work?
	Nowadays, how you would describe the school? What are the differences with other schools?
	Considering the other schools in Maipú, which are the main 'problems' that the school must face during the next few years?
	What do you think about the selection processes based on tests?
	What do you think about the selection processes based on personal interviews?
	By doing that, which are objectives the school wants to achieve through the Preferential school voucher?
What kind of rationalities associated with equity and competition can be identified within and between the schools in the enactment of the school admission process?	What is your role in the implementation of this policy? Which are your main interests and objectives? Why did the school decide to implement the Preferential school voucher?
	Can you tell me some examples of the kind of admission policies in use in other schools? What is your position on these processes of admission? What`s your personal evaluation of the role of the school in educational policy admission process?
	How would you say is the admission process discussed nowadays by the school community? Which kind of school actors are participating in that policy debate?
	Does this admission have the same effects for all the families?
	Particularly, considering the admission policy, what is your general position in that discussion? Which kind of opinions do you reject or defend? Is it good/bad? For whom?
	Particularly, considering the Preferential school voucher after these years, which is your impression about the outcomes?
How is the admission process enacted by policy actors at the school level through its policy documents, created "by" and "for" the school, as discursive practices?	Do you have to do any paperwork related to the admission process?
	Do you have to read, sign or create any document related to the admission process? With what purpose?
	Who else should be related to these documents?
	Do you know who else read these texts and documents related to the admission process?

Table 13: **Management and Teachers Interview Topics**

Appendix 3: Schedule Policy Documents Observation Guidelines

Research Question	Questions
Origin	Who creates/writes this document?
	What is the origin of the document and institutions mentioned?
	What's the role of the person/institution who made this document?
	How does the policy document 'travel' within the school?
Function	What's the role/purpose of the document?
	What institutions are involved?
	What's the main message?
	Which policy actors are related with the policy document?
Public	Who is the public for the policy document?
	Who can see the document?
	Who should be engaged with this document?
	Who authorises the circulation of the documents?
Context	How did you see the document?
	Where it was found?
	What's the role of this school?
	Who and in what circumstances explained the document?

Table 14: Schedule Policy Documents Observation Guidelines

Ethics procedure

Name: Claudio Frites

Proposed research project: Exploring the enactment of the school admission process in Maipú. The Preferential school voucher in secondary schools in Chile.

Proposed funder(s): *Becas Chile* Program (Chilean Government)
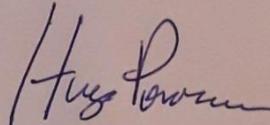
Discussant for the ethics meeting: Hugo Parra

Name of supervisors: Julia Paulson and Antonio Olmedo

Has your supervisor seen this submitted draft of your ethics application? Yes

In the following pages, I present the project summary and the ethical issues signalled by the Bristol University form[1]. These points were discussed with Hugo Parra and the following pages show the most relevant elements of this dialogue.
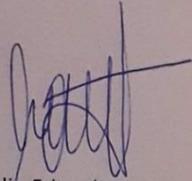
Signed: Claudio Frites (Researcher)   Signed: Hugo Parra (Discussant)

Date: 23/04/19

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[1] Ethical issues discussed: 1) Researcher access/exit. 2) Power and participant relations, 3) Information given to participants, 4) Participant's right of withdrawal, 5) Informed Consent, 6) Complaints procedure, 7) Safety and well-being of participants/researchers, 8) Anonymity/confidentiality, 9) Data collection, 10) Data analysis, 11) Data storage, 12) Data protection, 13) Feedback, 14) Responsibilities to colleagues/academic community, and 15) Reporting of research.

Project Summary

The school admission and the school choice have been in the spotlight for decades. Various countries have devised and experimented with multiple systems incorporating in different ways private and public participation/financing (Bellei, 2015). The school voucher in Chile is one of these systems. Chile has pioneered the school voucher policy, since its introduction in 1981 by the Pinochet's Dictatorship (1973-1990). The logic underpinning the design of the school voucher policy is as follows: financial resources are distributed to schools by the state in accordance with prevailing market logic. That is to say parents will choose the schools with better results according to the standardised tests, and in this way poor performing schools will disappear from the system, if they do not have enough students/resources (Jofré, 1988). In this way, the whole school system dynamic was explained by the policy-makers who designed this policy mimicking the market and through the lens of economics.

A radical version of school voucher system has been operating in Chile for almost four decades. The school voucher is a way to allot resources for enrolment to families (Friedman, 2006). In Chile, the school voucher resources "follow the student", and the schools receive money in direct relation to the number of students attending the schools (Jofré, 1988). Thus, the voucher is the main instrument to finance and regulate school provision, and it is currently working in one of the most deregulated versions (Coulson, 2009) for more than the 90 percent of the total enrolment (Bellei, 2015). In effect, public and private schools in Chile face almost the same rules[50] and schools are able increase their enrolment indefinitely (Mizala, 2009).

The Preferential school voucher law is a reform to the traditional voucher, which is based on a diagnosis which considers that the original voucher presented problems in its design, that made it difficult for parents to exercise school choice (P. González et al., 2002; Mizala, 2008). According to this diagnosis, the problem was that the original design of the voucher system did not acknowledge differences between students, because it offered the same amount of money to every student, through a 'flat voucher'. Therefore, the school voucher, and the rationality which has underpinned the school system since 1980, was deemed to be operating as an incentive to exclude disadvantaged students who were, from the school perspective, 'harder to teach'. In effect, the schools started to develop admission processes, such as admission exams and/or personal interviews, that made school choice difficult for parents (P. González et al., 2002, 2004) and the discrimination according to family characteristics and/or the student's

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[50] Public schools follow more bureaucratic rules, and sometimes received an additional amount of money from municipalities. On the other hand, private institutions can manage the institutions almost without restrictions.

attainment started to be a common practice in the admission process (Atria, 2012). Given this diagnosis, the Preferential school voucher was implemented in 2008 with a twofold objective: equity and quality. The first objective was to improve equity in the school system, by eliminating the incentives to student exclusion, by directing more money to the schools where underprivileged students attend – which, according to the current definition of 'underprivilege students', corresponds to forty per cent of the total enrolment approximately. The second objective was to improve the quality of the system, by asking for some specific outcomes from schools, such as: higher attainment and more accountability, as part of the same process. Both objectives are linked by a conditional clause (P. González et al., 2004; Mizala, 2008, 2009). In this way, the Preferential school voucher law, also known as the 'equity voucher', changes the logic of school choice for parents, that now can choose any school which is financed by the state, without restrictions, and the admission process cannot develop admission processes associated to tests and/or personal interviews. In effect, the Preferential school voucher is the biggest reform to the school voucher system, since its origin, and it represents a twist in the way the school quasi-market has been operating, and how the State is redefining its role in education, attempting to reconcile competition between schools and the market logic proposed by the dictatorship with the equity policies developed by the centre-left democratic governments, that ruled Chile until 2010.

Given this context, the aim of this research is to understand how and in what ways policy actors at the school level –teachers, and management teams- in Maipu interpret and enact the admission process given the context of the Preferential school voucher. This research presents two objectives. The first objective is to explore how policy actors at the school level –teachers and management teams - interpret and enact the admission process in Maipú, given the context of the Preferential school voucher. The second objective is to explore how policy documents at the school level are enacted by the policy actors at the school level, given the context of the Preferential school voucher policy. In this way, I will develop a qualitative study, where I will develop semi-structured interviews and I will analyse policy documents produced by and for the schools. I will develop interviews with key policy actors, in the admission process, such as: managements teams, and teachers. And the policy documents produced for the school and by the school. In the last case, these documents can be produced for state agencies for accountability purposes. I will develop this research in Maipú. Maipú is one of the most populated districts of Santiago and thus can be considered a hotspot in terms of the recent changes in Chile. In relation to the creation of educational markets, the expansion of private actors through the school voucher is above the national average (4 out of 5 students

are studying in private schools in Maipú) (Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional y Administrativo - SUBDERE, 2016).

The research will follow the recommendations stated by the British Educational Research Association (2011) and the Data Protection Act (UK GOV. Department for Digital, Culture, 2018). Moreover, considerations will be given to: protection of research participants, not doing harm or potential benefits and risk to participants (Silverman, 2013). As Punch (2009) suggests, some issues will arise as the project develops, or even after. This implies that there may be ethical challenges in the following stages: design, methods, analysis, presentation and findings (Wellington, 2015). This emergent situation implies be aware of and responsive to ethical challenges over the course of the research; to this end I will consider I will talk about these issues with supervisors, and I will meet twice a month with Hugo Parra, in order to discuss these issues, in relation to our respectively studies. Finally, this research will also be done with the Ethics Committee of the University of Bristol's authorisation.

1. Researcher access/exit

I already have access to some head-teachers and teachers from Maipú in secondary schools. This contact arose from my former job during the years 2014 and 2015 at *Universidad de Santiago*, and some of these teachers are still working in secondary schools and they can act as gatekeepers for my research. Nowadays, these teachers may not be working in the schools where I will be developing my study, but they can offer an insightful point of view, in terms of information about the context or possible risks for the research completion. I will call to schools and after that I will send email, to keep a track of the process. If the school says no, I will try to find if there is a reason, and keep a record. I will do the same in relation to the interviewees. Following the classification developed by Maguire, Perryman, Ball, & Braun (2011), I will choose an 'ordinary school', which is a school 'that were not subject to any 'external' interventions as a result of 'under-performance' or which were 'star' schools that may have enjoyed more than usual autonomy' (p.2).

I will phone to these schools, and send emails in order to keep a track of the decisions taken. The selection of this school will be a mix between political and technical reasons. Political, in order to exclude, for example, schools with problems that can make the research inappropriate, and could make the school community feel reluctant to participate in a study (I am considering, for example, schools that have been under the media scrutiny). On the other hand, there are technical reasons, such as the classification according to the results in standardised tests.

At the beginning of the research, all participants –the school management teams and teachers - will be informed about the research about key aspects such as: the right to withdrawal, informed consent, complaints procedure, anonymity /confidentiality, as will be detailed in the following paragraphs. The information will be provided by letter in person. and it will be the same for each participants (see appendices). At the end of the research, I will share the results of the research, sharing the final document (in English), a summarised version of the text (in Spanish) and offering a seminar within the community considering all the participants in the research. School management and teachers can easily participate in this kind of activity, which can be part of their work.

2. Power and participant relations

These are key elements in terms of the development of my work with policy actors. Considering the interview as my main method of research, I should be aware of elements such as: the asymmetrical power relation of the interview, In the management team and teachers' case, they usually participate in this kind of activities. They probably have develop some kind of research in their studies as teachers, and they are usually interviewees in different circumstances. In fact, they can be very skilled interviewees (Ball, 1994b).

And the interview as a one-way and instrumental dialogue, where the interviewer's has the monopoly of the interpretation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). This might be a point of tension, considering the type of the data. Nevertheless, as Silverman (2013) suggests one of the strategies is to develop a clear and detailed policy of confidentiality, in this case the interviews will be anonymised, and I will be clear about the kind of information that will be required – which is: gender, type of school and general information, such as gender or their school trajectory- and its intended possible uses. The principle of not doing harm refers to the difficulties derived from how these moral dilemmas are resolved. In this sense, my questions will entail developing a clear idea about how the school is facing the admission process, particularly considering that this research will explore the points of tension of the equity voucher policy. In this way, these tensions could be easily framed in terms of morality and ethics. In this sense, it seems particularly problematic to be able to avoid entirely moral adequacy and the 'right' answers from the interviewees when they are in contact with the interviewer; particularly when we talk about the tension between private ends and the public good.

3. Information given to participants

All participants interviewed will receive the same form (see appendices). Participants and school names will be changed. In addition, I will identified just the the main role –management team, or teacher - without further specifications. In this way, the chance to identify an interviewee will be reduce to their group –teachers or management team- and to one out of four schools. In this way, there is a chance to be identified, according the interviewees will be no more than nine per school, and they will belong to different areas. In this sense, the management teams can hardly be more than five. Nevertheless, they are going to be identified just as members of the 'management team' or 'teachers'.

4. Participant's right of withdrawal

Participants will have the researcher email. It is the participants' decision whether to take part or not in the research. If they decide to participate, they are still free to withdraw and without having to give a reason. After the fieldwork, the participants can withdraw during the development of the interview or, even six months after the interview.

5. Informed Consent

Participants who choose to take part in this research will also be asked to sign a consent form. In addition, they will be given an information sheet to keep. Teachers and management team probably will be In relation to teachers and management team, I will verbally explain the research project, as a complement to the aforementioned information sheet.

Some teachers or part of the school management team may be reluctant to participate in this kind of research, because they may be unsure about the uses of the information they give, or they may not perceive this kind of research as being something useful for them. In that case, I will try to know if there is any underlying reason, but I will respect their decision and I will try to know if their change their opinion. To sum up, informed consent consider three elements: 'it should be based on adequate knowledge […], consent is voluntary […] and that people are free to decline to participate or withdraw during the research without the fear of any adverse consequences' (Brooks et al., 2014, p. 80). The participants to be interviewed will be given an information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form.

6. Complaints procedure

Thus, they can make any suggestions or complaints. Similarly, participants will have the researcher's supervisors' contact information, so they can file a complaint by email (both of my supervisors are Spanish speakers). This information will be given to participants through the information sheet.

7. Safety and well-being of participants/researchers

There are no noticeable risks involved in participating that could affect participants. There is chance that participants can identify each other, but participants will be identified through their general role (teacher of a public school, or member of the management team, for example) Nevertheless, during the interviews, if there are questions that participants may find distressing or intrusive, they will be free to not answer those questions or to withdraw from participating in the research, without giving any explanation. To be clear, I will be exploring a very specific point of the school choice/admission process. In this sense, many questions are will be seen as very specific and technical. In this last sense, there might be ethical issues related to the personal information that policy actors at the school level share or in relation to the implementation of the policy analysed. I am referring particularly in how this technical problem is adopted by the teachers and school management team – and how they perceive my judgement about these issues.

My research will explore the equity voucher system at the school level. So, what happens if the school is not obeying the law, for example spending resources in ways that constitute a crime? What should I do if I see wrong or illegal behaviour during my fieldwork study? Where is the boundary between the particularities of the 'implementation' process and something illegal? This is probably an extreme scenario but considering how easy it is identifying the participants in the study, the question is how to balance 'not doing harm', with the problem arising from not following the law.

I lived in Maipú for 25 years and I have been in contact in different ways with this district since then. Considering my biography, the personal bias is an aspect to be aware of. These will be key elements during the collecting data process, developing interviews and analysing documents. In effect, being an insider throws up some problems to be considered during the fieldwork, analysis and the findings, and can be considered even as a limitation. As Maxwell states it is 'impossible to deal with these issues by eliminating the researcher's theories, beliefs, and perceptual lens. Instead, qualitative research is primarily concerned with understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations may have influenced the conduct and conclusions of the study (which may be either positive or negative) and avoiding the negative consequences of these' (2004, p. 124). Nevertheless, this proximity clearly also is advantageous, in terms of factors such as the different backgrounds and the power asymmetries. Finally, this potential proximity is not so clear to me now. I left Maipú more than ten years ago, I have lived in three very distant cities from Santiago, and nowadays I am living abroad.

8. Anonymity/confidentiality

In order to protect participants, the whole data set will be anonymised, as well as the schools. Nevertheless, I will be working in just a few schools, and, if someone from the school community reads my research, the interviewed might be identified. This is quite unlikely and also unavoidable. Nevertheless, this situation will be one of my concerns during my research. In this sense, I am not going to make explicit the role within the management team or the teachers. In this sense, I am not going to identify them as the `Head teacher`or the 'math teacher'.

9. Data collection

Each participant will be asked to take part in personal interviews with the researcher. Interviews and interaction between participants will be recorded using an audio-recorder. However, participants can keep a copy for themselves if they so wish. There will be semi-structured interviews with the participant in the local quasi-market.

In addition, I will give participants the choice to check and make comments on the interviews' transcripts. I will transcribe the interviews, these interviews and the transcripts will be made in Spanish. In relation to the policy documents, these policy documents will be anonymised, and will be identified according to some general characteristics.

10. Data analysis

In relation to the data analysis, the recorded interviews will be analysed by the researcher in detail later to understand how the interaction happened and what characteristics it had. The entire interviews will be transcribed and N-Vivo will be used to manage these texts. Finally, the recordings and transcripts made during the research will be stored on a password protected webpage (Google Drive). These recordings will be shared only with my supervisors.

11. Data storage

All the information gathered will be safely stored on a computer with a password. As a backup, this information will be saved on a password protected website (Google Drive). All participants will be informed about the data collection. This information will be in the information sheet but will also be verbally explained too.

12. Data protection

In this research, personal data is being used exclusively for research purposes. Personal data will have no other use. Personal data will not be used in a way that will cause, or is likely to

cause, damage or distress to any participant; and the results of the research activity will not be available in a form that identifies the participants.

13. Feedback

In relation to feedback, the participants will have the chance to add some comments to the interviews, or make some changes, if they feel these is something wrong.

14. Responsibilities to colleagues/academic community

This dissertation will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it will not be submitted for any other academic award. The views expressed in the dissertation will be my responsability.

15. Reporting of research

The results of this research will be reported in a dissertation. It is also possible that the main findings of this research could be presented as part of conferences, papers or book chapters. In these documents the schools will be anonymised. The public documents, such as the documents produced for the schools by the state agencies, are not going to be anonymised.

Appendix 5: Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes nad that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed

Date

Figures, tables and Abbreviations

No prog: List of Figures and tables

No prog: List of Abbreviations

MINEDUC, SEP, SOSTENEDOR

En portada, abajo del título:

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Faculty of Social Science and Law, Graduate School of Education.

School of Education, June 2020.

Word count:

Key to transcripts

Italicised text: denotes emphasised speech

(…): material has been edited out

[square brackets]: Paraphrased for the sake of clarity

I …………..................., confirm my willingness to participate in the research study on how policy actors at the school level enact the school admission process, conducted by Claudio Frites, Chilean PhD student at the School of Education, University of Bristol, UK.

I agreed to participate voluntarily; the characteristics of this study and this interview were explained to me. By this means, I understand that Claudio will record the interview and take notes about it. I also understand that, I am free to decide not to continue with my participation in this study if I so wish, and that this decision will have no consequences for me. I can stop participating at any time, even before the research begins or while I am already participating in it. I understand that the anonymity of this interview will be protected when transcribing the conversation. I will be identified using a fictitious name to identify me. I understand that some sentences or phrases from our conversation may be used in Claudio's thesis or in some other publications related to this research if I so authorise it (Please tick the appropriate line).

If I have any concern or complain I know that I can contact Claudio or his supervisors Dr. Julia Paulson or Dr. Antonio Olmedo.

Researcher: Claudio Frites
Contact number: +44 7591550348
Email: cf16429@bristol.ac.uk

Julia Paulson
julia.paulson@bristol.ac.uk

Antonio Olmedo
a.olmedo@bristol.ac.uk

-- I agree that some excerpts of this interview may be published
-- I do not agree that some excerpts of this interview may be published

Signature: _____
Name and Date: _____