Assessment & Social Justice in a Context of High-Stakes Testing:

Conceptions and Experiences of the SIMCE test in Three Chilean Schools Orientated by Inclusive Principles

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Declaration

I, Tamara Camila Rozas Assael confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Based on a wide range of positive assumptions about educational assessment, large-scale and high-stakes testing has become globally popular. In Latin America, Chile was one of the first countries to adopt a national test (SIMCE), introducing high consequences for schools and teachers. International literature has warned of the negative effects of this kind of testing on minorities and students from disadvantaged groups, leading researchers to reflect on consequential validity and sociocultural perspectives regarding the fairness of assessments. In the case of Chile, few studies have explored the relationship between social justice and high-stakes testing, which is relevant considering the high levels of socioeconomic and academic segregation. Using a qualitative multiple case study, I investigated conceptions and experiences regarding assessment and social justice based on the SIMCE test in three state schools in Chile with an inclusive orientation (serving students with special needs, cultural diversity, and delayed school paths). The data collection methods included interviews, workshops, focus groups, surveys, observations, and documentary analysis with school community members including staff, students, and parents. The data were analysed using thematic analysis and a theoretical framework based on a concept of social justice taken from the philosopher Nancy Fraser. The findings showed that SIMCE had a significant impact on school life but as a way of control that tended to impoverish education, and it had limited contribution to dimensions of social justice. In addition, the school staff's conceptions of social justice regarding assessment diverged significantly from SIMCE policy, which led them to see SIMCE as unfair. The staff tended to have a Rawlsian perspective of social justice, based on equity, pedagogical purposes, and a notion of fairness close to a sociocultural perspective, whereas SIMCE was more in line with a utilitarian perspective based on the purpose of accountability and fairness focused on equality.

Impact statement

The thesis contributes to a critical approach to historically positive assumptions about assessment and social justice, specifically high-stakes testing. The findings highlight certain problems with national and international expectations about the contribution of high-stake testing to quality and equity in education. In particular, the findings suggest that high-stakes testing impacts school communities with an inclusive orientation, but does not support their work, acting more as a tool that represents a risk of impoverishing education and discouraging work with minorities/students from vulnerable groups, problematizing the idea that the test helps reduce inequality in education. This enriches the evidence presented elsewhere (Au, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2007) and provides new evidence in Chile, where these problems have rarely been explored.

This thesis also makes a theoretical contribution to the field of assessment, particularly with respect to high-stakes testing, adding to research about social justice issues that go beyond the traditional notion of fairness based on bias and equality (see Gipps & Stobart, 2009) and offering elements of analysis rooted in the field of philosophy based on Nancy Fraser's dimensions of social justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2006). In this sense, the study provides an analysis that warns of the limitations of high-stakes testing in contributing to the dimensions of social justice proposed in that framework: for instance, the difficulty of using SIMCE as a pedagogical tool that enables teachers to make decisions to improve student learning (distribution dimension); the fact that it is a test that is not sensitive to student diversity and the school context, thus contributing to stigmatisation (recognition dimension); and the lack of participation that school staff have in the assessment process, preventing their potential role of adapting assessment in accordance with students' needs (participation dimension).

Thirdly, this study has implications for assessment policies in Chile. The findings show that SIMCE is not a tool that helps work in schools with an inclusive orientation. It does not inform about student learning in a detailed way and in accordance with the real work done in classes, and is instead a tool that stresses school communities, does not consider progression with students with different needs and experiences, and tends to stigmatise schools that serve the population of lower socioeconomic levels. These results highlight the need to re-evaluate and eventually remove some of the core elements of the SIMCE policy, such as the consequences for school communities, the publication of results, and the market- and accountability-focused purpose based on school competition and classification of school performance, and instead move towards a new national policy based on a pedagogical purpose, which considers the opinions and participation of school staff and students, and

which involves collaboration between local authorities and school communities. This thesis is therefore a call to put an end to a test that punishes school communities and to build an assessment that provides support for school communities, allowing them to promote inclusion in line with the principles of social justice.

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Dedicado a mi madre, Cecilia.

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Agencia Calidad	Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación (Education Quality Agency)
MINEDUC	Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education)
SAC	Sistema de Aseguramiento de la Calidad (System of Quality Assurance)
SEP	Subvención Escolar Preferencial (Preferential School Subsidy)
SNED	Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de Desempeño (National Performance Evaluation System)

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Statement of the problem

Historically, assessment has often been linked to issues of social justice, particularly those promoting equality of opportunity between individuals (Gipps, 1995; Howe, 1997). In the past, it was considered a fairer mechanism for selecting people for bureaucratic positions in the civil service than using birth or patronage (Madaus & O'Dwyer, 1999). Later, in the educational field, in relation to the notions of objectivity and merit (Broadfoot, 1979b; Gipps, 1999), assessment was used as a fair means of defining students' positions and trajectories (Broadfoot, 1979a; Dubet, 2004; Isaacs, Zara, Herbert, Coombs, & Smith, 2013), influencing their success and failure in the educational system (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Perrenoud, 2015).

In the field of assessment, the relationship between assessment and social justice has been addressed through the notion of *fairness* and traditionally linked to the notion of avoiding bias in particular (Isaacs et al., 2013) as well as the idea of *equality* in terms of providing the same conditions of assessment to all candidates (Gardner, 2001, in Kane, 2010). However, various scholars (e.g., Gipps & Stobart, 2009; McArthur, 2018) have criticized this traditional view of fairness, arguing that it neglects relevant aspects. From a sociocultural perspective it is argued that there is a need to consider the experience of the individual regarding the test (Gee, 2008; Murphy, 1995), the analysis of contextual aspects and the notion of *equity* as something key to be considered to address fairness in assessment (Gipps & Stobart, 2009). A consequentialist approach (e.g., Crooks, Kane, & Cohen, 1996; Messick, 1993) highlights the relevance of considering the consequences of assessment as crucial elements of fairness and validity. In addition, using sociological views and social reproduction theories (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Broadfoot, 1979b; Gipps, 1999; Perrenoud, 2015), scholars have warned about the role of assessment centred on its risks, in terms of legitimising elites and dominant groups to the detriment of groups with disadvantaged positions in society. These alternative views of fairness show how assessment can shape a person's sense of self-worth and their ongoing place in society, not always in positive terms (McArthur, 2018a), indicating the inequalities that the test could be generating when not considering the differences between experiences and contexts.

However, positive assumptions about assessment and social justice prevail in the field of assessment and educational policies: assessment is seen as a mechanism to ascertain merit objectively, to provide information on learning gaps and as a powerful tool to improve quality and equity in the school system

(Flórez, Rozas, Gysling, & Olave, 2018; OECD, 2009). The spread of these positive notions of assessment, and particularly large-scale assessment and high-stakes testing, have been connected with the expansion of *neoliberalism*. In the 1980s, based on the assumption that individual entrepreneurs' freedom and the institutional framework are characterised by strong private rights and that the free market and free trade were the best options for human wellbeing (Harvey, 2017), neoliberalism became one of the dominant systems for economic, cultural and political organisation (Campos, Corbalán, & Insunza, 2015; Harvey, 2017), and also influenced the educational field. One of the main elements of neoliberalism in education was the expansion of privatisation and the introduction of competition at different levels of the systems, including public education (Au & Ferrare, 2015). This led to competition between schools to access students, competition to access funding, and competition between families to access certain schools (Corvalán & García-Huidobro, 2016). In that context, standardised and large-scale testing was seen as a measure to provide objective information for families, citizens and government to compare and rank educational agents, institutions and educational systems (Au & Ferrare, 2015; Sahlberg, 2016). In line with these positive assumptions, as well as the Global Education Reform Movement (Sahlberg, 2016) that promoted a series of principles linked to the marketisation of educational achievement, accountability and standardisation, national large-scale assessments and global international tests have been widely disseminated (Verger, Fontdevila, & Parcerisa, 2019). It was in that context that *high-stakes testing* emerged, linked to *performance accountability* (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016), involving large-scale testing with consequences for educational agents, usually schools and teachers, based on student achievement. The assumption was that incentives and consequences based on student performance would motivate effective actions among different school agents to achieve school improvement (Sahlberg, 2016). Nevertheless, the evidence on the impact of high-stakes testing on student learning and school practices is not conclusive (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Mons, 2009) and the international literature (e.g., Au, 2020; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Vasquez & Darling-Hammond, 2008) has even reported negative effects, such as discrimination, stigmatisation and fewer opportunities for low-performing pupils and groups who are traditionally marginalised (those of low socioeconomic level, ethnic minorities, special needs students, etc.).

Chile has not been an exception to the international trends in high stakes testing and it was the first country in Latin America to implement a national large-scale assessment with a census-based nature (Martínez, 2008), making it the country in the region with the longest tradition of large-scale assessment in terms of national and international tests (Martínez, 2008). The most important large-scale assessment in Chile is the Education Quality Measurement System (SIMCE) introduced in the

1980s, which today includes a series of national, standardised, and compulsory tests that measure student performance in comparison with the National Curriculum in primary and secondary education, based on a multiple-choice instrument applied on an annual basis (Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). SIMCE is now the central tool of the accountability regime in education and it has high consequences for school communities. These consequences include monetary rewards for teachers and schools, influence on the level of school autonomy regarding the use of resources, and the threat of closure if a school's students consistently produce poor results (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). However, in the international literature, the evidence is not conclusive about the positive impact of SIMCE on student learning (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016) and there are some negative reports regarding curriculum narrowing and discriminatory practices against students in order to improve schools' SIMCE results (Carrasco, Gutiérrez, & Flores, 2017; Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Sánchez, 2018; Weinstein, Marfán, Horn, & Muñoz, 2016).

Issues about social justice in Chile are not trivial because it is currently the third most unequal country in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2022) and has a school system with some of the highest levels of socioeconomic and academic segregation in the world (Bellei, 2015; Valenzuela, Bellei, & Ríos, 2014). At the same time, Chile's educational system has followed one of the most radical neoliberal models in the world, due to the systematic policy of privatisation, competition, and its market-driven orientation (Bellei & Vanni, 2015b; Cornejo, 2018; Verger, Zancajo, & Fontdevila, 2018), features that have contributed to social and academic segregation (Bellei & Vanni, 2015b; Valenzuela et al., 2014). The neoliberal and market-driven model was imposed by force during the dictatorship (Ruiz, 2010) and SIMCE played a key role in contributing to various key parts of that model (Campos et al., 2015) such as school choice, the competitive school funding system, and the increasing participation of the private sector in education. Even though SIMCE policies have added other emphases over the decades, such as compensation and accountability policies (Gysling & Rozas, in press), the test still has a role in maintaining market dynamics (Acuña, Mendoza, & Rozas, 2019; Orellana, 2014).

Chile and the SIMCE test make an interesting case to examine questions about assessment and social justice in a context of high-stakes testing for several reasons. These include the lack of conclusive evidence of the positive impact of high stakes-testing on quality and equity in education, indications of its detrimental effects on minorities/disadvantaged groups in society, and the fact that the Chilean educational system is a paradigmatic case of the neoliberal model with high levels of social and academic segregation, while SIMCE is the oldest large-scale test in the region and it has an important

role in the educational model. However, research in Chile on SIMCE tends to focus on other areas: the use of SIMCE in school communities, such as the influence of the test on the leadership team and teachers' actions (Manzi, Bogolasky, Gutierrez, Grau, & Volante, 2014; Meckes, Taut, & Espinoza, 2016; Weinstein et al., 2016), the use of SIMCE reports and results by school staff and parents (CIDE, 2012; Taut, Cortés, Sebastian, & Preiss, 2009), and the technical and methodological aspects of the test (e.g., Eyzaguirre & Fontaine, 1999, in Flórez, 2013). Some recent studies consider the consequentialist dimension of validity in SIMCE (Flórez, in press, 2013; Flórez, 2015) and the validity of SIMCE itself (Flórez, 2015; Ortiz, 2012), while only very few studies directly address SIMCE and its relationship with social justice (e.g., Gysling & Rozas, in press; Rozas, Falabella, & Flórez, 2020). For these reasons, I decided to focus my study on conceptions and experiences regarding assessment and social justice in relation to SIMCE policies in Chilean school communities.

I focused on school communities in particular, because addressing the debate about fairness and social justice in assessment from the perspective of those who experience assessment policies can provide a unique and practical view of these issues, in terms of having the opportunity to observe what happens when the aims of an educational project, conceptions about social justice, school practices, and central level policies meet in one place, the school. I chose schools with an 'inclusive orientation', meaning they were open to receiving, working with, and promoting groups of students who are considered to find it more challenging to achieve good academic results or are seen as having fewer skills to perform well on the standardised test, such as students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with special needs, and with delayed school paths. I was interested in these kinds of schools because these characteristics indicate that they already have a commitment to aims of social justice, in line with the goals promoted by the international agenda (Global Campaign Education, 2013; UNESCO, 1990, 2009) and national agenda in education (MINEDUC, 2005, 2015b), regarding access and learning opportunities for all students regardless of their conditions.

I.2 Aim and research questions

The aim of this research was to understand conceptions and experiences of assessment and social justice focused on the SIMCE test in schools orientated by inclusive principles in Chile. To do that, I explored i) social justice conceptions in school communities with an inclusive orientation, ii) social justice conceptions regarding assessment and the connection with SIMCE, iii) the SIMCE influence on the experiences of school community members and the implications in terms of social justice. The choice of these three topics to address the aim of the research was based on the view that it is not

possible to separate conceptions and experiences of assessment and social justice, which is the core of the research aim, from conceptions of social justice and the influence of SIMCE on the experience. This view follows the assumption that assessment (Filer, 2000), as well as the experience of assessment (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Gipps, 1999), are social products influenced by cultural, historical, and political elements. Based on this foundation, my position was that the conceptions and experiences of assessment cannot be analysed in a manner that is isolated from the context and the conceptions regarding social justice, and the same is true of the influence of SIMCE. In the case of Chile, there were some elements that suggested that these relationships were possible since there has been strong debate about social justice in education in recent years (Cox, 2003; García-Huidobro, Ferrada, & Gil, 2014) (see Section 4.4.2). Thus, the importance of social justice in educational settings such as schools, could be influencing conceptions of assessment and fairness, and also experiences and judgments about the influence of the SIMCE tests on schools. The trio of the conception of social justice in schools, social justice in relation to assessment and the SIMCE influence on school members' experiences, and their implications in terms of social justice, were relevant to address the aim of the research focus, which was to understand the conceptions and experiences of assessment and social justice focused on the SIMCE test in schools orientated by inclusive principles. This led to the creation of three questions: i) What do three Chilean state school communities with an inclusive orientation understand by social justice in schools?, ii) What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice?, and iii) How does SIMCE influence school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice?

More details about the reasons for the choice of each research question are provided below:

- RQ1: What do three Chilean state[1] school communities with an inclusive orientation understand by social justice in schools?

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[1] In Chile we have three kinds of schools: i) state schools: schools administered by local governments – the municipalities- that received state funding based on a subsidy per student attending the school ii) private state-subsided schools: schools administered by private agents such as particular individuals, non-governmental organisations, religious institutions, that received state subsidy per student that attend the school. Before the Inclusion Law enacted in 2015, among these schools there also were profit organisations that charged families, iii) private non-subsidised schools: schools administered by private agents who charge families and do not receive state subsidy. Currently, the state schools attended around 36% of the population, private state-subsidised schools around 56%, and private schools around 8% (Bellei & Muñoz, 2021)

As stated, assessment is a social phenomenon and, accordingly, perceptions about it are not isolated from the school communities' conceptions of social justice and their contexts. I assumed that the school context and conceptions of social justice regarding the role of the school would directly or indirectly influence the experiences and conceptions of the school communities about the SIMCE test and social justice, which was why I decided to address this research question.

- RQ2: What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice?

The school communities usually have experiences of internal and external assessment. My assumption was that experiences of both types of assessment were connected because they are experienced by the same agents. So, conceptions about fairness regarding internal assessment could influence experiences of the SIMCE test or, vice versa, the experience of SIMCE may influence conceptions about fairness regarding internal assessment. I therefore decided to address this topic without forcibly creating a division between fairness in internal assessment and external assessment. Instead, I explored the conceptions of fairness in assessment in a broader sense, asking about experiences and examples of internal and external assessment, and using that information I analysed experiences related to SIMCE in particular.

- RQ3: How does SIMCE influence school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice?

Considering the evidence about the limitations of SIMCE to contribute to student learning and some research indicating that there it may lead to discriminatory practices against students, it was therefore relevant to explore how SIMCE impacted state school communities with an inclusive orientation. Some previous evidence has shown that SIMCE does not necessarily impact all schools in the same way, so it seemed important to explore how SIMCE impacted this particular type of schools. It was also an opportunity to analyse this impact considering different dimensions of social justice, in accordance with the framework proposed.

Addressing these research questions, this study is intended to contribute to the international discussion in the field of assessment regarding social justice and fairness at a time when high-stakes testing has spread around the world based on the argument of social justice—achieving greater levels of quality and equity in education for all students—despite a lack of conclusive evidence of its success.

I also hope to contribute to the local debate about national assessment policy in my country and the possibilities and limitations of this policy to contribute to social justice with respect to schools orientated by inclusive policies.

I.3 The empirical study

To answer the research questions, I carried out a qualitative multiple case study in three state Chilean primary schools with an 'inclusive orientation'. I chose i) a school with an emphasis on special needs students, ii) a school with an emphasis on cultural diversity, particularly with immigrant students and non-native speakers, and iii) a school with an emphasis on students with delayed school paths. My purpose was not to recruit schools orientated by inclusive projects in a representative way, but to use these cases as examples of these experiences. The school were located in three different districts of the city of Santiago, the capital of Chile, two in the north of the city and the third in the south.

The data collection methods included interviews, workshops, focus groups, surveys, observations, and documentary analysis, with different members of the school community; the staff (including teachers, the leadership team, coexistence team, and integration team), students, and parents. However, I considered the school staff to be the core participant of the research because they are the ones who make the most important decisions in the school regarding how to address the SIMCE test and the practices and internal policies concerning student inclusion. The data were analysed using a coding process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020) in which I used the Nvivo qualitative software and I followed a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2016).

I.4 Thesis outline

This thesis is organised into 10 chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the study, including the statement of the problem, the aim, and the research questions, and provides a description of the main elements of the methodological approach.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 map out the context of the study through a review of the relevant literature on the topic. **Chapter 2** presents key literature on assessment to understand the debate surrounding social justice and assessment, including general definitions of assessment, the origins and effects of high-stakes testing, historical assumptions about assessment and social justice, the notion of fairness and some critical views, and the perspective considering theories of social reproduction. **Chapter 3**

presents an analysis of the concept of social justice based on the classification used by the philosopher Nancy Fraser, who proposed the redistribution, recognition and participation dimensions. I explain each of these dimensions, exploring how they can be seen and used in educational and assessment settings. **Chapter 4** outlines the central elements of the Chilean educational model and assessment system that make it an interesting case to investigate in the field of assessment and social justice. To do that, I analyse the main elements of Chilean educational policy over the last four decades and the role that the SIMCE test has had, the characteristics of the SIMCE test, its effects according to the local evidence, and criticisms of the policy from different educational agents.

Chapter 5 explains the methodological approach and design chosen for this study, including the methodology and epistemological stance (section I), the characteristics of the case study (section II), the procedures for choosing the sample of cases and the main characteristics of the schools selected (section III), and the different stages of the data collection (section IV) and data analysis process (section V). At the end of this chapter, I present various aspects regarding ethical considerations (section VI) and conclude with a summary of the main elements of the chapter (section VII).

The findings of the study are described in **Chapter 6, 7, and 8**. Each chapter addresses one of the research questions focused on the role of the school role and conceptions of social justice, conceptions of assessment and social justice, and the impacts of SIMCE. In these chapters, I present the findings in an integrated way, considering the different sources of information and including the qualitative and quantitative material, and taking into account the different agents participating in the research (school staff, parents and students)

Chapter 9 includes a discussion of the findings, focusing on the key themes that emerged with respect to the research questions in relation to the theory and literature reviewed, with a special emphasis on the theoretical framework of social justice using the dimensions of distribution, recognition, and participation.

I finish this thesis with **Chapter 10**, in which I present the conclusions of the research. The chapter begins with an overview of the findings based on the research questions (section I), followed by a discussion of the study's contributions regarding the theory and policies (section II). I subsequently reflect on the limitations of the study and possible lines of future research (section III), following this with a section on recommendations for Chilean assessment policies (section IV) and concluding with some final remarks.

CHAPTER 2. EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Introduction

This chapter presents the key literature on assessment in order to understand the discussion surrounding social justice and assessment. It includes general definitions of assessment, issues such as high-stakes testing, and some of the evidence about the effects of assessment on the educational system and school communities. We conclude by discussing historical assumptions about assessment and social justice, including the notions of objectivity and merit, the traditional idea of fairness, and some critical views, as well as the perspective based on theories of social reproduction.

2.1 Educational assessment: some definitions

Assessment has been defined as "*the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about pupils' responses to educational tasks*" (Lambert & Lines, 2000, p. 4). However, researchers argue that assessment is not only an educational activity, but a "*social activity*" (Broadfoot, 1979a; Gipps, 1999; Stobart, 2008a)*.* Filer (2000) called it "*a social product*" (p. 2) that shapes not only the educational process, but also how societies, groups, and individuals understand themselves (Stobart, 2008), and it is influenced by cultural, historical, and political considerations (Elwood & Murphy, 2015; Gipps, 1999). It is perhaps safe to assume that assessment cannot be analysed in an isolated manner, but rather there is a relationship between society, school systems and assessment, and the different contexts in which they are embedded (Baird & Oposs, 2018; Broadfoot & Pollard, 2000; Pollard & Filer, 2001).

The purposes of assessment are as diverse as its definitions. For example, Newton (2010) proposed a list of some 22 purposes, including student monitoring, diagnosis, segregation, placement, qualification, selection, certification, school choice, resource allocation, comparability, institution monitoring, licensing, formative, and transfer of students. In the 21st century, other purposes that relate more closely to learning have become more widely researched, particularly the provision of learner feedback (Broadfoot, 2009) and new concerns have also emerged in the assessment field, such as procedures to engage students with diverse cultural and personal backgrounds (Burns, Brown, McNamara, & O'Hara, 2017) and adaptations to assessments for students with disabilities or special needs (Nisbet & Shaw, 2019).

Assessments can be administered internally or externally in school systems. Internal assessment generally refers to evaluations carried out by school communities, particularly by school teachers, which are typically known as classroom assessments. External assessments are designed, carried out, and marked by agents from outside the school community; national assessments that are typically administered by national or local government, or by testing agencies/organisations. Since the 1990s, there have also been global assessments conducted by international organisations (see for example TIMSS[2], PISA[3]). External assessments are traditionally large-scale tests such as examinations and because they involve several schools across different regions and/or countries, and such tests are commonly used to "*estimate mastery of some large area of study*" (Koretz, 2017, p. 13). The tests are designed to sample curriculum content and may include examinations with combined modes of assessment such as complex multistep problems and essays and/or multiple-choice tasks (Koretz, 2017). One of the main purposes of large-scale testing is accountability in educational systems (OECD, 2013b). This means making someone (usually educational institutions) responsible for the quality of educational performance and outcomes (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Gana, 2012; OECD, 2013a). In order to contribute to the demands of accountability, large-scale educational assessments have become *high-stakes assessments* in many countries (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016), meaning that test results have serious consequences for stakeholders in the educational system (students, teachers, or schools) (Stobart & Eggen, 2012). These consequences could represent rewards such as professional recognition and extra funding, or sanctions including interventions or *the loss* of extra resources (Gana, 2012). The OECD (OECD, 2013b) has reported on this sort of policy in many countries, including the United States, England, and Chile.

2.2. Historical assumptions about assessment and social justice

Given the focus of the research reviewed in this thesis, there is a connection that can be made between assessment practice and theories of social justice. This section presents this discussion of the literature, including the importance of fairness, justice, merit, and social reproduction in education.

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[2] TIMSS is the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

[3] PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD).

2.2.1 Objectivity and assessment

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, objectivity is "the fact of being based on facts and not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings" (Cambridge dictionary, 2011). The idea of objectivity in assessment is an element that has historically linked assessment to fairness and social justice (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020) and is also one of the reasons to see assessment as an instrument for equality of opportunities (Gipps, 1995). The assumption of objectivity, and also the ideas of neutrality and scientific bases, is something that turned assessment into a tool strongly linked to positive rhetoric and the belief that it will naturally generate benefits for the system and the population (Martinic, 2010b; Verger, Fontdevila, et al., 2019). Part of the assumptions about the contribution of assessment to school improvement are that assessment captures merit objectively and that it can provide information about learning gaps that need to be addressed so knowledge can be fairly distributed (Flórez et al., 2018). However, not every assessment has been linked to objectivity (Gipps, 1999). Quantitative tests, and typically multiple-choice tests, have been seen as scientific because they are supposed to be highly replicable and have reliable scoring, while tests that require subjective judgment are not seen as objective (Gipps, 1999). In line with this, quantitative and standardised tests were rapidly expanded around the end of the 20th century, under the assumption that testing all students identically was fair and provided accurate information about all test takers (LaCelle-Peterson, 2000).

2.2.2 Merit and assessment

Since its origins, assessment has been seen as a system of selection for advancement based on merit that is fairer than a system based on birth, wealth, or connections (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020), suggesting an historic relationship between the notion of social justice in assessment and the concept of merit (Flórez et al., 2018).

It is argued that testing was first introduced in early China in 210 BCE as a way to conduct a meritocratic system to select men for the civil service and as military officers (Madaus & O'Dwyer, 1999) and, later, in the educational system assessment started being used as a way to offer fair opportunities to all candidates (Isaacs et al., 2013). For instance, in the 19th century, the Cambridge and Oxford universities introduced anonymised, written entrance examinations with common questions for candidates that made selection independent of the candidate's social circumstances (Isaacs et al., 2013). However, it seems that it was in the 20th century that assessment began playing

a leading role with regard to the promise of social meritocracy in the context of the process of mass schooling and the predominance of the ideology of merit (Broadfoot, 1979a; Dubet, 2004).

The development and expansion of the school system were part of the project of modernity in Western tradition, including Europe and the Americas and various other nations around the world (Pineau, 2001), where education was seen as a symbol of progress, as a way to create citizens, and as a process leading to a more just and egalitarian society (Broadfoot, 1979a; Dubet, 2004). So, education was seen as a possibility of social mobility, meaning that social positions could be defined by ability and academic achievement rather than by family history and patronage (Gipps, 1999). In that context, assessment played a key role in providing the assumption of fair competition and efficient mechanisms to select and hierarchise people in the educational system based on their merit (Broadfoot, 1979a; Dubet, 2004; Perrenoud, 2015). The belief was that educational assessment was able to measure student performance, allowing the differentiation of 'capable' students who developed the skills required from those who did not achieve the requisite skills in a specific field, which was key to building the idea of a fair and meritocratic educational system (Dubet, 2004). Accordingly, internal and also external tests emerged as tools that would contribute to expanding meritocracy and fairer societies. 'Closing the achievement gap' thus become synonymous with removing inequality in education (Zhao, 2016: 721) and testing was seen as a tool to identify and address the achievement gap (Flórez et al., 2018), so it is not a coincidence that large-scale assessment expanded globally during the second half of the 20th century (Verger, Parcerisa, & Fontdevila, 2019). However, from the perspective of social reproduction theories, it can be argued that the ideology of merit and the role of assessment to support it contribute to the legitimisation of the position and privileges of the elites, opposing the idea of the educational system as a source of social justice (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Perrenoud, 2015), a theme developed in the next section.

2.2.3 Assessment as a tool for social reproduction

Using a "sociological discourse of assessment" (Filer & Pollard, 2000, p. 2), various authors (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Broadfoot, 1979a; Dubet, 2004; Gipps, 1999; Gipps & Stobart, 2009; Perrenoud, 2015) have warned of the role of assessment as a mechanism that supports class and social reproduction, suggesting that, in addition to educational purposes, assessment fulfils a series of political and social roles (Filer & Polard, 2000).

From a critical sociological perspective, the result of educational assumptions based on the notion of merit and the supposed objectivity of evaluation systems suggests a structure that legitimises the

positions of the elite and the exclusion or disadvantaged position of the working classes, minorities, and groups considered to have difficulties (e.g., those with disabilities or special educational needs) (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Dubet, 2004; Perrenoud, 2015). In an era of meritocracy paradigms, testing has been instrumental to reinforce and reproduce educational and social inequity (Zhao, 2016), because it encourages the view of failure in education as an individual responsibility, which makes those who are not successful accept their failure, providing legitimacy to the current social order (Gipps, 1999). For example, in France, Bourdieu, and Passeron (1993) argue that the façade of equal opportunities conceals a process of selection and classification within the educational system that generates unequal conditions for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a consequence, students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds have significantly less chance of accessing prestigious institutions (such as well-known secondary schools and selective universities) and prestigious careers (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993). Negative results on exams contribute to this situation because they reinforce the idea that these students are not capable of being successful in those institutions and careers (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993). In the United States, students with low proficiency in English, typically Latin American students, are likely to experience 'obstacles to achievements', because of assessment policies, with educational policies privileging language proficiency per se over cognitive development or academic achievement of students, reinforcing cultural domination (LaCelle-Peterson, 2000). In Chile, formal assessment also seems to represent an obstacle for disadvantaged groups of students, because the repetition of years, which is based on student performance measured in marks, is more common among students of lower socioeconomic status (MINEDUC, 2018a) and school dropout is also higher among students of lower socioeconomic levels, those who belong to municipal schools, and those who are immigrants (Bonomelli, Castillo, & Croquevielle, 2020). The link between assessment and inequality, to the detriment of students from disadvantaged positions, is something that seems to happen not only in internal school assessment (Perrenoud, 2015), but also in external and international assessments such as PISA (Zhao, 2020). According to Zhao (2020), PISA promotes the idea that educational outcomes are a matter of individual decisions and students' taking responsibility for their own learning, leading them to blame themselves for academic failures, which impact those from disadvantaged position who tend to hold that belief (Zhao, 2020).

According to the social reproduction perspective, these kinds of examples show that assessment tends to reinforce the disadvantaged position of some groups of students, typically those who are more marginalised from society, challenging the idea that educational and assessment tools provide fair conditions for all students and necessarily contribute to social justice goals. In that sense, the approach

to assessment based on social reproduction concerns could be connected to the root of the negative concept of unfairness mentioned by Nisbet and Shaw (2020), where social injustice is taken as a reference to address fairness, which proposes focusing on those groups of people seen to be particularly disadvantaged or at risk, such as ethnic minorities, groups of low socioeconomic level, refugees, or people with disabilities.

Thus, social reproduction theories have offered a critical view of assessment in terms of the role that assessment could be playing in reinforcing the social hierarchies, segregation and marginalisation of certain groups in society. This proposal of social reproduction sees assessment as a mechanism that perpetuates social injustice, questioning the traditional positive view of assessment (see section 2.2.1 and 2.2.3) and adding an additional perspective to the analysis of assessment, fairness and social justice. This perspective could be relevant to the Chilean context, considering the high levels of inequality and segregation in Chilean society in general (PNUD, 2017) and the academic and socioeconomic segregation in the educational system (see section 4.1), and the possible role of assessment in this context.

2.2.4 Fairness and assessment

A technical approach to social justice in assessment

A technical discourse of assessment tends to focus on the elements concerning "maintaining and improving confidence in systems of assessments and results, legitimizing the uses to which they are put" (Filer & Polard, 2000, p. 2). Some authors (Gipps & Stobart, 2009; McArthur, 2018a) argue that fairness has traditionally been framed as a technical discussion focused on procedures, without consideration of the aspects connected to the social context, cultural factors, and power relations.

Contemporary notions of fairness are largely influenced by writing and research in the 19th and 20th centuries. The references to fairness in assessment started in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, particularly in England, Germany, France, and the United States (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020). The traditional agencies and organisations linked to assessment standards and design of educational tests introduced the notion of fairness in the 1970s (Tierney, 2013). Indeed, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, developed by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), briefly referred to fairness for the first time in the 1974

publication (Tierney, 2013). However, it was only in the 1990s and predominantly in the 2000s when the testing agencies introduced specific standards and guidelines for fairness. For instance, in 1993, the Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation in Canada, defined "Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada" (Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation in Canada, 1993). In 2000, Educational Testing Service (ETS) produced its own standards for quality and fairness (ETS, 2000 in Gipps & Stobart, 2009) to guide test developers and in 2009 published the "ETS Guidelines for Fairness Review of Assessments" (ETS, 2009) and in 2014 the "ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness" (ETS, 2014). Other national organisations published standards on fairness in assessment in the same period, such as Ofqual in the UK with the document "Fair access by design Guidance for qualifications regulators and awarding bodies on designing inclusive qualifications Guidance" (Ofqual, 2010).

Since its theoretical inception, fairness has been strongly tied to the idea of bias (avoiding bias) and validity. Shepard (1981) described a biased test as one where "two individuals with equal ability but from different groups do not have the same probability of success" (Shepard 1981 in Gipps & Murphy, 1994, p. 18). The connection between fairness and the lack of bias is reflected in the fact that the words *biased* and *unfair* were used interchangeably (for instance in the assessment standards in the 1970s) (see Tierney, 2013). Today it is common to find definitions of fairness focused on the lack of bias. For instance, Isaacs et al. (2013), in their book Key Concepts in Educational Assessment, indicate that one of the main principles of fairness involves bias: *"any assessment system itself is not subject to any form of bias relative to its candidate."* (p. 57)

Validity, meanwhile, refers to accuracy in assessment design and the interpretation of results (Isaacs et al., 2013) to meet the intended purpose of the assessment (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020). So, validity can be defined as "the extent to which any assessment measures what it has been designed to measure, and … the extent to which inferences can be made from an assessment outcomes*"* (Isaacs et al., 2013, p. 135). Fairness has traditionally been related to the notion of validity. For instance, the definition of fairness provided by ETS is "the extent to which the inferences made on the basis of test scores are *valid* [emphasis added] for different groups of test-takers" (ETS, 2014, p. 19)

In connection to validity and fairness, it is important to mention 'construct-irrelevant variance'. Construct-irrelevance variance exists when the "test contains excess reliable variance that is irrelevant to the interpreted construct" (Messick, 1989, in Nisbet & Shaw, 2020, p. 29). An example of this is when unfamiliar or inaccessible language (for instance the experience of a non-native speaker) make

the assessment irrelevantly difficult for some individual or groups (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020), preventing the candidates from demonstrating their knowledge in a particular area due to an external factor (in this case the language) that does not relate to the knowledge it is intended to measure. For instance, Flórez (2015), referring to the Chilean national standardised test SIMCE, describes how a test corrector in a maths test marked the answer of a student who wrote in his indigenous language, as "wrong" because they were no procedures to address answers in languages other than Spanish. As Flórez explains, in this case the student's answer may have been correct, but it was discarded solely on the basis of being written in a language unknown to the reviewers.

Therefore, a common international position regarding fairness emphasises avoiding irrelevance variance. For instance, ETS stated that the best way to approach the ideal of fairness for all test takers is "to make the influence of construct-irrelevant score variance as small as possible" (ETS, 2014, p. 19). This means that the conditions of the candidate that are not the purpose of the measurement should not influence the results. The candidate should not be at a disadvantage because of gender; socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural and religious background; any physical or sensory impairment; or any difficulties they face regarding language, emotional, or behavioural problems they suffer (QCA, 2006, in Isaacs et al., 2013). In this vein, one of the strategies to avoid bias and provide fairness is the study of Differential Item Functioning (DIF) to prevent bias among certain groups of the population (ETS, 2014). For instance, in the United States, is common to investigate DIF for African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, and Native American populations (as compared with White Caucasian), and females (as opposed to males) (ETS, 2014). Other strategies to address bias and provide fairer assessments have included the introduction of *modifications* and *accommodations* (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020). *Accommodations* refers to "relatively minor changes to the presentation and/or format of the test, test administration, or response procedures that maintain the original construct and result in comparison to those in the original test" (AERA in Nisbet & Shaw, 2020, p. 32) and *Modifications* occurred when "the construct itself is adapted for a subgroup but not for all" (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020, p. 33).

In practical terms, to address fairness, test developers have been focused mainly on the test design, so the main concern for the field of assessment has been avoiding potentially offensive images or language in questions and materials (ETS, 2009), including special accommodations for test takers with special needs (Joint Committee on Testing Practices, 2004), defining contents and comparison group/s appropriate for the students to be assessed (Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation in Canada, 1993) and the implementation of DIF studies to avoid bias with certain groups

of the population (ETS, 2014). However, the attention to the consequences and use of the test was a secondary priority, defining a kind of separation between the design and use of test, as reflected in this quotation: a "fair test can be used unfairly" (Educational Testing Service, 2009, p. 2).

Another element to highlight in the discussion about fairness in the assessment field is the focus on the notion of *equality* and *homogeneity*. The traditional views of fairness highlight *equality* as one of the core elements (Gipps & Stobart, 2009), which can be noted in the predominance of the elements linked to the notion of equality in the literature about fairness. For instance, Isaacs et al. (2013) describe a fair test as one that provides all candidates with *"an equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability"* (p. 57). Similarly, Kane (2010, in Camilli 2013) states that "Procedural fairness can be said to require that all test takers *be treated in essentially the same way* [emphasis added], that they take the test or equivalent test, under the same conditions or equivalent conditions, and that their performance be evaluated using the same (or essentially the same) rules and procedures" (Kane, 2010 in Camilli 2013, p. 117). Moreover, various authors (Filer, 2000; LaCelle-Peterson, 2000; McArthur, 2018c), argue that the traditional view of fairness is based on the assumption of student homogeneity. LaCelle-Peterson (2000) contends that standardised tests strongly defend the idea of offering the same treatment to all students, which is based on the idea that students are practically homogeneous learners*,* ignoring the possibility of offering different treatment to students. However, McArthur (2018c, p. 46) argues that the traditional view of assessment is based on "assumptions of sameness" that is, assuming that there are *normal/same* conditions under which students live, study, and complete assessments. She goes on to say that, according to that view, someone who deviates from the norm can only be accommodated if it is considered to be special circumstances, as it was a matter of offering "special allowances or charitable exceptions", suggesting a discriminatory view of those who are not considered the norm.

To summarise regarding fairness in assessment, test developers have been focused on avoiding bias and preventing irrelevance variance and have followed the notion of equality. An alternative approach suggests that this emphasis is focused on a technical view of fairness that ignores a series of aspects that are relevant to have a more complete view of fairness, which is presented in the following section.

Various authors (Crooks, Kane, & Cohen, 1996; Gipps & Stobart, 2009; McArthur, 2018; Messick, 1998) argue that fairness and validity in testing cannot be focused exclusively on the test itself (design, content) and the conditions of its implementation, but also have to consider the context, the use, and consequences of the test. This section presents two approaches that embrace this view: *consequential validity* and the *sociocultural approach to fairness*.

Consequential validity refers to how assessment results are used, and a key concern here is the impact on participants arising from the assessment process, interpretations, and decisions of assessment (Isaacs et al., 2013). Therefore, for consequentialists, the uses of the test and its social consequences should be included in the analysis of the test validity and fairness. This argument formally appeared in the third edition of Educational Measurement, where Messick (1989) addressed the consequential analysis of the test, stating that "for a fully unified view of validity, it must also be recognised that the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of score-based inferences depend as well on the social consequences of the testing. Therefore, in consideration of validity, social values and social consequences cannot be ignored (Messick, 1980). In this vein, Messick (1980) proposed a "Feedback model for test validity" (p. 1024) which included the social implications of testing and the question for the implication for test uses.

Although the detractors of consequential approaches (see Maguire, Hattie, & Haig, 1994; Wiley, 1991, cited in Shepard, 1997) argue that addressing consequences will overburden the concept of validity or overload test-makers, some authors go further. Crooks, Kane, and Cohen (1996) proposed a test validation model that includes the analysis of the impact that the assessment can have on students and other participants in the assessment process. Crooks et al., (1996) argue that assessment is justified only if it leads to benefits for students or another stakeholder in terms of motivation, teaching and learning improvements, and confidence for future performance, among others. So, the validity of the test will be reduced in case of "positive consequences not achieved" (Crooks et al., 1996, p. 279). On the other hand, validity will be also questioned if a "serious negative impact occurs" (Crooks et al., 1996, p. 279), including aspects related to personal and psychological dimensions such as diminishing motivation and self-efficacy, increased anxiety, and stress. They also mention effects associated with school decisions such as excluding students and focusing on test-driven learning at the expense of higher outcomes. Finally, validity is also reduced when the test has a negative impact on a relational

dimension, that is, if the test is perceived as unfair or it substantially damages relationships between participants.

Along with the consequentialists, a range of authors (e.g., Gipps & Stobart, 2010; Gipps, 1995; 1999; Gipps & Murphy, 1994; Stobart, 2005) have contended that a notion of fairness exclusively focused on the idea of bias is too simplistic and narrow and needs to take other aspects into account, suggesting the inclusion of a sociocultural approach. In the words of Wertsch, Río, & Alvarez (2012), the goal of a sociocultural approach is to explain the relationship between human mental functioning and the cultural, institutional and historical situations in which this functioning occurs Sociocultural theorists argue that individuals cannot be considered in isolation from their social and historical context and, consequently, individuals' engagement with activities, in this case assessment, has to take account of the context of the activity, which means considering the broader social, historical, political and economic influences that shape the activity (Murphy, 1995). In the school context, this means considering the larger system of activity, community of practice or learning environment (Moss, 2008).

The sociocultural view of education has implications in terms of understanding the learning process, the understanding of assessment and, finally, the understanding of fairness in assessment. A range of authors have argued that there is a relationship between the model of learning and the view of assessment (Black, 1999; Elwood, 2005; Murphy, 1995, 1998), suggesting a connection between how we view how students learn, how we view how students should be assessed and how we view how students' responses are connected (Elwood, 2005). For instance, in the behavioural approach to learning, which is based on a stimulus-response theory of learning, the test item is seen as the stimulus, the answer to the test is seen as the response to the stimulus (Black, 1999) and no attention is paid to any process of the pupil which might intervene between the stimulus and response (Black, 1999). In contrast, from a sociocultural approach it is argued that assessment results, their interpretation and their consequences cannot be understood without understanding the *experience* of the students and the influence of the environment and contextual factors around this experience (Murphy, 1995).This has implications on the notion of fairness in assessment, because this depends not only on the rigorousness with which the test was built, but on the conditions around the test and the experience of the students regarding those conditions.

Also based on the sociocultural dimension, some authors propose including the analysis of fairness and introducing the notion of *equity* as a core element. Gipps & Stobart (2009) argued that the

quantitative approach of equality to address differences between groups is not sufficient to analyse fairness. Burns et al. (2019) also made a clear distinction between equity and equality, stating that "treating people with *equity* means treating people fairly (which may mean treating people differently), while treating people equally means treating people the same" (p. 6). The idea of the traditional approach to fairness centred on the notion of equality, with different groups being allowed to be judged on the same test, is considered a simplistic view (Gipps & Stobart, 2010). Alternatively, it is stated that the notion of equity involves a moral justice and a qualitative judgment that implies looking at the justice of the arrangements prior to the test/examination (Gipps & Stobart, 2009). According to that view, the analysis of fairness not only considers the test features (design, format, implementation conditions, etc.), but also the contextual conditions of the candidates outside the test. In particular, Gipps & Stobart (2010) and Stobart (2005) emphasised the importance of looking at the conditions regarding the curriculum and educational opportunities and the relationship between them, access to resources and conditions prior to the test, what and how the students were taught, and the impact on teaching and learning processes. In the same vein, Gee (2008) pointed out that to guarantee real opportunities to learn, sociocultural aspects should be included. That means not offering the same to all, but considering the students' experience and their previous background. In that sense, it is not about offering the same "content" in lessons and assessment, but also equal opportunities for action, participation and learning.

The issue of equity and the consideration of a sociocultural perspective in assessment is certainly complex, because pupils do not come to school with identical experiences and they do not have the same school experiences, so it is not possible to expect assessments to have the same meaning for all pupils and to expect to achieve perfectly fair tests (Gipps, 1995). However, it is possible to build an equitable approach that helps to achieve fairer ways to address assessment. Gipps (1995) proposed a series of suggestions to meet this aim, such as providing a range of assessment tasks involving a variety of contexts, a range of modes within the assessment, and a range of response formats and styles. Moreover, she proposed that the tasks should consider the experience of the pupil ("the equal access issue"), should be presented clearly ("the pupil must understand"), should seem relevant to the pupil ("to engender motivation and engagement"), should also provide conditions that are not threatening ("to reduce stress and enhance performance) and "all groups should be feel able to participate fully" (Gipps, 1995, p. 279). Some specific strategies proposed were to simplify the language of the questions and to offer a range of different ways of answering questions that do not prioritise one form of answer over another (Gipps, 1995). Similarly, in order to provide learning opportunities to culturally diverse students, Lee (2008) proposed different strategies such as focusing on generative topics and

considering forms of knowledge and ways of using language emerging from students' everyday experiences in families and communities.

Overall, the elements described below regarding the sociocultural and consequentialist perspective suggest the need to consider the experience of individuals in connection with the environment and contextual factors and their effects, challenging the traditional notion of fairness in assessment.

While the theory and practice of assessment has evolved significantly in recent decades, so has the commitment to high-stakes testing, which involves assessments with significant consequences for school communities, which I outline in the next section.

2.3 High-stakes testing

2.3.1 High-stakes testing: Origin and evolution

National large-scale assessments and international tests have been widely disseminated, including in countries with differing levels of economic development and with different state and administrative traditions (Kamens & McNeely, 2010; Verger, Fontdevila et al., 2019; White, 2014). Sahlberg (2016) describes this situation as part of the Global Education Reform Movement, an international phenomenon that spread a series of principles linked to the marketisation of educational achievement, accountability, and standardisation. An important time for the expansion of large-scale assessment was in the 1980s with the adoption of neoliberal and marketised models of education embraced by countries such as the United States and England (Sahlberg, 2016; Verger, Fontdevila et al., 2019). These models swiftly gained popularity around the world and were replicated in countries keen to use similar education policies, such as Chile and New Zealand (Sahlberg, 2016; Verger, Fontdevila et al., 2019). The introduction of international large-scale assessments (ILSAs) indicated a global appetite for comparison of education systems (see World Bank, 2005 in Kamens & McNeely, 2010). Countries were keen to be involved in these tests and rankings because participation could lead to reception of funding, international aid, and, importantly, foster relations with the international community with evidence of modern educational policies and improved competitiveness (Addey, Sellar, Steiner-Khamsi, Lingard, & Verger, 2017).

In the expansion of large-scale assessments, local and international evaluations were connected to the development of a global educational agenda promoted by intergovernmental organisations such

as the United Nations, the OECD, and the World Bank during the 1990s and 2000s (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). This agenda spread the notions of decentralisation, quality assurance, standardisation, and accountability in education (Verger, Parcerisa et al., 2019). As regards quality assurance, there was a general agreement on the need to guarantee not only access to education, but also the learning of all students (Kamens & McNeely, 2010) and, consequently, the need to significantly improve the quality of education provided by the school system. The assumption was that large-scale assessment was a key tool to increase the efficiency and quality of education, contributing to a high-performing educational system (OECD, 2013b).

The standardisation of teaching and learning in the 1980s and 1990s was also part of the process that contributed to the expansion of large-scale assessment. Standardisation was based on the belief that all students should be educated to the same ambitious learning targets (the standards) and, in that context, external standardised testing and school evaluation systems were used to judge how these standards were being attained (Sahlberg, 2016). The notion of *accountability* in education was another trend linked to global educational reform (Sahlberg, 2016; Verger, Parcerisa et al., 2019). One of the main purposes of accountability policies was to make educational actors, mainly schools and teachers, more responsible for student achievement (Sahlberg, 2016).

Even though there are different kinds of accountability systems in education, such as *professional accountability*, *bureaucratic accountability* and the *performance accountability* system[4], it is the latter, also called *performative accountability* (Ball, 2003; Falabella & De la Vega, 2016) or results-based accountability (Anderson 2004), that has increased substantially around the world (Anderson 2004; Ball, 2003). The paradigmatic countries where this model has been implemented include England, the United States and Chile (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016). *Performance accountability* involves the idea that school change does not depend on the willingness of practitioners or increasing professional capabilities, but on incentives, pressure and clear targets (Carrasco, Seppanen, Rinne, & Falabella, 2016). In addition, some authors, such as Ball (2003) have emphasised with the notion of *performative accountability* that this kind of model implies not only a technical and structural change in organisations, but also represents a cultural reform that influences teacher identity, producing "new kinds of teacher subjects" (p. 217). In this thesis, I decided to use the notion of *performance*

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[4] A description of the different models of accountability could be found in Carrasco et al. (2015); Falabella & De la Vega (2016); Flórez & Rozas (2020).

accountability because it makes the conceptual connection with the notion of *student performance* clearer, a core aspect of the current evaluative state in Chile (Parcerisa & Falabella, 2017).

According to the expansion of the performance accountability model, student performance data has been used systematically to supervise teachers and/or schools, rewarding or punishing schools and teachers, such as in terms of teachers' salaries and promotions, the publication of test results, school rankings or interventions in the autonomy of underperforming schools (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Sahlberg, 2016; Verger, Fontdevila et al., 2019). The main assumption of a high-accountability system is that incentives and consequences will motivate actions among different school agents to achieve school improvement (Sahlberg, 2016)[5].

In Latin America, large-scale assessment and high-accountability systems also were part of national policies (Martinec, 2010b). The reasons seem to be multiple, such as a belief in these tools as a mechanism to improve the educational system, as a way to engage with global education policy and gain legitimacy in the international landscape (Meyer & Benavot, 2013, as cited in Verger et al., 2019), and considering international pressure from organisations such as the World Bank to introduce reforms to improve educational outcomes (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). In addition, with the support of international organisations such as UNESCO, the Ford Foundation, the IDB, the Organisation of Iberian-American States, and USAID, various countries in Latin America started participating in international tests (Schiefelbein & Schiefelbein, 2003). Later, in the 2000s, there was concern about controlling learning results in school and, consequently, governments implemented accountability policies to make schools and teachers responsible for results in order to exert pressure for school improvements (Martinic, 2010b). Chile was not the exception, and it introduced a national large-scale assessment by the end of the 1980s, the SIMCE test (Gysling, 2015)

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[5] The accountability system based on student performance also reflected other assumptions regarding the parallel between student achievement and the measurement of the quality of educational system; that students' scores on national tests provide a valid indicator of the quality of institutional performance and that it is possible to compare the 'productivity' of individual education systems through international comparisons (Broadfoot & Black, 2004)

2.3.2 Effects of high-stakes testing

Despite the either positive or negative opinions about high-stakes testing, the evidence reveals the influence that this kind of tests have on school dynamics (Brill, Grayson, Kuhn, & Sharon, 2018; Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Mons, 2009; Stobart, 2008), such as those linked to school management, teaching practices, the teachers, and the student experience (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Mons, 2009).

There is literature describing some positive effects of high-accountability tests in terms of school organisation and school effectiveness. For example, such tests can enhance the alignment of objectives at all levels of the system (Brill et al., 2018) and they can encourage students to work harder and more effectively with the goal of improving their attainment (Stobart, 2008). However, the evidence is not always conclusively positive. Indeed, there is evidence from research that such testing can inhibit creativity and breadth in teaching and learning. Some researchers (Au, 2007; Brill et al., 2018; Koretz, 2017; Stobart, 2008) argue that high-stakes testing has led to curriculum narrowing, where fewer subjects are taught in schools or where a smaller body of content is designed so students are better prepared to take tests. In addition, different reports describe a reduced or non-conclusive evidence of high-stake testing impact on student learning (Anstorp, 2010; Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Mons, 2009; Nichols & Harris, 2016; UNESCO, 2017) and a negative impacts on disadvantaged students (Au, 2021; Gana, 2012; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Vasquez & Darling-Hammond, 2008) and in schools serving vulnerable populations (Berliner, 2011; Jerald, 2006; Koretz, 2017; Tefera, 2019).

Curriculum narrowing and teaching to the test

Curriculum narrowing is one of the main effects of high-stakes testing (Au, 2007) and refers to *prioritisation* of the subjects and skills measured on the test (Brill et al., 2018; Stobart, 2008), meaning that the school tends to focus mainly on maximisation of test results, with implications for the organisation of school resources, school time, and teacher and student routines (Artiles, 2011; Koretz, 2017). Curriculum narrowing is observed in the practices of classroom teachers with regard to changes and strategies orientated towards increasing outcomes (Koretz, 2017), but also in students (Elwood, Hopfenbeck, & Baird, 2017), as they adjust their learning behaviours and practices in order to do well on high-stakes examinations. Even though curriculum narrowing is not necessarily negative and it could produce benefits such as working harder in certain subjects (Koretz, 2005; Stobart, 2008) and being clearer about the standards expected for each stage of education (Gregory & Clarke, 2003),

when test results are linked to high consequences for students or schools, the effects tend to be negative (Stobart, 2008).

The international evidence points to negative effects of high-stakes testing in terms of the skills and contents taught, suggesting there is a reduction of learning opportunities (Amoako, 2019; Perryman, Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2011; Spicer, Ehren, Khatwa, & Bangpan, 2014). For instance, the metanalysis by Au (2007) concludes that, in most cases, curriculum narrowing implies that curricular content is narrowed to the subjects tested, subject area knowledge is fragmented into test-related pieces, and teachers increase the use of teacher-centred pedagogies. Only in a minority of cases do high-stakes tests generate positive effects linked to the expansion of curricular content, the integration of knowledge, and more student-centred, cooperative pedagogies (Au, 2007). Other authors propose effects linked to restrictions in the development of higher-order cognitive skills (Amoako, 2019; Bellei & Morawietz, 2016; Berliner, 2011; Gilliom, 2020; Jerald, 2006; Mons, 2009). So, it is argued that instead of enhancing thinking skills and a deeper understanding of the subjects (Berliner, 2011; Gilliom, 2010), or promoting 21st century competencies such as citizenship education (Bellei & Morawietz, 2016; Mons, 2009), high-stakes testing favours the focus on basic skills based on precarious teacher strategies such as repetition and memorisation (Berliner, 2011; Gilliom, 2010), providing little room for creative and enjoyable activities (Berliner, 2011), reduced hands-on experimentation (Gilliom, 2010), minimum social skills and independence (Mons, 2009), and also decreasing the teacher's willingness to use creativity and innovation (Amoako, 2019; Pascual Medina & Rodríguez Gómez, 2018; Perryman et al., 2011).

Effects of high-stakes testing on student learning

According to the literature reviewed on the topic (Anstorp, 2010; Brill, Grayson, Kuhn, et al., 2018; Falabella & De la Vega, 2016; Mons, 2009; Nichols & Harris, 2016; UNESCO, 2017), there is no conclusive evidence about the positive effect of high-stakes testing on student learning. Even though some studies do suggest a positive relationship (e.g., Hanushek & Raymond, 2005), many of them do so only cautiously (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016). For instance, the study by Hanushek and Raymond (2005) on the effects on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy concludes that high-stakes accountability systems have positive impacts on overall student performance, but not on the gap between white and black students, in fact, this gap actually increased. Nichols, Glass, and Berliner (2012) found some positive patterns in the relationship between the pressure system and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results in maths in fourth grade but warned about the

possible effects of training and the difficulties to draw conclusions on genuine effects on student learning.

Moreover, the literature review by Brill, Grayson, and Kuhn et al. (2018) in primary education in 13 international jurisdictions reveals that high-stakes testing may increase the achievement gap by focusing attention on the performance of 'borderline' pupils or may be used to reduce the gap by informing funding programmes for disadvantaged pupils. The review by Mons (2009), mainly based on the United States, the United Kingdom, and European countries, concludes that there is no empirical consensus on the benefits of standardised tests for effectiveness and educational equality, stating that there is not a one-to-one correlation and testing appears to be unpredictable (Mons, 2009). The study by Amrein and Berliner (2002) cited in Anstorp (2010), based on 18 states with high-stakes tests, concludes that, in almost all of them, student learning remains at the same level it was before the policy was implemented, or even decreases with the introduction of high-stakes assessment policies. 'The Global Education Monitoring Report. Accountability in Education' from UNESCO (2017) states that "There is no clear evidence that raising the stakes for schools leads to better learning outcomes" (p. 54), reporting that in different countries such as the United States, Australia, and Portugal, school accountability policies have a small negative impact and these policies tend to benefit students of higher socioeconomic status (UNESCO, 2017). In addition, the analysis by Treviño (2006) about standardised and high-stakes testing in sociocultural diverse and unequal contexts such as Latin American countries suggests that high-stakes testing is a mechanism that contributes to expanding learning gaps between socioeconomic and cultural groups.

The difficulty in defining a positive relationship between accountability-based tests and learning is related to the divergent evidence (Brill, Grayson, & Kuhn, et al., 2018), the complexity of controlling for other variables influencing learning (Koretz, 2008, as cited in in Nichols et al., 2012), and the *inflationary* phenomenon (Stobart, 2008), which make it difficult to conclude whether improved results represent a genuine learning improvement or a better performance on the test.

Effects of high-stakes testing on minorities and disadvantaged groups

Despite the promise of high-stakes testing to contribute to equity in school systems (Flórez et al., 2018) in terms of helping to inform, reduce learning gaps, and provide more learning opportunities to disadvantaged and minority groups in society, there is no robust evidence confirming this contribution. In contrast, there are some studies that show detrimental effects for these groups of

students (Au, 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Mons, 2009; Tefera, 2019; UNESCO, 2017). Students from minorities and low socioeconomic levels, such as black and Latino students in the United States leave schools more frequently, raising the dropout rate (McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Heilig, 2008) and the percentage of young people involved in crimes that end up with prison sentences (Au, 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2007)[6]. These kinds of consequences are connected to the phenomenon of "playing the system" (Stobart, 2008, p. 123), meaning that in a context of high pressure on school communities to improve student attainment, they took actions to rapidly increase results without genuinely improving student learning. Thus, *cheating practices* have emerged in school communities (Nichols & Harris, 2016), such as correcting test answers after students have completed them, submitting false student ID numbers to technically disqualify underperforming students, verbally coaching students during examinations, distributing correct answers before tests, or leaving multiplication charts and other aids on display during tests (Gilliom, 2020; Nichols & Berliner, 2005). These practices corrupt the assessment system, generating validity issues, particularly in the interpretation of scores and their use to make decisions about students, teachers, and schools (Nichols & Harris, 2016).

Moreover, there are school practices that directly harm disadvantaged and minority groups of students who are typically those less likely to perform well on standardised tests, such as special needs students, new language learners, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students with poor attendance, those from ethnic minorities, or students with health or family problems (Au, 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2007; McNeil et al., 2008; Tefera, 2019). One of these practices is the selection of students with expectations of higher academic performance, discriminating against those less likely to perform well on standardised tests (Gana, 2012; Gregory & Clarke, 2003; Stobart & Eggen, 2012). Other practices include the expulsion of students who perform poorly (Au, 2021; Gana, 2012; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Vasquez & Darling-Hammond, 2008), encouraging them to not attend school on the day of the test (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Mons, 2009), or repetition of years, where students are kept at the levels prior to those at which tests are applied (Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008; McNeil et al., 2008) preventing lower-performing students from taking them. In addition, some practices directly reduce the learning opportunities of students, such as focusing less attention and resources on pupils less likely to obtain good results (Artiles, 2011; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012), favouring a focus on students who can achieve test

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[6] A paradigmatic case of discriminatory practices against minorities in the context of high-stakes testing was 'The Texas miracle', where the state that was the model for the NCLB policy was shown by research to have boosted scores partly by keeping many black students out of the system (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

scores that would improve a school's accountability report (Artiles, 2011; Brill et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2017) and isolating students with serious learning difficulties because they are not able to pass the test straight away (Mons, 2009). Another practice linked to student stigmatisation is to label low-performing students and minority groups as 'special needs students' to avoid them having to take the test (Au, 2020; Nichols & Harris, 2016).

Regarding the students' experience in the school, even though some studies did not find a relationship—either positive or negative—between high-stakes testing and children's wellbeing, such as the research by Jerrim (2021) regarding the Key Stage 2 test in England, other studies reported that the "Non-Standard Learner Identities" (Au, 2009, p. 68), meaning non-white students, non-native speakers, students from ethnic minorities, low-income students, and students with special needs, tend to have negative experiences regarding high-stakes testing (Au, 2009; 2020; Tefera, 2019). The curriculum narrowing prevents schools from having a more diverse curriculum that recognises the diversity of student history, culture, and experiences, which produces less welcoming and supportive environments that can lead to the disengagement of students of colour and bilingual students (Au, 2009, 2021). Moreover, the requirements that all students reach the standards outlined by high-stakes testing are in contrast to the structural inequalities in the conditions to achieve these standards (e.g., fewer resources, lower quality of teaching, and late high-quality intervention compared with white students) (Tefera, 2019). This generates tensions and frustration among students from low-income and minority backgrounds, because, in practice, they do not have the same opportunities to achieve these standards (Tefera, 2019).

High-stakes testing in schools serving vulnerable and minority groups

There is evidence showing that the negative impact of high-stakes testing is greater in schools serving populations of lower socioeconomic level, for instance regarding curriculum narrowing (Berliner, 2011; Jerald, 2006; Koretz, 2017). Curriculum narrowing prevents students of low socioeconomic level from developing key skills and receiving essential knowledge that allows them to understand the world (Berliner, 2011; Jerald, 2006). In relation to this, Jerald (2006) states that wealthy students are less affected by curriculum narrowing because they will access knowledge that is neglected in schools such as art, culture, history, and geography due to the experience they have because of their privileged situation (e.g., on holiday, via visits to museums and other cultural settings, etc.). Berliner (2011), following the study by Woodworth, Gallagher, and Guha (2007), demonstrates that, in California, the opportunities to be taught art differ significantly between wealthy schools and schools serving poor

communities, with the percentage of students receiving instruction in areas of the arts in schools serving poor students being scarcer than those taught in art at schools focused on the wealthy. Similarly, Luke (2010, in Lingard & Keddie, 2013) argue that high-stakes testing means that schools tend to offer a curriculum of basic skills to working-class students and those from cultural and linguistic minorities, reproducing the social class differences that their parents experience. Moreover, Koretz (2017) revealed that inappropriate test preparation, such as score inflation, is more severe in schools serving high concentrations of disadvantaged students. He explained that schools and teachers that work with high-achieving students have no reasons to introduce negative preparation practices because they have more chance of obtaining sufficiently high scores for accountability purposes. In contrast, school with students less likely to obtain high results have more incentives to introduce preparatory practices.

Another negative consequence is school stigmatisation. High-stakes testing contributes to a negative reputations for schools serving low-income and minority students (Au, 2021). Due to the lower results that these schools tend to have on tests, because of the context of structural inequality and the lack of adaptation of high-stakes testing to local contexts, these the schools are seen as "failing" (Au, 2020, p. 107) or "trouble schools" (Tefera, 2019, p. 465), but, in reality, they do not have the resources and support to produce the results expected (Tefera, 2019). The publication of results by school and league tables significantly contributes to the negative image of schools with poor results (Power & Frandji, 2010). League tables and official state rankings produce definitions about which schools are " 'good' or 'bad', 'successful' or 'failing', and 'efficient' or 'inefficient'" (Falabella, 2016: 756). The image of the *failing school* is something that tends to generate frustration and a negative environment in the schools (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005; Power & Frandji, 2010), contributing to professional demotivation and demoralisation and even leading to teacher attrition (Mons, 2009; Nichols & Harris, 2016), which is more common in schools serving disadvantaged students because those are the establishments that usually produce the lowest results.

Conclusion

This section demonstrates a connection between assessment and notions of social justice based on the origins of assessments. There is positive rhetoric regarding assessment and its link with social justice involving concepts established historically, such as the assumption of objectivity in quantitative tests and meritocracy as a fairer way to organise society. A second aspect to consider is the discussion about fairness in the field of assessment, the challenges in terms of validity, the evolution of the

debate, and standards to progress towards fairer assessment. Sociocultural and consequentialist approaches have added significant elements to the analysis, such as the consideration of the context, the notion of equity, and the idea of consequences of assessment as crucial elements. In addition, the theories of social reproduction, outline a series of elements indicating the negative effects of assessments in a context of a marketised system. This perspective provides a critical view of the role of assessment that is centred on the risks in terms of legitimising the elites and dominant groups to the detriment of groups who occupy a disadvantaged position in society, such as the working class, cultural minorities, and groups with handicaps.

The different ways to address the question about assessment and fairness presented in this chapter, reinforce the notion that assessment is not just a technical issue, isolated from the environment and context, but is connected to the social, historical and political dynamics. These elements connect to the theories about social justice and assessment presented in Chapter 3. As will be seen in Chapter 3, conceptions about social justice and assessment are involved with the different demands, concerns and challenges in society across time. In that sense, it is not a coincidence that in the case of Chile (chapter 4), the SIMCE assessment also has a different emphasis regarding social justice, due to the differing aims of national education policy, depending on the different political and historical periods experienced in the country (section 4.4).

CHAPTER 3. THEORIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

There are many ways to examine the concept of social justice (Adams, 2014). In this thesis, emphasis is given to the classification used by the American philosopher Nancy Fraser (1995), who proposed three dimensions: *Redistribution*, *Recognition* and *Participation*. The decision to use Nancy Fraser as the main reference to address the concept of social justice was taken because she offered an integrated way to understand and work with these three dimensions, viewing them as all having a relevant role (see Fraser, 1998).

These three dimensions are not the exclusive domain of Fraser, as she developed them by building on the work of others. For example, John Rawls (1972) was a key figure in the case of the redistributive dimension of social justice, while Charles Taylor (1994) and Axel Honneth (Fraser & Honneth, 2006) were important in terms of recognition, and Iris Marion (Young, 1990) was a pivotal exponent of the participation dimension. Fraser (1995) developed the idea that together these three dimensions were key to addressing contemporary challenges related to social justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2006). I have used these three dimensions as lenses to explore and shed light on the broad range of challenges regarding social justice in the context of educational settings.

The analysis of each of these dimensions includes multiple perspectives about the issues raised in the research. The use of these dimensions of social justice have not been limited solely to the field of philosophy, but also permeate discussions across research in education and assessment. For example, Lynch & Lodge (2002) and Power (2012), who analysed school systems in Ireland and the United Kingdom, respectively, worked with the three dimensions proposed by Fraser. In Latin America, Veleda, Rivas, & Mezzadra (2011) focused on the recognition and distribution dimensions to address the challenges in education in Argentina. In the field of assessment, there are also authors who use these dimensions to address the discussion about social justice in assessment. For instance, McArthur (2018b) made a series of suggestions which include the notion of *recognition* in the debate about social justice and assessment in high education. Stein (2016) developed an historical analysis of testing and social justice through the notion of distribution proposed by John Rawls. Flórez et al. (2018) and Flórez and Rozas (2019) presented an exploratory analysis of large-scale assessment and accountability systems in education considering these three dimensions. Murillo, Román, & Hernández Castilla. (2011) suggested a model of assessment including elements of these three

dimensions. In Chile, Gysling, and Rozas (in press) and Rozas, Falabella, and Flórez (2020), analysed national assessment policies including distribution, and recognition and participation.

Table 1 summarises a theoretical description of the three dimensions together with explanations of the connection of these dimensions with the discussion about social justice and assessment.

Table 1

Synthesis of social justice approaches with the three dimensions: Distribution, Recognition, and Participation

DIMENSIONS	Social justice focus	Purpose of Education	Purpose of Assessment	Concerns regarding Assessment
Distribution	Socioeconomic focus Equitable distribution of goods, income, and education	To provide certain universal knowledge and skills to all of the population	To measure the key knowledge and skills needed to contribute to society and develop. To promote equal access to educational standards. To help reduce learning gaps.	Is the test providing significant information about people's knowledge and merit? Is the test measuring the knowledge and skills needed to participate in a democratic society? Is the test helping to identify learning gaps?
Recognition	Cultural focus A positive affirmation of cultural differences. Combat thinking that sees differences as deficits.	To value and promote diversity within society. To contribute to self-determination for disempowered or colonised people.	To legitimise diverse cultural knowledge and ways of knowing.	Is the test contributing to legitimising different ways of knowing based on cultural differences? Is the test sensitive to cultural and contextual aspects? Are the voices and experiences of the participants considered in the design and the process of the assessment? Are the original goals and objectives appropriate for the target population?
Participation	Political focus -More equitable distribution of power and privilege.	To contribute to full inclusion and participation in decision-making, particularly for those who have been discriminated against.	To contribute to the values of social justice, equality, empowerment, and emancipation.	Is the test conducted in a democratic process? Does the test consider the different stakeholders? Were the content and goals of the test negotiated with the community? Is the assessment contributing to making the students more conscious of oppression and motivating them to change it?

Source: Prepared by the author, based on various authors (Abma, 2006; Flórez et al., 2018; Fraser & Honneth, 2006; Frierson, Hood, & Hughes, 2002; Greene, 2006; Hopson, 2009; Howe, 1997; Stobart, 2005)

As Table 1 shows, each of the dimensions can be aligned with particular social, cultural, and political foci and, in doing so, it is possible to explore the way in which social justice evolves or can be seen in educational settings. The following sections explore and explain each of the dimensions in more detail.

3.1 Distribution dimension

The distribution or redistribution dimension of social justice is traditionally linked to the material or economic dimension, namely wealth, income, and goods (Fraser, 1995; Young, 1990), including the basic materials and cultural assets of individuals in society, such as access to education, the distribution of knowledge and learning (Rozas et al., 2020) and the role of the state in that distribution (Murillo & Hernández, 2011). In education, distributive justice usually refers to distribution of access, opportunities, and resources, and we commonly see a special focus on disadvantaged populations (Gardner, Holmes, & Leitch, 2009) and educational policies linked to compensatory programmes (Bolívar, 2012; Veleda et al., 2011).

There are various ways to refer to this notion of social justice. Some authors (e.g., Fraser, 1995; Power, 2012) use the term *redistribution*, others (Bolívar, 2012; Rawls, 1995; Young, 1990) use the term *distribution*, while others (e.g., Gale, 2000) make a distinction between the two. For instance, Fraser (1995), when explaining the redistributive dimension, generally refers to notions closer to Marxist theory, connecting this dimension to the *political-economic structure of society* or the notion of *exploitation*—in the sense of having the fruits of one's labour appropriated for the benefits of others— but she also recognises the contribution of authors as John Rawls to the concept. Alternatively, Gale, (2000) proposes that *distributive justice* is linked to compensation for those who lack basics skills, while *retributive justice* is connected to guaranteeing social justice for individuals, as displayed in their free interactions, such as in the marketplace, which could be connected to a different model of states. Other authors such as Young (1990) have stated that distribution could refer to a different ideology, to a *socialist justice*, or a *capitalist liberal justice.* In this document, I will use the term *distributive justice* or *distribution* dimension of social justice because it allows to me refer to the concept in a broader sense and I will centre particularly on the utilitarian and Rawlsian perspectives, because they offer a variety of lenses that are helpful to understand the Chilean case, which is the focus of this research.

The utilitarian view based on Robert Nozick was the dominant moral philosophy until the 1970s. It defends the idea of maximising the general utility, meaning that an act is correct and fair when it

maximises the benefits for the majority, even if it harms a minority (Bolívar, 2012; Murillo & Hernández, 2011). The analysis is based on costs and benefits, and then certain cost. For example, a certain rate of school failure has to be accepted for the overall functioning of the system (Bolívar, 2012). In his seminal work *A Theory of Justice* (1971), John Rawls questioned utilitarianism, proposing the notion of *justice as fairness*, which supports the idea that justice is not maximising the satisfaction of the majority, but a *fair* distribution of goods (Bolívar, 2012). Rawls proposes the *difference principle*, arguing that unequal individuals have to be treated unequally to reduce the natural or born inequalities (such as different skills or talents) (Bolívar, 2012; Gale, 2000).

Nozick's perspective, consistent with the neoliberal model (see Hayeck & Friedman, in Corvalan & Garcia Huidobro, 2016), defends the idea that the central aspect of social justice is not the final distribution of goods and the difference principle, but the process in which the goods are distributed: fair competition in the market (Gale, 2000; Nieuwenhuis, 2010). From this perspective it is argued that merit is key in the debate of justice; each person should receive goods and positions according to their different contributions to productive and competitive processes in society (Gale, 2000). Alternatively, Rawls believes that merit is important, but it should be accompanied by fair distribution of goods that goes beyond merit and natural talents (Ribeiro, 2014). Rawls thus suggests the notion of *fair equality of opportunity*, which has to be supported by actions for redistribution by the state (Bolívar, 2012; Ribeiro, 2014), while Nozick and neoliberal perspectives suggest the *equality of opportunities* supported by the market (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). Therefore, there are significant differences between the utilitarian and Rawlsian views regarding how to address merit and compensation. From a Rawlsian point of view, there are certain minimum rights and conditions that everyone must have regardless of the merit, talents, or any differences between individual (Veleda et al., 2011), so redistribution and compensation is needed to guarantee all people's rights. Alternatively, from a utilitarian point of view, the merit, talents, and individual decisions in a market dynamic are the key elements to organise society.

In education, with regard to the state and educational model, it can be said that Nozick's position is expressed in a neoliberal model of education where the state is subsidiary, abandoning the role of the protagonist in the provision of educational services and focusing on guaranteeing the operation of market dynamics in education (Hayeck & Friedman, in Corvalan & Garcia Huidobro, 2016). Meanwhile, the Rawlsian perspective is closer to a social democratic model or a state with some social welfare system (Bolívar, 2012; Murillo & Hernández, 2011), where the state has a relevant role in the provision of education and fundamental rights. The assumption in the neoliberal model is that the market

regulates the quality of the school system, so, in a context of school competition, low-quality schools will leave the system due to the lack of preference on the part of families and schools with better quality will remain in the system as they are selected by families, as was expected in the Chilean neoliberal model introduced by the dictatorship (Bellei & Vanni, 2015; Ruiz, 2010). Alternatively, in a society with certain elements of the social democrat model or a reformed neoliberal state, the diagnosis is that the market dynamic itself does not solve society's needs, so the state must have a more relevant role, assuming there is a mixed model where the market and state act together to organise life in society, which occurs in Chile with the introduction of the Evaluative State (see section 4.4.3)

In the case of educational assessment, there is generally a positive rhetoric about assessment and positive links to the distribution dimension of social justice (Flórez et al., 2018), but a different way to address success and failure. From the utilitarian viewpoint, which is close to the neoliberal model, academic success is seen purely as an individual attribute, meaning that if you succeed at school or have a negative performance at the school it is your responsibility because you did not make enough effort, you lacked sufficient talent, or because you did not choose the right school for you (Bolívar, 2012). In contrast, following the Rawlsian perspective, it would be necessary to review the original conditions of the students, the families, and the schools to confirm whether success or failure in education and assessment is the results of the student's work. So, if the student were exposed to precarious material background conditions, lacked sufficient support from their parents, and went to a school that did not provide the educational resources and opportunities for learning, the failure would not be considered the fault of the student, a phenomenon developed in depth by the followers of social reproduction theories (see section 2.2.3), meaning that the state and the educational system would have to work to provide genuine learning opportunities to all students.

On the other hand, there is a certain positive rhetoric regarding assessment, based on assumptions of its power to promote fundamental learning. The belief was that universal minimum knowledge and skills across the whole population were needed to develop democracy and progress, and this is the reason why standards and standardised tests have become extremely important in recent decades (Howe, 1997; Kornhaber, 2004). In that context, large-scale assessment and accountability systems in education have been seen as central to improving the overall quality of educational systems *and* enhancing the equity of student learning (Koretz, 2017; OECD, 2013b; UNESCO, 2017) with the promise of providing helpful information about the learning gaps that need to be addressed in order to offer resources and support (Flórez et al., 2018). Therefore, during the 1980s and 1990s, based on

a discourse of equity, standardised tests became popular with governments worldwide as a tool to promote the reform of standards in order to encourage access to fundamental knowledge for all students (Baird & Oposs, 2018; Broadfoot & Pollard, 2000; Howe, 1997; LaCelle-Peterson, 2000). For instance, in the United Kingdom, with the Education Reform Act in 1988, a National Curriculum for all pupils was introduced to achieve continuity and consistency in student learning experiences (Broadfoot & Pollard, 2000) and, along with this, a series of national assessment requirements were implemented. In the United States With the publication of Nation at Risk in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, a reform movement started with a strong emphasis on state-mandated tests, shifting to an era where students' scores were used to hold teachers accountable (Koretz, 2017). In Chile, significant curricular reforms were conducted in the 1990s to promote key learning among all students, and the SIMCE national test was used as a key tool to contribute to this goal (Gysling, 2015; Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). International assessment also emerged that was linked to a 'promise' of increased social justice and more emphasis on equity goals. For example, the OECD's (2013a) report on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)—'PISA 2012 Results: Excellence Through Equity. Giving every student the chance to succeed'—claims that, "PISA has become the world's premier yardstick for evaluating the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems." (p. 3). There was also the belief that a good, valid, and well-designed assessment had the power to measure merit and provide objective information about talents, potential performance of the labour market, and the promotion of universal standards of education (Flórez et al., 2018; Young, 1990), which was considered an essential contribution to build democracies and progress in a country (Howe, 1997).

Large-scale assessments such as SIMCE or international tests like PISA were not the only kind of assessment with goals linked to equity and the distribution of knowledge. The assessment for Learning (AfL) movement aimed to contribute to student learning and teacher practices based on the idea that formative assessment conducted by teachers in classrooms is a central tool to achieve these purposes (Elwood & Murphy, 2015). Based on this approach, the expectation was that formative assessment can provide "information about the learning process that teachers can use for instructional decisions (…) and student can use in improving their performance" (Brookhart, 2011, as cited in Isaacs et al., 2013, p. 7). AfL and formative assessment had a special focus on student learning and further improvement, which is reflected on the questions mentioned by Black & Wiliam (1998): "Does assessment result in socially meaningful student outcomes for the individual? Does the assessment indicate that this treatment is working with these students? What factors account for the variability in student performance?" (Shinn & Hubbard, 1992, as cited in Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 60). In line with

distribution goals, Black & Wiliam (1998) reported that formative assessment benefits the learning of disadvantaged and low-income students, which is a significant contribution in terms of social justice. Another assessment that can be linked to the redistributive dimension of social justice is *differentiated assessment*, which is aimed at offering assessment that is engaging, accessible, and challenging for students, regardless of their different abilities, providing differentiation by task or by outcomes (Isaacs et al., 2013). In Chile, there are some recently implemented experiences based on AfL and formative assessment to address the difficulties in school trajectories among students from state schools, such as student dropout, repetition of years, and various learning gaps. In the city of Valparaíso, the municipality, in collaboration with the University of Chile and professionals from the Stop SIMCE Campaign between 2017 and 2020, implemented an assessment system[7] in state schools with the aim of monitoring the school trajectories of students in order to prevent dropout and failure (Flórez & Olave, 2020; Rozas et al., 2020). In Santiago, the municipality of Renca, led by the pedagogical team from the municipality and in coordination with the leadership teams and teachers of the state schools, promoted formative assessment in schools, adapting their internal assessment regulations and seeking strategies to implement the formative approach in school (Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021).

The assessments described reveal an interest in contributing to distributive justice in the sense of demonstrating the students' abilities in an objective way and being a tool that contributes to reducing gaps and improving learning conditions for all.

3.2 Recognition dimension

The recognition dimension concerns cultural aspects of social justice referred to as social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication that reproduce patterns of inequality in society (Fraser 1995; Young 1990). This dimension characterises cultural injustice as:

> "cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own); non-

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[7] This assessment system was introduced in the context of the implementation of the "School Success Project" (*Proyecto de Éxito Escolar*). To find out more about the project and the assessment system, follow this link to the website of the municipality of Valparaíso: https://cmvalparaiso.cl/2018/10/17/exito-escolar-la-apuesta-de-la-alcaldia-ciudadana-por-las-trayectorias-escolares-y-el-fortalecimiento-de-la-educacion-publica/ and the documentary "Finally another way … Communal Project on School Success: Towards a New Assessment System" (*Por fin de otra manera. Proyecto Comunal de Éxito Escolar. Hacia un Nuevo Sistema de evaluación*" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23kmYvs82iI (Alto al SIMCE, Corporación Municipal Valparaíso, & Saberes Docentes -Universidad de Chile., 2018).

recognition (being rendered invisible by means of authoritative representational, communicative and interpretative); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life situations)" (Power, 2012, p. 475).

The concept of recognition was introduced into the social justice discussion by Charles Taylor and later developed by authors such as Axel Honneth, Iris Marion Young, and Nancy Fraser (see Fraser, 1995; Fraser & Honneth, 2006; Taylor, 1994; Young, 1990). There is a strong link between recognition and identity, Taylor (1994) argues, and he adds that misrecognition can damage self-esteem, so recognition is therefore noted as a critical facet of social justice. Following Taylor, Nancy Fraser (1995a) and Marion Young (1990) claimed that social justice not only involved a socioeconomic dimension, but also a *cultural dimension* that looked at other aspects of justice. So, the recognition dimension claims another kind of equality; not the equality of opportunity and the fair distribution of goods, but the recognition of cultural identity, social esteem, and dignity (Bolívar, 2012). In fact, the demand for recognition is not to be considered as 'equals', it is a demand for a positive affirmation of the differences between groups (Young, 2000, as cited in Bolivar, 2012). In that sense, an approach involving recognition requires the identification and acknowledgement of the claims of historically marginalised groups, such as women; refugees; cultural, linguistic, religious, racial, and sexual minorities; and indigenous groups (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). So, to achieve social justice, cultural or symbolic changes are needed such as positively valuing cultural diversity, changes in societal patterns of representations, and communications revaluing disrespected identities (Fraser, 1995).

Education has a central role in the recognition dimension. From this approach, it is argued that even though it is important to improve material conditions in schools, such as guaranteeing high quality in infrastructure, pedagogical material, better equipment, and good salaries for teachers, it is urgent to end cultural hierarchies that support dominant modes of schooling that privilege white, middle-class ways of knowing and being to the detriment of marginalised groups (Lingard & Keddie, 2013; Veleda et al., 2011). In that sense, is it necessary to change the notion of the ideal school based on the middle- or upper-class student and to review the different dimensions of the school system (e.g., the pedagogy and the curriculum) considering the perspective of students of low socioeconomic background and from non-dominant groups (Veleda et al., 2011). Other researchers (see Gale, 2000; Lynch & Lodge, 2002; Veleda et al., 2011) have highlighted the relevance of schools fostering self-respect in students, facilitating positive self-identities for students from different social groups, promoting the development of student's abilities, and encouraging students' expressions of their experiences and their capacity for self-determination. To build a school environment that respects and values

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individual differences (Gale, 2000; Lynch & Lodge, 2002), which increases sensitivity to negative stereotyping, the inclusion of artefacts from diverse cultures and the visible representation of diversity in teaching materials is also something highlighted from the recognition perspective (Power, 2012). In that sense, it is relevant to create more complex categories to analyse school realities, going beyond socioeconomic criteria that tend to reduce school diversity to *poor/non-poor schools*, neglecting other dimensions that might enrich the understanding of educational issues (Veleda et al., 2011).

Regarding educational assessment, the recognition dimension is particularly focused on the need to take account of the cultural differences and avoid addressing them hierarchically (Flórez & Rozas, 2020). A recognition perspective suggests that assessment and evaluation should consider cultural and contextual dimensions, but also play an active role in contributing to the value of cultural difference and the need to end cultural domination (Greene, 2006). This is key while tests tend to benefit dominant cultures of usually white, wealthy men (Au, 2021; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Perrenoud, 2015; Treviño, 2006) and it would involve the connection between gender, students' preferred styles of learning, and the style of examinations. However, consideration of different cultures without favouring one group over another is complex because it cannot be solved simply by translating tests into the student's native language. There is a series of cultural assumptions, epistemological notions, and different conceptions of knowledge that are involved in testing, going beyond the mere language (Treviño, 2006; Padilla, 2011, as cited in Burns et al., 2017).

Some approaches and initiatives that take into account concerns about recognition come from the field of evaluation[8]. For instance, Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE) (Hopson, 2012), which aims to legitimise specific knowledge from different cultures and resist the thinking that sees differences as a deficit or diversity as deviant. For this purpose, CRE states that it is important to consider the context such as demographic or socio-political factors, locations, race, ethnicity, gender, religious convictions, socioeconomic status, and power dynamics (Hopson, 2012; Stokes, Chaplin, Dessouky, Aklilu, & Hopson, 2011). In this approach, the process of the evaluation is central and a series of elements should be taken into account, such as i) authentic engagement of the participants (students, parents, school staff), ii) co-construction of the substance and process of the evaluation; iii) meaningfully addressing culture and context, iv) respecting and addressing stakeholders' perspectives, and v) using the triangulation of perspectives in multiple ways (Greene, 2006).

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[8] The field of evaluation is related to the evaluation of the implementation of educational or other social programmes (see Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Assessment (see Burns et al., 2017; Burns et al., 2019; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017) is similar to Culturally Responsive Evaluation, but focused on classroom assessment. Under this approach the consideration of cultural aspects of the students' experience is central to achieving engagement with the learning and assessment process. In that sense, *Culturally Responsive Assessment* is intended to ensure that the assessment process is mindful of student differences and employs assessment methods that are appropriate for different student groups considering their different experiences based on their cultural identity, which could be linked to diverse dimensions such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, or religion, among others (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). The assumption for assessment under this approach is that the classroom is diverse; students have different ways of learning, different approaches to learning, different interests, different academic strengths, different preferences for expressing their knowledge, and different life experiences (Burns et al., 2019) and, consequently, they highlight the importance of teachers "researching students" (Burns et al., 2019, p. 11). By this, they mean that teachers become familiar with the preferences, strengths, interests, and experiences of their students, and provide support to allow them to demonstrate what they know (Burns et al., 2019). In addition, this approach suggests that using cultural perspectives in assessment involves being student-focused and promoting student involvement in the entire assessment process (e.g., in the selection of the assessment tool, data collection, interpretation, and use of results) (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). In this vein, the Aiding Culturally Responsive Assessment (ACRAS) project, with partners in Austria, Ireland, Norway and Turkey, involved research and practical recommendations regarding *Culturally Responsive Assessment* at the lower secondary level with addressing the issue of assessment considering students with a migratory background in a culturally diverse classroom (Burns et al., 2019)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is other method that can be used to support fair classroom assessment, recognising different cultural backgrounds due to the possibilities that this framework provides for working with diverse students (Burns et al., 2019). UDL is aimed at providing educators with options that minimise barriers to learning and maximise opportunities for every learner to grow, in order to create educational systems that are more equitable and effective for *all learners,* offering guidelines to build flexibility that addresses learner variability (Rose et al., 2018). The main principles of UDL are i) providing multiple means of engagement (the *why* of learning), ii) providing multiple means of representation (the *what* of learning), and iii) providing multiple means of action and expression (the *how* of learning) (Rose et al., 2018). These principles can be used as guidelines to consider student diversity, as outlined in the handbook of Culturally Responsive Assessment (Burns et al., 2019).

In the field of large-scale assessment there are several initiatives that include elements of cultural recognition, such as the adjustments made in New Zealand to diagnostic assessments of reading and mathematics based on the IBRLA (Initiation, Benefits, Representation, Legitimacy, and Accountability) framework, which consider the Māori concept of these dimensions of learning (Gardner et al., 2009), or the contextual adaptation of state assessments in Queensland, Australia (PREAL, 2009, in Flórez et al., 2018). Moreover, there have been attempts by international agencies and test developers to address some of the concerns regarding student diversity, mainly focused on gender, language conditions, and disabilities (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020). These efforts are generally centred on avoiding bias and fulfilling the requirements to build valid instruments that prevent construct-irrelevant variance, such as by using Differential Item Functioning (DIF) (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). *Accommodations* (modifications to test content) and *adaptations* (modifications to format) are other strategies introduced to assessments to offer all candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020).

Besides the progress in terms of offering opportunities to a broader range of students to demonstrate their knowledge, there are limitations in terms of changing the prevailing patterns linked to dominant and legitimised knowledge, as diversity continues to be seen more as a problem to solve than a form of knowledge to include (Flórez et al., 2018; Gardner et al., 2009; Treviño, 2006)*.*

3.3 Participation dimension

The participation dimension refers to the inclusion and participation of individuals and groups in decision-making processes, enabling their influence on the institutions, policies, and processes affecting their lives (Adams & Zuñiga, 2016). Along these lines, Fraser (2003) proposes the idea of 'parity of participation', meaning that decisions should be shared among all stakeholders, being particularly important the participation of those who have been discriminated against because of their ethnicity, gender, age, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic conditions, or certain characteristics of a group (Murillo & Hernández, 2011).

A key element of this approach is the concept of *oppression*, which raises the importance of power distribution in society, revealing the unequal relationships between the oppressor and oppressed (Young, 1990) and connecting with the notion of *parity of participation* in society, as highlighted by Fraser. From this perspective, education has a key role in terms of making an individual conscious of

any oppression and motivating them to transform this reality (Young, 1990) and, in that sense, the participation dimension could be connected with the critical pedagogy perspective represented by authors such as Henry Giroux (United States), Peter McLaren (Canada), and Paulo Freire (Brazil), which proposed a revolutionary role for schools in social justice and democracy (Freire, 1996; Giroux, 2003; McLaren, 2016). These authors raised the idea of the school as a site of contestation, resistance, and possibility (Giroux, 2003). They point out that educators and schools have to work with the students' experience, legitimising their culture, making visible their languages, dreams, and values, and promoting critical and analytical skills to reveal the relationships of domination (Giroux, as cited in Freire, 1985). In terms of school organisation, the participation dimension places special emphasis on the democratic process within schools: how the decisions are taken, how the methods of engagement and control operate, and how the relationships of power between the parties involved in the education process are (between students and teachers, teachers and school managers, and teachers and parents) (Lynch & Lodge, 2002).

The participation of different educational agents and the democratisation of the different processes of assessment are seen as key elements to contribute to fairer assessment and social justice in school and society. In this vein, Gipps (1999) highlighted the relevance of "*openness*" in the different stages of assessment in order to build fairness.

> The best defence against inequitable assessment is openness. Openness about design, constructs, and scoring will bring out into the open the values and biases of the test design process, offer an opportunity for debate about cultural and social influences, and open up the relationship between the assessor and learner (Gipps, 1999, as cited in Camilli, 2006, p. 251)

The field of evaluation has developed a series of approaches and initiatives focused on the participation dimension. In particular, democratically-oriented evaluations explicitly support democratic values like social justice, equality, empowerment, and emancipation (Greene, 2006). The main purpose of this kind of evaluation in democratic terms is not to assess the effectiveness of a program or the merit of someone, but to produce changes in the community that contribute to democratic changes in society (Greene, 2006, 2012). The origin of this perspective in evaluation lies in Barry MacDonald's proposal of "*democratic evaluation*" in England and Ernest House's commitment to social justice for evaluation in the United States (Greene, 2006). According to Greene, (2006), democratically-oriented evaluation includes *Democratic evaluation* (McDonald, 1976, as cited in Greene, 2006), *Deliberative democratic evaluation* (House & Howe, 2000) *Critical evaluation* (Greene,

2006)*, and *Responsive evaluation* (Stake & Abma, 2005). A series of elements to design and implement democratically-oriented evaluation have been mentioned, some of which are presented in Table 1 at the beginning of the section. First is the inclusion of the stakeholders related to the issue evaluated, considering their interests and engaging them in the decisions (Greene, 2006; Howe, 2010). Second is *Dialogue.* People involved in evaluation should listen to others and explore others' beliefs and persuasions instead of confronting, attacking, and defending (Abma, 2006). Third, a democratic process is needed, for instance, following a deliberative process where a rational, cognitive process and a negotiation between stakeholders is conducted (Greene, 2006).

Regarding school and classroom assessment, the literature makes some proposals about how to introduce democratic principles into assessment. For instance, the *Communicative evaluation* linked to dialogic pedagogy (Del Pino, 2014) and the *Inclusive evaluation* (Ferrer, 2007) related to the Learning Communities model consider the democratic participation of the educational community in assessment decisions to be a key element of assessment (Del Pino, 2016). These models understand assessment as a collaborative construction based on dialogue and orientation to solve the real problems of the school and its participants. The methods to conduct assessment consist of participatory action methodologies (interactive groups) and the work is based on the diversity of experiences and capabilities (Del Pino, 2014; Ferrer, 2007). These approaches to assessment give a leading role to students and teachers. For instance, in *Communicative evaluation*, the student participates in the construction of criteria and evaluative tools, and decides intersubjectively in the phases of the evaluation methodology. The social context also plays a key role as it is understood as a source of knowledge for the assessment. The assumption is that the school community provides information about the educational needs, problems in evaluation, and the requirements that support development of the student (Miguel Del Pino, 2014). An empirical example of the application of these models can be found in the Chilean research by Del Pino-Sepúlveda and Montanares-Vargas (2019) based on *Communicative evaluation*.

Finally, with regard to large-scale testing in education, the literature raises concerns related to the democratic dimension of social justice, highlighting the low participation in assessment decisions and process design on the part of teachers (Flórez & Rozas, 2020; O'Neill, 2013; Sahlberg, 2010), which tends to generate de-professionalisation, and demotivation among teachers (Mons, 2009; Stobart, 2008). In that vein, various authors (Ranson, Thrupp, Sahlberg, Darling-Hammond, & O'Neill, as cited in Flórez & Rozas, 2020) have suggested more democratic alternatives where professional responsibility is at the core of the accountability dynamic instead of the predominant position of

external control based on high stakes. Responding to these concerns, there are some large-scale assessment systems based on teacher-led and school-based assessments (see Cuff, 2018), such as those that use classroom work, portfolios, practical or performance demonstrations, and systems of moderation panels instead of external assessment such as, providing greater opportunities for participation to school communities, some of these examples can be found in Australia, Ontario (Canada), the Caribbean Examinations Council, Sweden, (Cuff, 2018, PREAL, 2009 cited in Rozas et al., 2020). Moreover, there are experiences with the key role of school communities in collaboration with local governments and regional organisations. For instance, in Queensland (Australia), assessments are developed, administered, and graded by school teachers in relation to the national curriculum and state guidelines, which work in collaboration with regional and state panels also composed by teachers, who help to make the marking comparable between schools (PREAL, 2009). In Malta, the QAD (Quality Assurance Department) combines external and internal assessment with improvement plans developed by the schools (Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021). In Nebraska in the US, there is the School-based, Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS), an assessment system based on school reports led by teachers in coordination with the districts (Roschewski, Isernhagen, & Dappen, 2006). Another example of large-scale assessment with a democratic orientation is the citizen-led evaluations, the Independent Assessment of Learning instrument (Medición Independiente de Aprendizajes, MIA) (Hevia & Vergara-Lope, 2016), implemented in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, that measures basic skills in maths and reading and designed so that parents, teachers, communities, and anyone else can apply them and also understand the results. In Chile, the "School Success" (Exito Escolar) project implemented in the city of Valparaíso, was based on the participative co-construction of communal assessment criteria with the schools on the basis of an appropriation of the curriculum in accordance with the learning that the communities themselves consider relevant. The school communities defined assessment scenarios and, to make them valid and reliable, judgment calibration panels were implemented at the school with the support of professionals from the municipality of Valparaíso (Flórez & Olave, 2020; Rozas et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This chapter explores how aspects of tradition and the philosophical field have helped shed light on various concerns and challenges regarding the discussion of social justice and assessment. This allows us to conclude that assessment is not merely linked exclusively with the technical field, but is also a social activity related to political, historical and even social and moral debates, so an interdisciplinary perspective or a multifaceted approach is needed. In that respect it is worth looking at the connections

and links between the different traditions and fields that enrich the discussion on social justice and assessment. The dimensions proposed by Nancy Fraser and the implications for assessment presented in this chapter could be connected to other perspectives described in other sections. For instance, regarding social reproduction theories (section 2.2.3), the indication of the role of educational assessment in legitimising social hierarchies and the negative consequences for groups in disadvantaged positions could be related to the distinction between equity and equality presented in this chapter (section 3.1). Another link to highlight is the connection to the sociocultural perspective of assessment (section 2.2.4). The emphasis that this perspective made about the relevance of considering contextual factors and the influence of the sociocultural environment on the experience of assessment, could be connected with the notion of recognition of inclusion of cultural differences presented in this chapter.

In addition, valuable connections can be made between the social justice dimension and the Chilean context (Chapter 4), particularly with regard to education policies and the way in which national assessment via SIMCE has been addressed over time by educational policy and the educational dimension of social justice. In the 1990s, the discourse and focus of education policy on the notion of equity and compensation (see Section 4.4.2) could be connected with the challenges proposed in the redistributive dimension regarding the distinction between equality and equity. In addition, the criticism of the SIMCE test from civil society (see Section 4.6), where participation is demanded in decisions on assessment, could be connected to the participation dimension of social justice with respect to the emphasis given to the democratisation of the different processes of assessment as key aspects to contribute to fairer assessment.

CHAPTER 4. THE CHILEAN CASE

Introduction

In this section I present the Chilean case and the role that assessment, and particularly the SIMCE test, have had in the country. The aim is to outline the central elements of the Chilean educational model in order to familiarise the reader with the national context, as well as to explain the features of the educational and assessment model that make Chile an interesting case to study in the field of assessment and social justice.

4.1 Chile as a neoliberal experiment in education

The Chilean educational system has been one of the most radical cases of neoliberal experimentation in the world, representing "the first experiment with neoliberal state formation" (Harvey, 2017, p.7), which can be seen on the systematic policy of privatisation implemented, driven by competition and the market (Bellei & Vanni, 2015; Cornejo, 2018). This neoliberal model was imposed in the 1980s by the dictatorship, mainly influenced by the Chicago School of Economics in the United States, based on economist Milton Friedman's proposals, as well as by the policies promoted by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government in the United Kingdom (Corvalán & García-Huidobro, 2016). The bases for the neoliberal orientation in education and other dimensions of society were introduced in the Constitution created by Chile's dictatorship in 1980, where education was not defined as a social right guaranteed by the state and private agents acquired the right to create and organise schools (Cornejo, 2018).

As a result of the policies introduced during the dictatorship and their expansion during the subsequent democracy (Cornejo, 2018; Falabella, 2018; Ruiz, 2010), Chile has an unprecedented level of privatisation (Bellei & Vanni, 2015; Verger, Zancajo, & Fontdevila, 2018). Unlike the rest of the countries in Latin America where the process of privatisation has been carried out to complement the role of the state and provide education services where they do not exist, in Chile, private agents replaced the role of the state based on a system with a strong tradition of public education, assuming a leading role in the provision of education and making profits based on state funding (Bellei & Orellana, 2015). As a result of these policies, from 1980 to 2020 state education went from educating 80% of students to only 30% (Bellei & Muñoz, 2021).

The market dynamic not only affected the organisation of the educational system, but also seems to have contributed to increased socioeconomic segregation and inequality in educational outcomes (Bellei & Vanni, 2015; Valenzuela, Bellei, & Ríos, 2014). Chile has a school system with some of the highest levels of socioeconomic and academic segregation in the world (Bellei, 2015; Valenzuela et al., 2014) with high levels of academic segregation within schools (Treviño, Valenzuela, & Villalobos, 2014) and even has educational *ghettos* structured by social classes (Cornejo, 2018). As a consequence of social segregation, students with similar socioeconomic characteristics are concentrated in different kinds of schools: most students of high socioeconomic status attend paid private schools, the majority of the students of medium and medium-high socioeconomic status attend private schools with or without state funding, and most students from low and medium-low socioeconomic groups attend state schools (Cornejo, 2018; PNUD, 2017). In practice that means that 62% of state schools have enrolment composed of at least 85% socially disadvantaged students, compared with 31% in private schools (Bellei et al., 2018 in Bellei & Munoz, 2021).

4.2 Chile and a tradition of large-scale testing: international and national tests

Chile is the Latin American country with the longest tradition in large-scale assessment, in terms of international and national tests (Martínez, 2008).

As regards international tests, in Latin America, Chile is the country with the earliest and highest participation in international assessment projects (Martínez, 2008; Schiefelbein & Schiefelbein, 2003) starting with the IEA test[9] (1971). By the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the curriculum and assessment unit of the Ministry of Education (*Unidad de Curriculum y Evaluación*, UCE) defined participation in international tests as one of its three priority lines of work (Bravo, 2011), which is consistent with the consolidation of the Evaluative State during the 2000s (see section 4.4.3). Then Chile added the first applications of PERCE[10] (1997), IALS[11] (1998), TIMSS[12] (1998), PIRLS[13] and

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[9]IEA; International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, IEA (Asociación Internacional para la Evaluación del Rendimiento Educativo).
[10] PERCE: First International Comparative Study (Primer Estudio Internacional Comparativo, PERCE) (UNESCO).
[11] IALS: International Adult Literacy Survey (National Centre for Education Statistics – NCES).
[12] TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (Asociación Internacional para la Evaluación del Logro Educativo – IEA).
[13] PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (National Centre for Education Statistics – NCES).

CivEd (2001)[14], PISA[15] (2002), and LLECE[16] (1997). Currently, Chile has high participation in six international assessments: PISA, ERCE, ICILS, PIRLS, TIMSS, and ICCS[17] (Castillo & Weintraub, 2021).

Moreover, Chile was the first country in Latin America to implement a national large-scale assessment in primary education with census-type characteristics (Martínez, 2008). The attempt to apply national tests to measure students' learning started in the 1960s, with the National Test on Verbal and Mathematical Ability (*Prueba Nacional de Habilidad Verbal y Matemáticas*), which was first applied in 1967 in Year 8. In 1982, it introduced the 'School Performance Evaluation Program' (Programa de Evaluación del Rendimiento Escolar, PER), applied in Year 4 and Year 8 (Falabella & Ramos, 2019). Later, in 1988, the Education Quality Measurement System (SIMCE) was introduced, which is the most extensive large-scale assessment implemented in Chile. The SIMCE test has been recognised in the region as a strong tool that achieved an early impact on educational policies (Martínez, 2008; Schiefelbein & Schiefelbein, 2003), something unusual in comparison with other tests in the region (Martínez, 2008).

4.3 SIMCE features

SIMCE is a national, standardised, census-based, and compulsory high-stakes test that measures students' performance in schools with regard to the National Curriculum in primary and secondary education (Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). It is a multiple-choice instrument applied annually that considers different subjects and school years depending on the period (see Appendix 3). The original subjects and school years included were Maths and Language in Year 4 and Year 8, but over time more levels and subjects were included. The latest national assessment plan for 2021-2025 outlined the application of SIMCE in five school years (Year 2, Year 4, Year 6, Year 8, Year 10) and five subjects (Language, Writing, Maths, Natural Science, and Social Sciences), which implies around 10 tests per school annually (see Appendix 3). In addition, the test results are presented by school (not by student) and are published nationally by formal state media such as the official website of the Education Quality Agency, and reported to school staff and parents.

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[14] CivEd: Civic Education Study (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement – IEA).
[15] PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD).
[16] LLECE: Latin American Laboratory for the Quality of Education (Laboratorio Latinoamericano de la Calidad de la Educación) (UNESCO).
[17] ICCSS: International Civic and Citizenship education study International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, IEA.

As SIMCE is a high-stakes test, it has serious consequences for teachers and schools, which can be classified into three areas: i) monetary rewards for teachers and schools, ii) school management, in terms of the autonomy to use and control resources and the requirements for school improvement plans, iii) supervision and penalties: external intervention by the state and the possibility of closure if continuing to produce low SIMCE results (see Appendix 2).

According to the Ministry of Education, the main purpose is "to contribute to the improvement of the quality and equity of education, reporting on the learning achievements of students in different learning areas of the national curriculum and relating them to the school and social context in which they learn" (MINEDUC, 2022, paragraph 2). However, the last expert SIMCE committee convened by the government (Comisión SIMCE, 2015) indicated that the main purposes of SIMCE were related to two dimensions: i) *Development*, such as providing information to monitor students' learning, and contributing information to school authorities and teachers to make curricular and pedagogical decisions, and ii) *Accountability and responsibility*, such as generating school staff commitments for student learning and providing information to parents. Reviewing documents and interviews with policymakers and people involved with the design of SIMCE, Flórez (2015) revealed that SIMCE has at least 17 purposes, some related to decisions by parents, schools, and policymakers. I argue that SIMCE also contributes to other aims linked to the historical and political context of the country, as explained in the following section.

4.4 The Chilean educational model and the role of SIMCE over time

This section describes the Chilean education model and the role of SIMCE over time (see Figure 1). In order to do this, I outline the main elements of Chilean educational policy over the last four decades because of the relevance of this period to understand the principles of the current educational system. The main argument in this section is that SIMCE has played a central role in educational policy since its origin, which has continued to the present. I divide the analysis into five stages according to the main purpose of educational policy and the role of SIMCE:

1. The dictatorship (1980s). SIMCE as a tool for market dynamics
2. The return to democracy (the 1990s). SIMCE as a compensatory tool.
3. The Evaluative State (the 2000s). SIMCE as a tool for accountability.
4. Inclusive policies (2015). SIMCE as a tool that generates tension.
5. The present: changing times (2022). The uncertain role of SIMCE.

Figure 1

Political Regimes and Purposes of SIMCE over Time
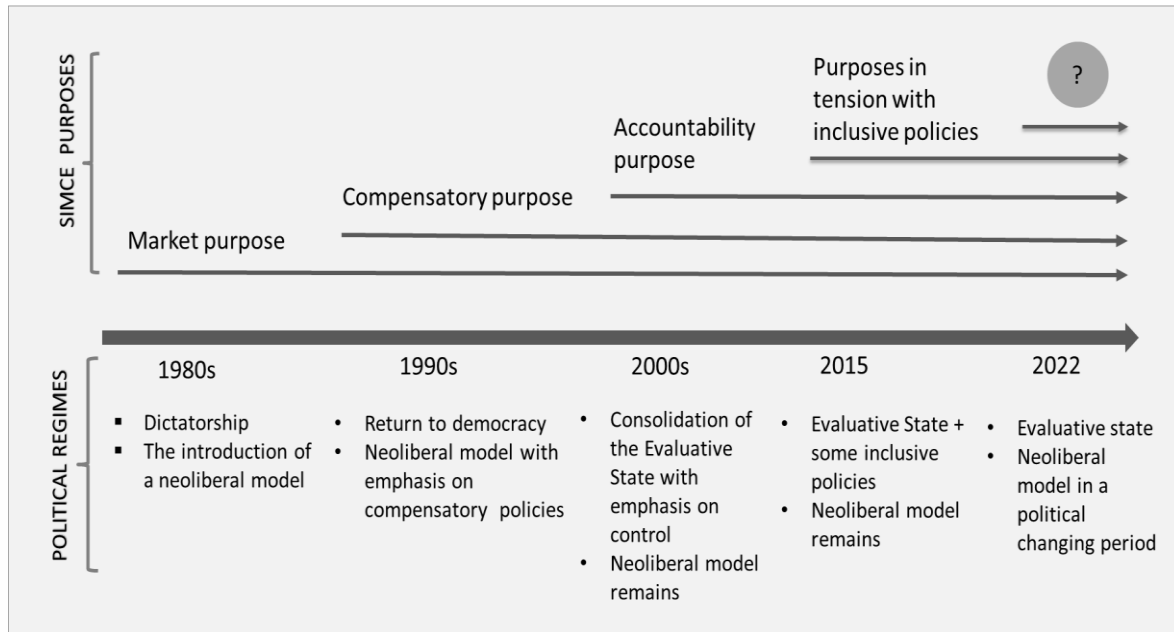
4.4.1 The dictatorship (the 1980s). SIMCE as a tool for market dynamics

As stated, Chile was one of the first countries in the world to experiment with the neoliberal model in education (Bellei, 2015; Corvalan & Garcia Huidobro, 2016) and SIMCE was one of the key tools to introduce, establish, and maintain the neoliberal model over time (Acuña et al., 2019; Campos et al., 2015).

In 1973, a military coup d'état ended democracy in the country, introducing a dictatorship between 1973 and 1990 that tortured and imprisoned more than 40,000 people for political reasons (Comisión Valech, 2011), including the disappearance and murder of more than 3,000 people (Comisión Valech, 2011) and the forced exile for around of 5,000 people (Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, n.d., paragraph 1). In the context of the lack of democracy and widespread repression, the dictatorship imposed a neoliberal model based on a *Subsidiary State* (Ruiz, 2010) (see section 4.4.1)**.** In order to install the neoliberal model in education, the dictatorship introduced a series of reforms that radically changed the educational system, including *municipalisation*, *school choice*, competitive school funding (voucher), and the *privatisation* of the system (Corvalán & García-Huidobro, 2016). The process of *municipalisation* ended the centralised system of education depending on the Ministry of Education

and shifting responsibility for schools to municipal authorities. As a result, the resources and capacities to administer schools were transferred to municipalities, generating inequality between schools and precarious working conditions (Oliva, 2010). The *school choice* reform established a system where parents could choose the school for their child, placing the responsibility for education on the family. The *voucher* introduced a financial system based on school competition where each student represents an imaginary 'voucher' and schools received funds according to the number of students enrolled, promoting competition between schools to attract students and thus obtain funds (Corvalán & García-Huidobro, 2016). The *privatisation of the system* consisted of promoting the participation of private agents in the school system and reducing the number of state schools by lowering the requirements to create private schools and generating conditions for business in order to incentivise the involvement of the private sector in the educational system (Ruiz, 2010), for example by using the co-funding system, where private state-funded schools can charge families[18].

In the context of these reforms, the SIMCE test was created in 1988, playing a key role to introduce, develop, and maintain the neoliberal model (Acuña, Mendoza, & Rozas, 2019; Campos-Martinez, Corbalán, & Insunza, 2015). First, SIMCE supported the *school choice policy*, because one of goals was for SIMCE to provide objective information to compare quality between schools to guide parents' decision when choosing schools (Campos et al., 2015; Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). Secondly, In the context of the introduction of competition for funding (voucher system), SIMCE was introduced as a tool to promote competition between schools and regulate school quality (Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). The assumption was that schools would try to improve SIMCE results to attract families in order to receive state funding, with a consequent improvement in school quality. Thirdly, in the context of the dictatorship's efforts to radically reduce the number of state schools (Ruiz, 2010), SIMCE was seen as a mechanism that could help legitimise private schools**.** The national standardised test (*Programa de Evaluación del Rendimiento Escolar*, PER) —implemented prior to SIMCE—was used by the military regime to argue that private schools were doing a better jobs than state schools (Cox, 1986) and, as under the dictatorship, SIMCE continued to have this role when democracy returned (Gysling & Rozas, in press). The Ministry of Education reports showed better performance of private schools, but

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[18] The co-funding system was an idea imported from the Chicago School of Economics in the economic area of the dictatorship, but finally implemented in 1993 during the first few years of democracy after the dictatorship. As private schools received state funding along with the fees paid by families, the creation of new private schools became a profitable business, leading to increased numbers of private state-funded schools in the system (Bellei, 2015). The Inclusion law enacted in 2015 established the end of co-funding, but this has been implemented progressively, so there are still some schools with this system of payment.

without contextual data (see MINEDUC, 1994) which was used to defend private education in the school system (Gysling & Rozas, in press).

4.4.2 The return to democracy (the 1990s). SIMCE as a compensatory tool

After the return to democracy, the government intended to reduce inequalities and compensate vulnerable sectors, allocating more funds to those areas. In this context, SIMCE was used to identify schools that needed more help and to focus state support, as well as to provide helpful information to contribute to school improvement.

As a result of the period of the dictatorship, education was in an extremely poor condition when the democratic governments regained power. Infrastructure and material conditions in schools were deficient, there were serious learning gaps between students, salaries were low and there were poor labour conditions for teachers (Cox, 2003). The diagnosis of the new authorities was that the market dynamic imposed by the dictatorship was not able to guarantee appropriate conditions in the educational system and the state should have a more active role in the sector (Martinic, 2010a). However, because of the weak democracy at the time, the new authorities decided to not make radical changes to the structure of the educational system and opted instead to focus on compensatory measures and improving internal school processes (Bellei & Vanni, 2015a). Then, during the 1990s, without abandoning the neoliberal and subsidiary state model, state policies in education were based on a discourse of *compensation* and *equity* (Cox, 2003; García-Huidobro, Ferrada, & Gil, 2014). The policy based on equity was also partly influenced by the 'priority education policies' developed in the 1960s in Europe and the 1990s in Latin America, introduced under the assumption that formal equality in access to the educational system did not guarantee real opportunities for students, so it was necessary to introduce compensatory measures, with greater efforts and resources channelled to the most deprived areas and populations (Bolívar, 2012). The idea of compensation and equity was in line with the *distributive notion of justice* expounded by John Rawls, who argued that justice is not merely offering the same to everyone, but providing different goods to compensate for the differences in the original conditions (see section 3.1). Chile followed these principles and the new democratic governments implemented a series of measures to improve education in socioeconomically vulnerable areas by providing pedagogic support for students, teacher training, materials, and support for families and school administrative teams, such as the emblematic 'Programme for Schools in Poor Sectors' (P-900) (Cox, 2003). In that context, SIMCE was used as the tool to identify the schools where

the resources should be focused and to be included in the programmes[19] (Ministerio de Hacienda, 2001), as well as to promote and evaluate the implementation of new public policies (Gysling, 2015; Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). For instance, SIMCE was used to promote the curricular reforms that were aimed at guaranteeing key learning for all students across national territory, aligning the contents of SIMCE with the national curriculum (Comisión SIMCE, 2003; Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). SIMCE aimed also served as diagnosis of student results for schools under the assumption that the results could be used by the school to improve the education provided (Bravo, 2011; Comisión SIMCE, 2003)

4.4.3 The Evaluative State (the 2000s). SIMCE as a tool for accountability

During the 2000s, Chile consolidated the Evaluative State in education based on a performance accountability system where SIMCE played a key role.

As in other contexts around the world such as the case of England[20] (Elliott, 2002), during the 2000s Chile consolidated the *Evaluative State* in education (Bellei & Muñoz, 2021; Martinic, 2010a), a model based on inspection and state control under the assumption that the increase in incentives and pressure on schools would significantly increase the general quality of the system (Elliott, 2002). In line with that model, the diagnosis in Chile was that the quality regulation system based on market dynamics introduced in the 1980s and 1990s was not enough and, consequently, the state should complement it by assuming a central role to evaluate and regulate the system (Vanni & Bravo, 2010). This period, like the previous one (the 1990s), was also orientated by distributive justice in the sense of improving knowledge distribution, meaning improving the quality and equity of education, but based on control and accountability of financial resources and educational results led by the state (Gysling & Rozas, in press).

Chile introduced some elements of the Evaluative State during the 1990s and early years of the 2000s, linked to control of the curriculum and teaching within schools (Martinic, 2010a; Parcerisa & Falabella, 2017), where SIMCE played a key role as the main indicator to define school performance. Of particular importance were the National Performance Evaluation System (SNED)[21] enacted in 1995, which entails a performance-based bonus for teachers in schools with outstanding performance, and

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[19] The beneficiaries of P-900 program were the schools located in the 10% of lower SIMCE results across the country (Ministerio de hacienda, 2001)

[20] A clear example of an Evaluative State is England, with the creation of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTEAD) (Elliott, 2002).

[21] The SNED policy classified some schools as 'excellent', mainly based on their SIMCE results.

the Preferential Subsidy Law (SEP) enacted in 2008 (Ley 20.248) (MINEDUC, 2008) which defines different levels of autonomy in the use of resources and penalties based on the school's performance (see Appendix 2). However, it was after a social movement led by secondary students denouncing problems in quality and inequality (Cabalin & Bellei, 2013), and in line with the international agenda (OECD, 2013b; Ravela et al., 2008) where accountability systems were suggested as the most effective strategies to increase levels of quality and equity in education, that Chile consolidated the Evaluative State with the creation of the System of Quality Assurance (*Sistema de Aseguramiento de la Calidad, SAC*) (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016).

The SAC enacted in 2011 created a new institutional framework in education, a series of measures to implement a model of performance accountability (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016), and declared the purpose of making the school responsible for students' results (MINEDUC, 2011a). In order to achieve this purpose, two new institutions were created: i) The Education Quality Agency that evaluates the achievement of educational standards and guides school improvements and ii) the Superintendence of Education that supervises the proper use of resources and the enforcement of legal regulations. The core of the accountability system was a school performance classification system, where all the schools officially recognised by the Ministry of Education[22] are classified into four performance categories according to a *Quality Index* based mainly on SIMCE*: high, medium, medium-low*, and *insufficient performance* (MINEDUC, 2011a). According to the performance categories, state-funded schools (private and non-private) risk various different consequences, such as visits from the Education Quality Agency to create or redefine the educational improvement plan, external pedagogical interventions, and the risk of closure (MINEDUC, 2011a). As a result of the institutional and legal changes implemented due to the SAC law, along with the previous mechanisms introduced in the 1990s, Chile consolidated a system typical of high-stakes accountability (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016) including: i) results targets predefined by the state, ii) a standardised assessment to measure school quality/learning outcomes, iii) the publication of the results and a school quality classification system, iv) consequences in accordance with the results (rewards and penalties), v) resources and/or technical advice for establishments classified as having unsatisfactory performance.

SIMCE thus played a leading role in the introduction and consolidation of the Evaluative State. On the one hand, SIMCE represented the main indicator to define schools and the consequences for school communities under the SAC law and in the previous accountability policies, such as the SNED and SEP

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[22] The exceptions are special schools and pre-schools (MINEDUC, 2014).

(see Appendix 2). On the other hand, the number of SIMCE tests significantly increased during the 2000s, reaching 15 tests annually in 2014 (see Appendix 3). Even though the SAC law defined the incorporation of variables other than SIMCE test scores, *Personal and social indicators*[23], to define the level of school performance in order to provide a fairer and more comprehensive evaluation of education quality, SIMCE continued being the main indicator for quality, representing at least 67% of the index and the sole indicator used to define school closures due to insufficient performance (MINEDUC, 2011a). Finally, the accountability system based on the Evaluative State described did not replace the market dynamic and the neoliberal model introduced under the dictatorship and continued under the new democracy, because their main mechanisms of this model, such as competitive school funding (voucher system), school choice for parents, and the privatisation of the school system[24] remained in force (Corvalán & García-Huidobro, 2016; Oliva, 2010). Therefore, today we have a *double accountability system* (Carrasco, Seppanen, Rinne, & Falabella, 2015; Falabella, 2018; Weinstein et al., 2016); one based on the market and the other based on the state. So, schools must compete and attract students to obtain funding (market accountability) and, at the same time, attain national performance standards (accountability to the state). SIMCE is used in both accountability dynamics; to inform parents' decisions about school quality and to promote school competition (market), and is also the indicator that demonstrates learning results to the state. In addition, SIMCE still has a compensatory role in the sense of helping to identify schools where the state plans to focus visits and support, with school in the lower categories of performance receiving more visits from the Education Quality Agency (MINEDUC, 2011a).

4.4.4 Inclusive policies (2015). SIMCE as a tool that generates tension

Influenced by international trends and local demands, the state introduced a series of legal initiatives to support work with student diversity, first regarding students with special needs in the 1990s, but later promoting inclusive practices in terms of a wider range of student diversity, including socioeconomic, academic, and cultural dimensions. However, as the performance accountability policies and market-driven dynamics remained in the system, inclusivity initiatives were subjected to

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[23] In the quality index, the Education Quality Agency included "*Personal and social indicators*" representing 33% of the index, while the "*Personal and social indicators*" are School attendance. (3%), Participation and citizen education (3%) School environment (3%), Healthy habits (3%), School retention (3%), Academic self-esteem and School motivation (3%), Gender equity (3%), and Technical-vocational qualification (3%). SIMCE represents the main criteria, at 67% (min) or 73% (max) according to the school features (vocational, mixed gender school).

[24] Chile is one of the countries with radical process of privatisation in education with high level participation of the private sector in the school system (Bellei, 2015; Verger et al., 2018)

tensions by these policies. SIMCE did not play a substantial role in promoting policies focused on inclusion and instead represented part of the tensions emerging due to the different logics in place, while supporting policies based on market and accountability dynamics.

- *A national and international picture*

The notion of *inclusion* is rooted in the 1960s in the United States in the context of the debate about the exclusion of children with different physical and cognitive conditions from schools (Rojas & Armijo, 2016), but it was at the 1990 UNESCO conference in Jomtien where this discussion was formalised. The concept of *Inclusive Education* is increasingly understood more widely and seen as providing learning opportunities, not only for students with special needs, but for all students, including those of different genders, from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, and with learning disabilities (UNESCO, 2009). In Chile, the notion of inclusive education has been strongly linked to social justice related to the idea of equity and equal opportunities (Matus & Rojas, 2015), firstly in connection to students with special needs, but later linked to multiple types of diversity, including broader cultural differences, such as the socioeconomic, cultural, gender, and ethnic dimensions (Gaete, Luna, & Alamos, 2020; Matus & Rojas, 2015). One of the most important initiatives regarding inclusion was the School Inclusion Law (*Ley de Inclusion Escolar* - N° 20.845) enacted in 2015 to regulate the student admission system in schools, eliminating fees and profit-making in state-funded schools, and introducing the obligation for state-funded schools to accept all students without any discrimination (MINEDUC, 2015b).

- *Inclusion regarding students with special needs*

In 1990, Chile started to move away from segregated models, where students with special needs were educated in special schools, to an integrated model where these students were able to attend regular schools[25] (MINEDUC, 1990; Santa Cruz & Rosas, 2020). In order to implement the integrated model, by means of decree N° 490/90 in 1990, the government implemented the provision of a state subsidy for every student with special needs integrated into a regular school and instructed schools to create special units within the establishments—projects of integration (*Proyectos de Integración Escolar,* PIE)—comprised by a stable professional team in the schools to offer support to students with special needs (Santa Cruz & Rosas, 2020). These measures, plus other changes introduced, such as the

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[25] The attendance of students with special needs at regular schools was made possible through decree Nº 490/90. (MINEDUC, 1990). However, some special schools remain in the system because not all students with special needs attend regular schools.

'National Policy on Special Education' (2005), which defines general strategies to expand rights for students with special needs; decree N° 170 (2009), which outlines extra funding for schools to work with students with special needs; decree N° 83 (2015) on 'Teaching diversification', which provided guidelines for curricular adaptations for students with special needs in special and regular primary schools (MINEDUC, 2015a), allowed increases in resources, materials, and guidelines for schools to work with students with special needs. This was also bolstered by initiatives such as the adaptation of school texts to braille in primary education (first adaptation in 1998) (MINEDUC, 2005, 2021b) and the international project (2000-2001) to boost the process of educational integration for the population with disabilities in initial and pre-school education centres, which provided materials to support the integration of students in the early levels of education (MINEDUC, 2005).

However, SIMCE policy did not play a leading role in policies aimed at expanding opportunities for students with special needs, but certain specific measures were implemented. Initial consideration of student with special needs began in 2009, with adaptations to the SIMCE test for students in Year 4 in schools in the Metropolitan region (Santiago) and some other regions of the country (Valparaíso and Bio Bío). From 2013, these adaptations were extended to students in Year 6 for the Maths and Language test. However, they were only for blind, impaired vision, and deaf students, and did not include the other levels and subjects included in SIMCE (Superintendencia de Educación, 2015). In addition, the guidelines provided by the Education Quality Agency meant that students with permanent special needs, such as those with blindness or various types of intellectual disability (e.g., Down's syndrome or Asperger's syndrome) could present a certificate issued by a professional in the area to avoid taking the test (Agencia Calidad, 2019). Thus, there were no accommodations for students with special needs except for those with particular visual or auditory impairments, and only in certain levels and tests.

- *Inclusion regarding Cultural Diversity*

Chile has an increasingly culturally diverse student population. The number of immigrant students, including non-Spanish speakers, has risen significantly in recent years -increasing in 612% between 2014 and 2019 (SJM, 2020)- and the majority of children and young people with an ethnic minority background were admitted to regular schools[26] (UNICEF - MIDESO, 2011). However, the distribution of cultural student diversity is not homogeneous between schools and regions; almost 60% of

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[26] According to UNICEF, in 2009, 97% of the indigenous population between 6 and 17 years old attended school.

immigrant students attend state schools[27] and around 70% is located in four regions in the country including the Metropolitan Region (SJM, 2020).

As a response to the diversity in schools, the state created a group of initiatives to promote equity and better conditions to work with students from these groups. For instance, in 2001, the Bilingual Intercultural Educational Project (Programa de Educación intercultural Bilingüe, PEIB) was created, supporting initiatives that contribute to contextualising, complementing, and preparing curricula that respect the culture of the country's indigenous peoples (MINEDUC, 2011b). Later, in 2020, the Ministry of Education approved decree 97 that established curricular bases for the subject of language and culture of ancestral native people from year 1 to year 6 in basic education (MINEDUC, 2021a). Furthermore, in 2016, the government created an ordinance (Nº 894) to guarantee equal conditions and rights for immigrant students in the educational system, requiring schools to provide appropriate conditions to integrate those students, recognising their culture and language (MINEDUC, 2016), and later the Ministry of Education created a plan for the National Policy for Foreign Students 2018-2022, suggesting a series of actions from the ministry in coordination with other state institutions and civil society organisations (MINEDUC, 2018b) to guarantee the right of education and inclusion of foreign students in the Educational system.

However, there is a series of barriers to address student diversity and introduce an intercultural approach in schools. The results of a survey applied in schools in the Metropolitan region revealed precarious conditions in work with immigrant and cultural minorities: 35% of the respondents indicated that the teachers and headteachers of their school have never received advice on implementing an intercultural approach (UAH, 2018), 38% stated that they have never explored the school curriculum from where their migrant students originate, and 87% said that their schools do not provide documentation in other languages. In addition, the report of the Jesuit Migrant Service (*Servicio Jesuita Migrante*) revealed that the Ministry of Education does not provide a pedagogical tool for learning Spanish or a mechanism to assess language skills (SJM, 2020). In addition, the Chilean government does not provide a plan or guidelines to address school assessment with students from different cultures or speaking different native languages. This is a pending issue to resolve because the international literature describes various hazards in the assessment of students with a migratory background that make the experience of assessment more difficult for them, such as the lack of formal

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[27] These percentages show that the distribution of immigrant students is inverse to the distribution of national students; 60% of national students attended private-state funded schools and only 35% state schools. Conversely, 59% of immigrants students attended state schools and just 30% private- state funded schools (SJM, 2020)

education and language proficiency in the dominant language of the new country (Padilla, 2011, cited in Burns, Brown, McNamara, & O'Hara, 2017).

With respect to SIMCE, it seems that there is no consideration of cultural differences between students regarding the contents, format, or implementation conditions. For instance, as regards non-native speakers, the only consideration is that schools are allowed to withdraw students who do not speak Spanish from the SIMCE test during their first year in Chile (Agencia Calidad, 2019). There are no modifications or accommodations to the SIMCE test regarding cultural background or the consideration of cultural knowledge in other ways.

- *Inclusion of those 'excluded' from the system: 'second chance schools'*

In 2020, some 186,000 children and young adults dropped out of the school system and in 2021 another 40,000 did not enrol in schools (MINEDUC, 2021c), suggesting that student dropout is a significant issue in the Chilean school system. Students who leave the school system tend to be children and young people belonging to lower-income sectors or adolescents living in conditions of poverty or social exclusion (Roman, 2009). One of the main factors explaining dropout is the need to work to contribute to family income, but also the conditions of the school system and student experience (Roman, 2009, 2013; Sepúlveda & Opazo, 2009). Indeed, one of the main reasons for dropout is school failure, expressed mainly in terms of low performance and repetition of years (Bellei, 2015; Roman, 2009). There are other factors that are directly linked to the educational system, such as the pertinence of the content, the teachers (expectations for students, concern and knowledge of the reality and characteristics of each of their students), and relationships with other students and with the school team (leadership team, teachers, inspectors) (Roman, 2009, 2013; Sepúlveda & Opazo, 2009). In that sense, regular schools have limitations to offer the necessary conditions and opportunities to students with different trajectories, conditions, and stories, those who have been expelled many times, or those who have left school because they consider it too challenging (Zabaleta, 2021).

In order to include students with interrupted school trajectories and who have ultimately been excluded from schools, there are *second chance school* or schools for reinsertion (Madero, Vargas, & Reimers, 2020). These schools are state or private schools that are focused on receiving students who have dropped out of the traditional school system, with the purpose of supporting the right of every young person to learn and receive a quality education, helping them to complete their compulsory

schooling[28] (Zabaleta, 2021). Many of these schools are currently under the administration of a non-profit organisation called SUMATE that works in partnership with a religious organisation called Hogar de Cristo (Madero et al., 2020)**,** and others are state schools run by the local administration, such as one of the schools included in this research, the Moon school. The second chance schools are formally recognised by the Ministry of Education under the same general rules and regulations as the other schools, in that they follow the national curriculum and students take SIMCE tests. Therefore, there are no accommodations or adaptions for SIMCE based on the students' difficulties or delayed progress due to their interrupted school trajectories. The students at second choice schools have to take the SIMCE test just like the rest of the students in the country do, in the same format, with the same implementation conditions, including response times, and without any mediation of their teachers or other school staff.

The conditions of the SIMCE test for students attending second choice schools, those with special needs, and those from cultural backgrounds other than the dominant one (Chilean, non-indigenous, from urban areas) suggest that SIMCE has a limited role in promoting student diversity and offering support for policies orientated by inclusive principles.

4.4.5 The present (2022): Changing times. The uncertain role of SIMCE

The pandemic has led to changes in the way that school classes are delivered and how assessments are done (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). The risk of contagion and the unusual educational conditions led various governments to suspend external standardised tests during the pandemic and Chile was not an exception (UNESCO, 2020). The parliament approved to suspend SIMCE test during 2020 and 2021 and the Covid 19 Social Committee, supported by academics from different universities, prepared a report with suggestions for educational assessment during the pandemic, proposing to reinforce formative assessment and describing the tension that SIMCE and other policies generate for a formative focus on assessment (Mesa Social Covid 19, 2021).

Prior to the emergence of Covid-19, in October 2019 Chile experienced a social uprising, or *Estallido social* as it was termed locally (Frens-String, Harmer, & Schlotterbeck, 2021)*,* in which millions of people across the entire country took to the streets for weeks to denounce inequality and poor conditions in areas such in pensions, health, and education. This social uprising caused a political crisis in the country and a national assembly was eventually created (*Convención Constitucional*) to propose

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[28] In Chile, compulsory schooling involves completing secondary education, equivalent to Year 12.

a new constitution for the country, replacing the previous one enacted during the dictatorship (Mohor, 2021). This assembly should propose the fundamental legal principles to define laws for different areas such as housing, health, and education, which represents an opportunity to introduce significant changes to the Chilean model (Spyer & Sadivia, 2021). In addition, a new president, Gabriel Boric, was elected in December 2021, heading a left-wing coalition that has proposed to end SIMCE and create a new formative assessment system based on teacher professionalism, continuous improvement, and integral learning, without consequences based on student learning (Apruebo Dignidad, 2021).

We are, therefore, living in changing times; the uncertainty under Covid-19, a national assembly drafting a new constitution, and a new president that promises to make changes to the educational and assessment system. In this context, the future of the SIMCE test is highly uncertain.

4.5 SIMCE effects

4.5.1 Effects on school management

As has occurred in other countries with high-stakes testing (see section 2.3.2), several studies (Bellei, Valenzuela, Vanni, & Contreras, 2014b; CIDE, 2012; Elacqua et al., 2013; Ferrada, 2017; Manzi, Bogolasky, Gutierrez, Grau, & Volante, 2014; Weinstein et al., 2016) have shown that SIMCE plays an important role in the organisation of school work in Chile, not only in terms of details, but also in the fundamental aspects of school organisation, such as time distribution, resource management, curricular strategies, and organisation of pedagogical activities. For instance, Manzi, Bogolasky, Gutierrez, Grau, and Volante (2014), using information from more than 300 state and subsidised private schools, reported that 76% of headteachers say that SIMCE is used to make decisions about the curriculum, and 96% of them state that SIMCE is used to monitor the school's progression year by year. Similarly, a study by Elacqua et al. (2013) indicated that more than 70% of the 200 participating teachers said that their schools defined school objectives in line with SIMCE. Furthermore, Ferrada (2017), who employs 16 focus groups, reports that teachers perceived SIMCE as something that *dominates* school organisation, even determining the value and prioritisation of knowledge (Ferrada, 2017: 339). In turn, Falabella & Opazo (2014), who conducted a case study in different regions of the country, show that schools tend to follow a 'SIMCE formula', taking instrumental decisions to improve their SIMCE results, for example, by allocating the most qualified/experienced teachers to the years that take the SIMCE test (Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Manzi et al., 2014; Weinstein et al., 2016) or buying

materials and paying for external private assistance in order to improve their SIMCE results (Bellei, Valenzuela, Vanni, & Contreras, 2014; Campos & Guerrero, 2016; Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Weinstein et al., 2016).

Moreover, local studies have revealed that some school staff introduce practices to increase the engagement of parents and students with SIMCE, such as motivational lectures for students to perform well on SIMCE, meetings with parents to encourage them to motivate their children and explain the consequences of low SIMCE scores (Falabella & Opazo, 2014), or the publication of SIMCE scores and SIMCE mock exams on school message boards as a way of promoting competition between classes and engaging students and parents with the test (Anaya & Gálvez, 2014; Falabella & Opazo, 2014). The schools also introduce threats (possible penalties) and rewards for students, such as telling the students they may have to repeat the year if they obtain bad results on SIMCE (even though this is not true), offering marks based on their performance on SIMCE (Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Flórez, 2013), organising trips to amusement parks to reward classes that improve their results, or promising material rewards, such as computers (Flórez, 2013).

Some of the studies conclude that SIMCE has positive effects on certain schools, for example by motivating school staff to improve results and identify subjects and learning dimensions that need to be reinforced (Bellei, Valenzuela, Vanni, & Contreras, 2014c), or, in the case of institutionally precarious schools located in environments with low competition, accountability policies such as SIMCE contribute to better organisation of school work (Bellei, Valenzuela, Vanni, & Contreras, 2014c; Falabella & Opazo, 2014). However, others studies (Falabella, 2019; Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Medina & Rodríguez, 2018) suggest that these effects are not generalised, as in many other schools the effects involve teaching to the test, without any genuine increase in professional capabilities or comprehensive educational improvements, as I describe in the following subsection

4.5.2 Effects on teaching to the test and curriculum narrowing

In Chile, as in other countries with high-stakes testing (see section 2.3.2), there are evidence that SIMCE leads to teaching to the test and curriculum narrowing in schools. Local studies report that schools introduced a series of activities to prepare for the SIMCE test (Anaya & Gálvez, 2014; Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Weinstein et al., 2016), such as mock exams, workshops, and classroom assessments following the SIMCE format. The evidence also shows 'reallocation between subjects' (Koretz, 2017: 95), meaning that the schools reduce attention to subjects not assessed by SIMCE, such as art, physical

education, and music (CIDE, 2012; Elacqua et al., 2013; Flórez, 2013; Manzi et al., 2014; SIMCE Committee, 2015), and even decrease their focus on levels not assessed by SIMCE (Anaya & Gálvez, 2014). Several schools also neglect he skills and knowledge not assessed by SIMCE, such as divergent thinking, creativity, critical thinking, expressive skills, artistic and sports abilities, and other complex abilities (Bellei & Morawietz, 2016; Comisión SIMCE, 2015; Andrea Falabella & Opazo, 2014). In turn, Ruminot Vergara (2017) reports that teachers did not address all the contents of the maths units defined in the curriculum, prioritising the units considered in SIMCE, which the international literature calls "reallocation within a subject" (Koretz, 2017, p. 97). In addition, some studies (Comisión SIMCE, 2015; Manzi et al., 2014; Weinstein et al., 2016) show that teachers adapt their internal classroom assessments to make them similar to SIMCE, reducing assessments to multiple-choice and content-centric tests which limited the opportunities of students to explore different kinds of assessment (Mena, Méndez, Concha, & Gana, 2018). In general the teachers are not happy with the effects, with one of the large-scale surveys in the country revealing that most of the teachers consulted believe that that SIMCE is impoverishing the teaching-learning process rather than contributing to improve the quality of schools (CIDE, 2012).

The impact of the SIMCE test on teaching and school strategies is also particularly strong in schools classified as low-performing and which serve families of low-socioeconomic levels (Elacqua et al., 2013; Manzi et al., 2014), which is an extra detrimental effect for populations occupying disadvantaged positions in society. For instance, the study by Elacqua et al. (2013) indicates that schools categorised as having low performance allocated teachers with better qualifications to the levels assessed by SIMCE (particularly in Year 4) and shows that the lessons by maths teachers in Year 4 have less interaction between teachers and students, and less consideration of the interests, motivations, and viewpoints of students, suggesting that this could be related to the focus on external standardised tests.

4.5.3 Effects on student learning

Following the international trend (see 2.3.2), although some studies show positive effects of accountability policies in student learning, in Chile there is no conclusive evidence on this relationship (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016). The study by Mizala and Torche (2013), based on the analysis of the SIMCE results of Year 4 students between 2006 and 2011, concludes that the Preferential School Subsidy (SEP), one of the accountability policies based on SIMCE results, contributed to improving educational outcomes. Meanwhile, a comparative study on education financing policies in Latin

America (Bertoni et al., 2018) indicates that the SEP policy has contributed to increasing equity in the distribution of resources and learning outcomes for the students assessed on SIMCE. However, other studies are less positive. The study by Bellei, Valenzuela, Vanni, Contreras, et al. (2014) shows that 90% of basic education establishments did not show sustainable improvements on SIMCE tests during 2000-2012, considering mathematics and language simultaneously. Likewise The Education Quality Agency (Agencia Calidad, 2020) reports that in the decade between 2009 and 2019, learning outcomes measured on SIMCE for students from Year 8[29] diminished in maths, did not improve in reading, and decreased in history, geography, and social sciences compared with the last measurement. Moreover, the study by Feigenberg, Rivkin, & Yan (2017), based on the analysis of SIMCE data between 2005 and 2014 from primary schools, suggests that the improvement of the results on the Year 4 test among students of lower socioeconomic levels was not attributable to SEP, but to the higher education and income of the parents. In addition UNESCO (2017) reports indicate that Chile did not achieve a significant improvement on international tests.

4.5.4 Effects on pedagogical purposes

The literature suggests that SIMCE has limitations to contribute to pedagogical purposes, with regard to providing information that helps teachers and school staff design and implement strategies to improve students' learning. Even though the SIMCE policy refers to a pedagogical goal, "To provide information … to inform the pedagogical practices of teachers" (Comisión SIMCE, 2015: 67-68) at the central level, experts found that the SIMCE policy had difficulties achieving this purpose (Comisión SIMCE, 2003). In order to address this issue, certain measures were taken to facilitate the use of SIMCE results by school communities, such as creating performance standards to show not only the numerical scores, but also the percentage of students in each of the achievement levels defined (Gysling, 2015), improving the report to include guidelines to interpret the results, and providing different reports to parents and teachers to facilitate the comprehension of SIMCE results (Comisión SIMCE, 2015). However, according to various studies (Acuña, Mendoza, et al., 2019; Gysling & Rozas, in press.; Manzi et al., 2014; Ortiz, 2012), SIMCE still has significant limitations to contribute to pedagogical purposes, basically because the results arrive late—the following academic year— hindering the teachers' adaptation of lesson plans, but also because they do not provide data for individual students (only aggregated data), preventing the identification of students with learning gaps and actions from being taken to support them (Manzi et al., 2014). It also fails to help design teaching

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[29] The results from Year 8 were the only ones that could be analysed, because in 2019, due to the political situation and the 'social uprising', the number of schools that took the SIMCE test in Year 4 was reduced and it was not possible to take results in Year 10.

strategies in accordance with the students' school trajectories and the test does not consider the experiences and conditions of diverse students (Colegio de Profesores, 2019).

4.5.5 Effects on minorities and disadvantaged groups of students

As seen in section 2.3.2, there is international evidence that high-stakes testing discourages schools and teachers from working with diverse students as they are perceived as an obstacle to achieving high results on standardised assessments (e.g. Au, 2020; Falabella & De la Vega, 2016). In the case of Chile, the distribution of time and resources based on students' needs, such as the implementation of differentiated teaching strategies according to special needs, spending more time on certain content to address the different learning rhythms of students, and addressing socioemotional skills in students are perceived as something of a 'risky area', because they are not directly linked to improving standardised results, (Falabella & Opazo, 2014: 17). In addition, the excessive influence of the SIMCE test on internal assessment limits the possibilities of diverse kinds of assessments and discourages the introduction of differentiated types of assessment within schools (Mena et al., 2018), which could reduce the opportunities for students from minorities groups that are considered outside the norm (McArthur, 2016).

There is also evidence of discriminatory practices against vulnerable groups. In particular, some studies report that schools implement strategies and organise admission processes to select students who are easier to teach in order to increase their SIMCE results and improve their reputation (Carrasco & Fromm, 2016; Carrasco, Gutiérrez, & Flores, 2017; Falabella, 2013; Hsieh & Urquiola, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2016). For instance, Carrasco and Fromm (2016) point out that some schools implement a policy of 'selectivity for improvement', as a strategy to choose students with better chances of achieving good results and, accordingly, increase their SIMCE outcomes and improve school enrolment. The study by Carrasco et al. (2017) reveals that there are different mechanisms to select students, such as play sessions, student testing, or interviews with parents, suggesting a clear relationship between the goal of obtaining good SIMCE results and selective practices. Once the students are in the school system, some establishments continue implementing detrimental practices with respect to student inclusion. In some schools, low-performing students are asked not to attend the school on the day of the test (Campos & Guerrero, 2016; Falabella, 2013; Falabella & Opazo, 2014), or even expelled from the levels assessed by SIMCE (Falabella, 2013; Weinstein et al., 2016). In line with this, Sánchez (2018) concludes that, after the introduction of an accountability policy based on SIMCE results (the SEP law), the likelihood of low-performing students taking the standardised test

significantly decreases (by more than 14 percentage points), suggesting that schools introduced strategies to prevent these groups of students from taking the test.

4.5.6 Effects on stigmatisation and school segregation

In line with international literature that suggests that accountability policies based on high-stakes testing promotes stigmatisation and school segregation (Au, 2021; Lipman, 2004), the conditions of the Chilean educational system seem to contribute to these effects. Like other countries with high-stakes testing (see section 2.3.2) in Chile, the results of the external test are published, creating rankings, league tables, and equivalent tools, generating stigmatising effects. An emblematic example of this is the initiative to produce 'SIMCE traffic light maps' (see Leiva & Díaz, 2017), a system created by the Ministry of Education in 2011, where schools were located on maps, marked in different colours according to their performance on SIMCE (red, yellow, or green). These maps were delivered to families to provide information to help them locate schools in an area by quality. Due to the socioeconomic segregation of the city, the maps showed poorer areas of the city concentrating the schools with low results in red and those in wealthy areas concentrating the green schools with high scores. After criticism due to the stigmatisation that these maps generated in school communities, they were eliminated, but a similar initiative was created by the Education Quality Agency, with a public system to identify schools in a territory according to their performance category[30].

The publication of the results and the league tables contributes to the stigmatisation of the most vulnerable schools; those serving low-income students tend to be in the lowest positions in the league tables and most of the schools in poor areas of the city are marked as red to indicate insufficient performance. Various studies (Assaél et al., 2014; CIDE, 2012; Flórez, 2013; Manzi et al., 2014) show that teachers believe that SIMCE leads to unfair comparisons between school performance because it does not consider the complex and challenging contexts faced by many schools in the country, dismissing the work done by schools in vulnerable areas, which is a claim also made by teachers in other countries such the United States and England (Mons, 2009). In the same vein, a series of qualitative studies (Acuña, Assaél, Contreras, & Peralta, 2014; Falabella, 2016; Rojas & Leyton, 2014) report that, in schools in challenging socioeconomic contexts and categorised as having low performance, accountability policies based on high-stakes testing generate frustration, anxiety, and feelings of incomprehension and despair among staff members. However, these feelings are not

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[30] See here https://localizar.agenciaeducacion.cl/

exclusive to vulnerable schools. Flórez (2013) and Campos and Guerrero (2016) report that teachers associate SIMCE with negative feeling such as stress, helplessness, pressure, and frustration, and the CIDE survey (CIDE, 2012) shows that 71% of the teachers consulted, who work at schools with varying realities and performances, believe that there is an increase in teachers' stress and anxiety due to the pressure for academic results.

SIMCE also seems to contribute to segregation between schools, leading some schools concentrate students with low socioeconomic profiles, while others concentrate students with high socioeconomic status (Comisión SIMCE, 2015; Treviño, Valenzuela, & Villalobos, 2016a). This could be because wealthy parents choose schools with higher SIMCE results, as is the case with respect to standardised tests in the United States (Au, 2021), or because the school tries to retain students who are more likely to well perform on these tests to maintain/generate school prestige (Carrasco & Fromm, 2016). Moreover, some local studies point to a possible relationship between the high accountability policies linked to SIMCE and within-school segregation. For instance, there are practices to segregate students into different groups in classes or school levels according to their abilities in key subjects in order to increase the students' results on standardised tests (Anaya & Gálvez, 2014; Rojas, Falabella, & Alarcón, 2016; Treviño, Valenzuela, & Villalobos, 2014; Weinstein et al., 2016), or they can take students with higher performances out of their regular lessons to provide them with additional training on maths and language (Flórez, 2013). These strategies are concerning in terms of the segregation of students within schools and the potential inequality with regard to learning opportunities for the students (Treviño, Valenzuela, & Villalobos, 2016b).

Connecting this evidence with on inclusion policies (see section 4.4.4), it seems that the policies in the Chilean educational system are placed under strain by two opposing logics, those based on accountability and market principles on the one hand (Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Rojas & Armijo, 2016; Sisto, 2019) and policies based on inclusion principles on the other. The performance accountability and market-driven approach press the school to be focused on improving SIMCE results to gain prestige and have a greater chance of attracting students in a context of competition-based school funding and to avoid penalties from the state, while the cost of this seems to be neglecting the orientation towards inclusion that promotes work with diverse students.

4.6 Criticism of the SIMCE test from civil society

In line with the impact of SIMCE described in the previous section, there has been criticism of the test from different members of society, such as teachers, parents, student movements, researchers, and politicians, who have that pointed to the negative consequences for school communities, such as curriculum narrowing, stigmatisation of state schools, discrimination of low-performing students, high levels of stress for teachers and students, and the role of SIMCE in the neoliberal model (ACES, 2012; Orellana, 2014). In that context, a campaign called Alto al SIMCE (Stop SIMCE) conducted by researchers, teachers, and students emerged in 2013 (Montero, Cabalin, & Brossi, 2019; Mauricio Pino, Oyarzún, & Salinas, 2016), which proposed ending the national standardised test in Chile and called for a new form of assessment based on democratic and inclusive education that considers school communities and their contexts (Campaña Alto al SIMCE, 2014). Various actions were carried out by this campaign and other groups to protest against the SIMCE test. For instance, in 2013 the students organised the first boycott of the SIMCE test in different schools around the country, including some emblematic secondary schools (Falabella & Ramos, 2019; Guillou, 2014), which was repeated in later years. These actions blocked the application of the test at these schools, thus preventing them from being classified and meaning they did not receive any financial bonuses linked to good results on SIMCE (Quevedo, 2016). Other actions included a public letter from educational researchers and recipients of national awards in education (El Mostrador, 2013) calling for a new system of assessment and ending the system of punishments/incentives for school communities based on SIMCE results and the publication of results by schools, in addition to other demands. A letter was also sent to the Ministry of Education (La Nación, 2015), from parents denouncing the negative effects of SIMCE, such as stress and anxiety for students, the impoverishment of education due to the neglect of subjects not assessed by SIMCE, and discrimination of students with lower academic performance, of low socioeconomic background, or those with special needs. Furthermore, President Michelle Bachelet, elected in 2014, also displayed a critical position on SIMCE, stating that SIMCE "Impoverished the concept of quality and education, and promoted practices such as selection, exclusion, and training for tests," establishing the challenge of "overcoming this definition and promoting a more complex and comprehensive understanding of quality to recoup the meaning of educational work" (Bachelet, 2013, as cited in Pino et al., 2016, p. 344) [my translation].

In response to these criticisms, in 2014 the government convened a commission of experts to review the SIMCE policy. The commission proposed maintaining the SIMCE policy in the system, but reducing the number of SIMCE tests by around half (cutting them from 15 to only seven or nine) and monitoring

erroneous interpretations and uses of the test, among other actions (Comisión SIMCE, 2015). A series of legal initiatives was also proposed in parliament to reduce the impact of the SIMCE test on schools. These including banning the publication of SIMCE scores by school (Allende, Bianchi, Guillier, Montes, & Navarro, 2017), preventing the closure of school due to their classification in terms of performance (Latorre, Quintana, Provoste, & Montes, 2019), reducing the weight of SIMCE in the school performance classification, giving more weight to comprehensive quality indicators, preventing the use of school time for SIMCE preparations (Girardi et al., 2019), and halting the application of national exams in Year 4 and lower levels due to the stress that this generated among young students (Girardi, 2018). These initiatives have not yet been approved, but some of them are already under discussion in parliament.

Conclusion

Chile is a particularly interesting case for research in the educational field. It is an early and extreme case of neoliberal policies implemented in education worldwide, it shows high levels of social and academic segregation in the school system, it has one of the most extensive national-scale assessments in Latin America, and, as in other educational system around the globe, it has an accountability regime based on SIMCE test with high consequences for school communities.

SIMCE occupied a central position in Chilean educational policies for the last 30 years. By the end of the 1980s, SIMCE was being used as one of the main tools for the introduction of neoliberal policies, contributing to various key parts of the model: school choice, the competitive school funding system, and increased participation of the private sector in education. During the 1990s, SIMCE supported compensatory policies, helping to identify school communities with lower performances and focusing interventions and additional resources. During the 2000s, with the consolidation of the Evaluative State, SIMCE emerged as the central indicator to define school performance and school closures. In recent years, even though SIMCE has not had a particular role in the latest policies related to inclusive principles, it continues playing a key role in the educational market and accountability system.

SIMCE is not only important in terms of educational policies, but also in schools. The evidence shows that SIMCE tends to have a significant influence on the organisation of work at school and impacts teachers' practices. Despite this influence, there is not conclusive evidence of its positive impact on student learning and the capabilities of members of school staff. In contrast, there is evidence of its negative effects on disadvantaged groups of students and poorer schools, in addition to narrowing of

teaching practices, aspects that have drawn criticism from various groups of society. This evidence generates doubts about the capacity of the SIMCE test to contribute to quality and equity in education.

For those reasons, I argue that Chile and SIMCE are interesting cases to investigate assessment and social justice in a context of high-stakes testing.

CHAPTER 5. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The study aimed to describe perceptions and experiences regarding assessment and social justice, with a focus on the SIMCE test in school communities orientated by inclusive projects. The research questions were the following:

- RQ1: What do three Chilean state school communities with an inclusive orientation understand by social justice in schools?
- RQ2: What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice?
- RQ3: How does SIMCE impact school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice?

Given the breadth of the research questions and the need for a range of evidence, data were collected using different methods and a wide range of participants to provide a holistic view of each school, as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Research tools and number of research participants

	School staff interviews	Parent interviews	Student focus group	School staff workshop	Observations (school meetings)	School staff survey	Documentary analysis
Research tools used, n	44	9	6	2	6	1	2*
Research participants**, n	48	14	38	40	72	34	6

* Institutional Educational Project (PEI) and School improvement project (PME)
** In the case of documentary analysis the number indicates the number documents analysed

To address these research questions, the study adopted a qualitative and multiple case study design that took place in Santiago, Chile between January and June 2018 in three state-run primary schools orientated by inclusive projects. Data were collected mainly through the staff of the schools, including the leadership team, integration team, coexistence team, and teachers, and secondarily with students

and parents. Multiple research tools were used: interviews, workshops, surveys, observations, focus groups, and documentary analysis.

This chapter is divided into six sections: i) Methodology and Epistemological Stance,
ii) A Multiple Case Study, iii) Sample of Cases, iv) Data Collection, v) Data Analysis, vi) Ethical Considerations, and a vii) Chapter Summary.

5.2 Methodological and Epistemological Stance

I chose an *interpretivist approach* to address my research because I share its epistemological position and it fits well with my research goals. In my view and based on my experience as a researcher, the way to access a 'reality' is through a particular interpretation that involves the researcher and the interpretation of the research participants, and there is no single reality, considering that each individual is unique and lives in a unique reality. These elements are in line with the interpretivist epistemology. From this approach, the access to 'reality' is through an interpretation and therefore the research actions involved a *double interpretation*; that by the participants and that by the researcher regarding the interpretation of the participants (Given, 2008). Therefore, my interpretation of data could be influenced by the experience of the researcher; in my case, my previous experiences as a student of the educational system exposed to national assessment and my past experiences as a researcher studying schools across the country. However, as the interpretivist and qualitative approach suggests, interpretation is a way to understand and produce knowledge about a phenomenon that does not represent an arbitrary or simple interpretation; it should be a well-founded interpretation and substantiated conclusion based on the observations made in the field and the different data collected by the researcher (Stake, 2007), and should also follow theoretical orientations that help the process of interpretation (Given, 2008). As Stake (2007) stated, I strongly believe that an interpretation requires a logical process to build an interpretation that is usually based on a mixture of personal experience, study, and the knowledge of other researchers, so a good researcher is reflexive, cautious, and willing to consider other versions of interpretations.

Moreover, I used a *qualitative design* because this approach offered better opportunities to explore the experiences and conceptions about social justice and assessment in school communities on the part of the protagonists of the experiences, considering their real context. Qualitative studies focus on giving voice to those who live experiences, enabling understanding about how people interpret their experiences and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Rimers,

2012). In addition, qualitative perspectives offer the possibility of identifying, analysing, and understanding the social processes and discourses that people or communities produce (Given, 2008; Mason, 2002), which was central in order to capture the conceptions of social justice of the school communities regarding the school role and educational assessment. Also, while qualitative research provides a *thick description* (Geertz in Given, 2008), it allows the production of *rich data* to achieve a profound understanding of the complexities of what is being studied (Given, 2008). These elements were relevant to capture the conceptions of the school staff and the relationships between different elements, such as the notion of social justice in a complex context, the Chilean scenario of an educational system with high accountability.

5.2 A Multiple Case Study

I chose the case study as the core design strategy to address my research objectives because this strategy focuses on studying contemporary phenomena within their real context (Yin, 2014), allows the description of complex social units (Merrian 1988 in Vanwynsberghe & Khan, 2015), and provides descriptions that are complex and holistic, and which involve a series of variables that are not highly isolated (Stake, 1978). These features were extremely relevant for my research because I aimed to describe the experience of the SIMCE test and social justice in assessment in complex social units: school communities composed of different members, with their relationships, culture, and ways of making decisions. In addition, consideration of the context, which is one of the strongest aspects of the case study (Yin, 1981), was a key element to take into account in my research, bearing in mind that the market-driven educational system and accountability are deeply embedded in the school culture in Chile (Carrasco & Fromm, 2016; Corvalan & Garcia-Huidobro, 2016; Falabella, 2019), a situation that could shape the communities' experiences regarding the SIMCE test, which were the focus of my study.

I aimed to describe the experience of schools with an *inclusive orientation*. By *inclusive orientation*, I understood this to mean the schools' openness to students who are traditionally avoided or seen as having fewer skills to perform well in the school system and on the standardised test (e.g., students from a low economic background, non-native speakers, students with special needs, and students with interrupted or delayed school paths). However, my purpose was not to address the schools orientated by inclusive projects in a representative way, but rather to use these cases as examples of how these experiences take place. For that reason, I chose the multiple case study as a strategy that would provide opportunities to work with different cases and to draw conclusions from a group of

cases, highlighting the main findings across the cases (Yin, 1981). In addition, my study aimed to contribute to understanding not only the experience of the schools chosen for the research, but also the experience regarding SIMCE in other schools, particularly in communities orientated by inclusive projects (explained in the next section). Therefore, I chose an *instrumental multiple case study*, because this aims to study a phenomenon going beyond a specific case (Stake, 2003).

5.3 Sample of Cases

5.3.1 Sampling criteria

As my research aimed to describe the experiences and conceptions regarding assessment and social justice focused on the SIMCE test in school communities oriented by inclusive principles, I therefore chose a purposive sample (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2006) to work with schools with an inclusive orientation. I also included complementary criteria linked to practical decisions and research gap considerations. I then sought schools presenting a series of formal and informal indicators that reflect the willingness of the school team to be inclusive and in terms of receiving, working with, and promoting student groups considered to be more challenging to educate and achieve academic results due to their personal, academic, or socioeconomic/cultural conditions. I aimed to explore a variety of inclusion dimensions, so I sought schools that provided different 'emphases of inclusion' in terms of the student population they cater for and the initiatives they have implemented to address this diversity. By 'school emphasis' it does not mean that these schools solely serve or focus on students with these characteristics, but that their student bodies do include a significant proportion of them and, more importantly, they pay special attention to them and make these aspects of student diversity part of their school project and public discourse. I provide details of the inclusion emphases I chose and the reasons why below.

I. *School with an emphasis on special needs students:* I wanted to choose a school with this criterion because even though the notion of inclusion is broader than special needs, this remains one of the relevant concepts regarding the notion of inclusion. Indeed, in Chile, there has been a series of recent policies intended to improve work in schools with students with special needs (see section 4.4.4). This emphasis was also relevant for the social justice dimensions in terms of offering opportunities and support to students with different capabilities (distributive dimension) and recognising and valuing their particularities (recognition dimension).

II. *Schools with an emphasis on cultural diversity, particularly with immigrant students and non-native speakers*. I chose this dimension because Chile has seen a significant increase in immigrant students in recent years and, for the first time, a large group of these people have come from a non-Spanish speaking country, which has represented a new challenge for schools. This situation is interesting considering the recognition dimension of social justice in terms of valuing different the characteristics and experiences of students.

III. *Schools with an emphasis on students with delayed school paths:* In Chile, there is a group of students who have problems following the expected school path for their age, due to social issues and the limitations of the school system to work with them, such as students with multiple repetition of school years, students with academic and behavioural problems who have been expelled from several schools, or students who failed to achieve the minimum level of knowledge for their age according to the national curriculum (see section 4.4.4). As a result, there is a group whose school paths are interrupted or they have dropped out of the school system. This situation is a challenge in terms of social justice because the right to receive an education for this group of students is at risk.

My aim was not to prove the "inclusiveness" of the potential schools selected or the veracity of the inclusive practices, but to check whether the schools had certain features that reflected an intention to promote inclusive practices. To decide whether the schools were oriented by inclusive projects, I used the following criteria and indicators:

Table 3

Criteria and Indicators to Define the Inclusive Orientation of the Schools

Criteria	Indicators
State-run primary schools	State schools are administered by public authorities (the council) and not by private sector agents. They serve students up to Year 8 (equivalent to Year 9 in the United Kingdom). Primary schools tend to be less selective and less competitive because the grades do not apply to the university system. State schools tend to be less selective than private schools because they do not have a tradition of selection (with the exception of emblematic schools at the secondary level)
Schools that cater to students from low or medium-low socioeconomic background	Schools that are categorised by the government as being of low socioeconomic levels. In order to evaluate this, I used two indicators used by the state: the school vulnerability index (*índice de vulnerabilidad escolar,* IVE, in Spanish) and socioeconomic groups (GSE, by the Spanish acronym). These indicators enable me to know whether the schools chosen tend to not discriminate against students due to their social background. Information from 2017
School does not have selective admission process	Admission process without selection based on student grades, tests, academic background, or other factors. The Ministry of Education provides information on its website. I also considered information provided by key external informants. I used information from 2017
Schools with Integration Project	Schools that have a formal Integration Project (*Proyecto de Integración Escolar,* PEI, in Spanish). Having such a project implies having a specialised team, internal policies, and resources to provide support to students with special needs. Formal information is provided by the Ministry of Education on its website. Information from 2017
School with a high percentage of students from a minority group of interest for the study	Schools with percentages of students from minority groups that are higher than the national or council average in one of the categories of interest for the research: percentage of immigrant and non-native speakers, students with special needs, students with delayed school paths). Information taken from Ministry of Education databases from 2016
Schools with initiatives orientated towards working with students from minorities and diversity	Schools with internal policies and initiatives to promote inclusive practices. Information reported by key external informants and found on the internet, YouTube, Facebook. Information checked in 2017

Complementary sampling criteria

a) School does not have an extreme position regarding the school performance classification

I decided to choose schools that did not have extreme positions in terms of school performance classification, that is, schools that are consistently in the low category of school performance and consequently at major risk of being closed due to their SIMCE results or schools that are consistently classified as having a high performance. I wanted to avoid these schools because there is already some national evidence about the experience of SIMCE in schools in these situations. Schools classified as having a high performance tend to have less resistance to SIMCE because they feel proud of the results (e.g., see Bellei, Valenzuela, Vanni, & Contreras, 2014; Contreras & Galvez, 2014; Rozas & Ruiz, 2014), while schools classified as having low performance tend to experience negative feelings about it because their survival as a school is under discussion as a consequence (e.g., see Assaél, Acuña,

Contreras, & Corbalán, 2014; Campos & Guerrero, 2016; Rojas & Leyton, 2014). I therefore decided to work with schools that were in middling positions, not on the list of schools with top academic results or on the list of schools with poor results. I considered two indicators to evaluate the school performance position: the SEP[31] performance classification carried out by the Ministry of Education and the SAC[32] performance classification conducted by the Education Quality Agency. I decided to consider both classifications because both are relevant for the school's work and position and could therefore influence the mood of the school staff regarding SIMCE (see section 4.5)

a) Convenience/practical criteria:

I included some practical criteria in order to facilitate access and the collection of information in the schools. However, it is important to note that these criteria were not used in isolation, but in relation to other criteria already described. Firstly, I chose schools located in the city of Santiago, because this is the city where I grew up and where my family lives, so it was easier to find access to free accommodation and to private transport which helped reduce the cost of my stay during the fieldwork. Secondly, I selected schools able to participate in the research during the first semester of the academic year. I chose this period of the year to do the fieldwork because, in my experience as a researcher, the school are less busy than in the second semester and consequently more willing to participate in research.

5.3.2 The selection process

The selection process was composed of four main stages. In the first stage, I defined the general criteria to select the sample: state-run; primary school; schools catering to students from low-medium low socioeconomic levels; and working with students with special needs, high levels of cultural diversity, or delayed school paths. In the second stage, I contacted key informants—researchers in education and educational authorities—and created the first list of possible schools based on their recommendations. In the third stage, I checked the inclusion criteria with different information sources and prepared a second list of schools in accordance with that. Third, I selected three schools that met the aforementioned criteria and which were willing to participate during the first semester of 2018. Figure 2 below shows a summary of the process.

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[31] SEP is the Priority School Subsidy law (*Subvención Escolar Preferencial*, SEP), created in 2008, which was aimed at offering more resources to schools with high numbers of students from the low socioeconomic level.
[32] SAC is the system for quality assurance created in 2011, assessed by the Education Quality Agency, a state institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

Figure 2

Process to Select Schools

1	2	3	4
Definition of general criterial of inclusive orientation	I contacted key informants	I check criteria of inclusion	I selected schools willing to participate
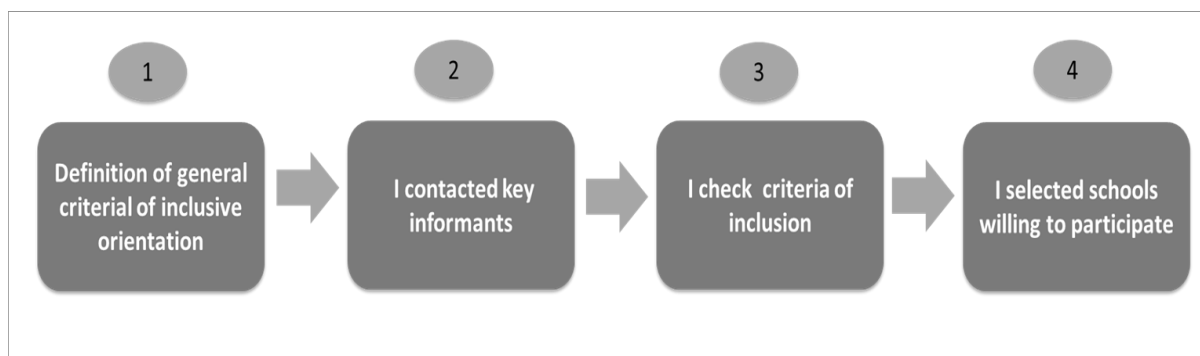
I chose three schools because this number allowed me to have a certain variety in terms of the school emphasis of inclusion without exceeding the schedules and resources defined in my research plan. Table 4 below shows the main characteristics of the schools according to the sampling criteria. The names of the schools were changed to maintain their anonymity.

Table 4

Key Features of the Schools Selected - How They Meet the Sample Criteria

Criteria	Star school	Sun school	Moon school
Inclusion emphasis and school ethos	Emphasis on special needs

The Star school defined itself as an *inclusive school; a school that is open* to student diversity and is willing to offer opportunities to address students' needs. The school staff report a high number of students with special needs and diverse profiles such as Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, and serious motor, visual and auditory disorders. Part of the ethos of the school was to offer integral education, in order to address not only the areas linked to curriculum subjects, but also aspects linked to artistic education. | Emphasis on cultural diversity

The school staff described itself as an *intercultural school community*. The school received students from different countries in Latin America such as Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela, and from other non-Spanish speaking nations such as Palestine and Haiti. There are also families and teachers belonging to the Mapuche indigenous people of Chile | Emphasis on delayed/interrupted school paths

The school staff defined the school as '*re-entry institution*' or '*second chance school*', providing students with several delays in their school path (at least two school years)[33] with the opportunity to complete formal education under the 2x1 format, studying two school levels in one academic year. Thus, the school attended a group of students that experienced situations of discrimination and failure in the school system, low academic performance, several school years repetitions, or expulsion from |

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[33] The students have at least exceeded the age expected for their school level, according to the regular educational system.

	These features were recognised and valued by the school community, leading to full enrolment at the school (45 students per class on average)		school. Some of them had interrupted their studies due to social issues (the need to work, pregnancy, drug problems, or family problems), or they were attending a special school but had to leave because of their age
Initiatives orientated to work with students from minorities and diversity	The school hired additional professionals to offer support to students with special needs. There was active inclusion of students with special needs in all school activities	The school recently created a staff group focused on inclusion to promote interculturality and inclusive practices. There are annual activities to promote interculturality, such as an intercultural market and indigenous celebrations	The school hired professionals in maths and language to offer personalised teaching to students with several gaps in the curriculum, particularly regarding difficulties in reading and basic operations in maths. Small classes were provided to offer personalised education
School with a high percentage of students from a minority group of interest for the study	% of SEN students at school (16%) > Council percentage (6%)	% of SEN students at school (16%) > Council percentage (3%) % of school students from Haiti (4%) > Council (0.5%)	-% of students with delayed school path: 100% because this is a requirement to attend the school. -% of SEN students at school (23%) > Council percentage (6%)
Location	Santiago (north of the city)	Santiago (north of the city)	Santiago (south of the city)
Administration	State-run school	State-run school	State-run school
Socioeconomic level			
Socioeconomic group (GSE by the Spanish acronym) – Year 4, 2017*	- GSE: medium-low[34]	GSE: medium-low	GSE: low[35]
-School vulnerability index (IVE) 2017**	- School IVE (79.5%) > council IVE (76.4%)	-School IVE (75%) > council IVE (59.7%)	School IVE (96%) > council IVE (75%)
Admission process	Admission without a selection process	Admission without a selection process	Admission without a selection process
School integration project	Yes	Yes	Yes

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[34] Most of the parents have declared that they have between 10 and 11 years of schooling and a monthly household income that varies between CLP 290,001 (USD 350 approx.) and CLP 460,000 (USD 566 approx.) Between 57.01% and 75% of students are in a situation of social vulnerability.

[35] Most of the parents or guardians have declared they have up to nine years of schooling and a monthly household income of up to CLP 290,000 (USD 350 approx.). Between 75.01% and 100% of students are in a situation of social vulnerability.

School performance			
-School performance classification SAC ***	2017: Middle-low	2017: Middle-low	2017: Insufficient
-School performance classification SEP****	2017: Emergent	2017: Autonomous	2017: Emergent
*GSE: has five categories i) low, ii) medium-low, iii) medium, iv) medium-high, v) high. The GSE is public information reported in the SIMCE reports. I used the indicator available for Year 4. ** IVE: values between 0-100%. This is reported by the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (JUNAEB), which is a state institution. ***SAC School performance: has four categories: i) high, ii) medium, iii) medium-low, iii) insufficient [my translation]. This classification is made by the Education Quality Agency. I used the 2016 database, which was the latest available in 2017. ****SEP School classification[36]: classification made by the Ministry of Education. SEP categories are: i) autonomous (high performance), b) emergent (medium or medium-low performance), c) in recovery (insufficient) [my translation].			

5.3.3 Strategies to access schools

Once I had a list of schools recommended by key informants[37] and I had checked the inclusion criteria in them, I called the school headteachers to explain the research and sent a formal letter via email inviting them to take part in the study. Subsequently, I visited the schools and met with the headteachers to explain the research. The first three schools I visited agreed to participate. Then I participated in a formal school meeting with the entire school staff where the leadership team introduced me. **Figure 3** below summarises the steps taken to access the schools.

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[36] SEP School classification i) Autonomous (high performance): The school has consistently shown hight educational results, according to the measurements carried out by MINEDUC, b) Emergent (medium or medium-low performance): The school has not consistently shown good educational results, according to the measurements carried out by MINEDUC. c) In recovery (insufficient performance): The school has repeatedly shown poor educational results, according to the measurements made by MINEDUC.

[37] The key informants were individuals outside the schools that recommended that I look at these schools based on the sample criteria that I was looking for.

Figure 3

Steps Taken to Access the Schools in the Sample
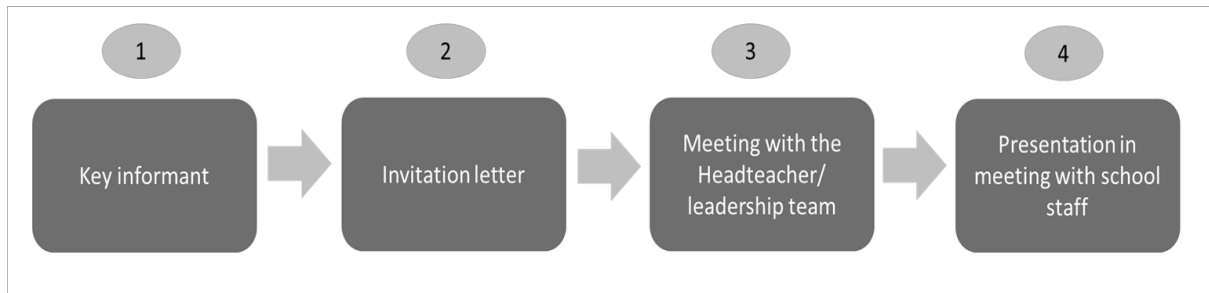
On the day of the meeting with the school staff where I was introduced by the headteacher, I presented the goals and research activities and gave the attendees a document including this information. I handed out a printed calendar and asked the people interested in participating to indicate the time they were available to be interviewed, their role at the school, and the way in which they wished to be contacted. I emphasised that participation in the study was voluntary. Several members of the schools registered their details in the calendar to be contacted. In order to coordinate the individual interviews with the school staff, I used the times and contact information indicated by the school staff in the calendar.

5.4 Data Collection

The data collection was carried out during the first semester of 2018, particularly between March and June (see Figure 4 below). I travelled to Chile in January to make contact with the schools and started the fieldwork in mid-March, which is when the academic year begins. I concluded the fieldwork in mid-June with the final activities at each school.

Figure 4

Timeline of Data Collection
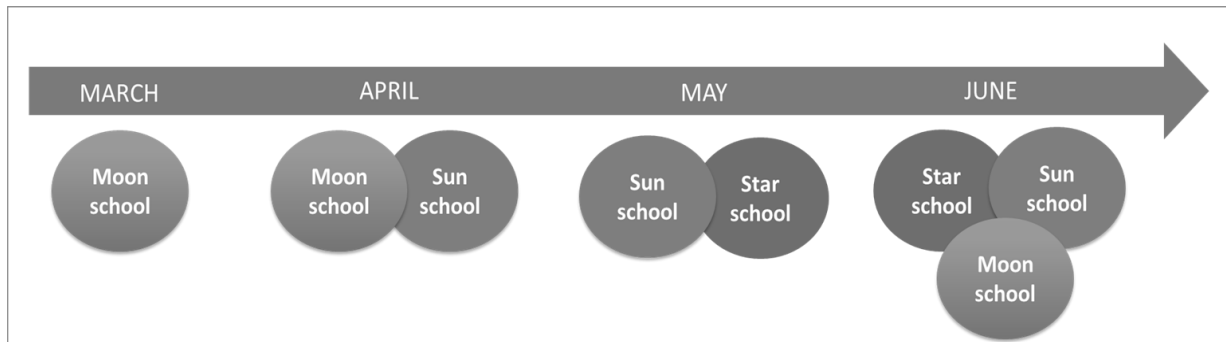
To contribute to the rigorousness and quality of the qualitative research (Silverman, 2016), I used triangulation; a strategy that implies a multimethod approach to data collection in order to understand different dimensions of the units of study and also to strengthen the findings and enrich the interpretations (Given, 2008). I also included various research techniques and different kinds of participants, as detailed in the paragraphs below.

5.4.1 Research participants

In order to produce relevant information about the school communities' experiences with SIMCE and social justice, I included different participants.

School staff:
The school staff in this research includes the leadership team, teachers, integration team, and coexistence team. Thus, when I refer to the 'school staff` I refer to all these participants. I considered the school staff as the core participants of the research because they are the people who take the main decisions in the school regarding how to address the SIMCE test and the practices and internal policies concerning student inclusion.

Leadership team
I considered the headteacher and deputy headteacher to be the leadership team. The headteacher is the main individual responsible for the operation of the school and is involved with the academic and administrative decisions. The deputy headteacher is responsible for the general planning and

management of the academic aspects at the school. Being aware of their experience is relevant because they are responsible for implementing the educational policy at the school and they make the decisions in terms of how to address SIMCE.

Teachers

I considered the teachers to be those who gave classroom lessons. Teachers can provide a view of SIMCE and its relation to social justice based on their experience in the classroom and their relationship with the students. I considered teachers from the levels both assessed and not assessed by SIMCE because their experience with SIMCE could vary due to the different pressures they may face.

Integration team

This team is usually composed of a psychologist, a special needs teacher, and a speech therapist. This team focuses their work on groups of students diagnosed with special needs, providing sessions both in and out of the classroom. However, this team also provides support to the teachers to design and implement activities and material in regular lessons to offer wider opportunities to all the students and not only students with special needs. I considered them because they could have a particular view of social justice while they worked to generate inclusive learning opportunities for all the students.

Coexistence team

The coexistence team is usually composed of a school social worker, a psychologist, and the member of staff at the school responsible for school coexistence. This team works for student wellbeing at the school, monitoring the situation of the students in terms of social issues such as family problems, and they also work to reduce conflicts within the school to promote a beneficial environment for students. This team could have a particular view in terms of the relationship between SIMCE and social justice because of their proximity to students with social difficulties.

Students

Students have to deal directly with the SIMCE test and with the strategies that some schools implement to raise the expected outcomes. As a consequence of that, students could be exposed to the negative/positive consequences of SIMCE in school. For this research, I included students from Year 5 and Year 8 (equivalent to Year 6 and Year 9 in the United Kingdom). I chose Year 5 because these students have taken the test recently (the previous year) and included students from Year 8

because they are finishing school, so it is a good time to capture their general views and reflections about the school, assessment experience, etc.

Parents

I included parents because they can be "key informants" to report school practices that could be difficult for the school staff to mention (e.g., student expulsions, discrimination, etc) and because they can contribute a complementary view of the student experience regarding SIMCE. I tried to choose parents of students in the Years in which I selected the students (Year 5 and Year 8). I also considered contacting parents from the parent union to gain a general view of the school and contacting parents of students with special needs to learn about the views of families who have commonly had to deal with exclusion issues.

5.4.2 Research tools

As shown in Figure 5, different research tools were used.

Figure 5

Research Tools

Interviews (53)	Workshop (2)	Focus groups (6)	Observations (6)	Survey (34)	Documentary
School staff (44)	School staff	Students	School meetings	School staff	analysis (6)
Parents (9)					
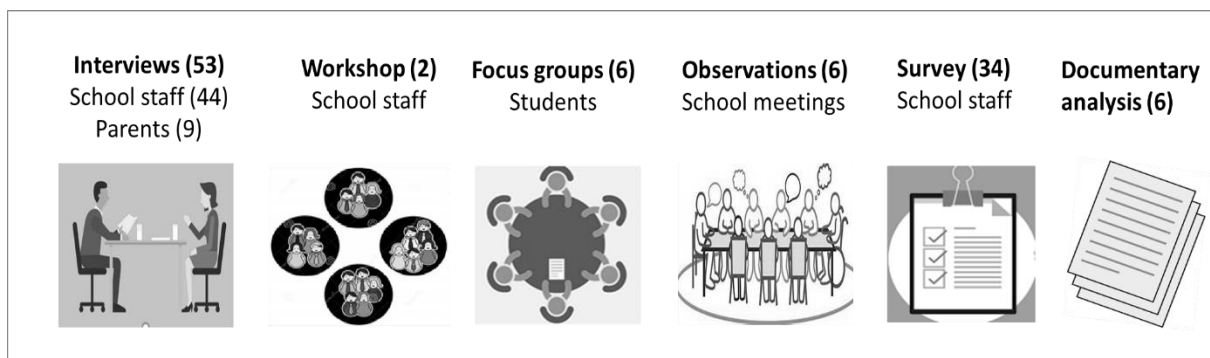
- *Semi-structured interview*

I used interviews with the school staff, including the leadership team, teachers, members of the integration team, members of the coexistence team, and parents, because interviews enable understanding of the points of view of others, capturing the world seen by the participants *"in their own terms"* (Patton, 2002:21). I favoured individual interviews to offer a private space to let the participants express their personal opinions. However, I set up group interviews when the participants

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suggested this option, organising them into small groups (no more than three participants), to generate a climate of closeness between the participants.

In the case of the school staff, I used the calendar I had given them to record their details in order to contact them and schedule the interviews. In the case of parents, I used different strategies to obtain the sample I sought; i) I sent a letter to parents describing the research and asking them if they would like to participate, ii) I attended the school-parent meetings and verbally explained the research and invited them to participate, and iii) I talked with parents that attended school activities and invited them.

- *Workshop with school staff*

The workshop with the school staff was something that emerged during the fieldwork. The original idea was to organise a focus group with the school staff. However, in the first school in the sample, they were very interested in the topic and suggested I do something where they could participate more actively and involve the whole school staff in the discussion. As the activity was successful, I changed the original design of the focus groups to a workshop. The specific features of workshops were something that I defined based on the negotiations with the staff in each school and what I observed in terms of school staff dynamics. I organised two workshops at the Sun and Star schools, but at the third school it was not possible to coordinate the activity due to school time restrictions. In both workshops, I clarified orally and in the written consents that i) participation in the activity was voluntary, ii) the audio recordings of the session would be analysed solely for research purposes, and I would be the only person to access these recordings, and iii) they could abandon the activity at any time and for any reason without having to explain why.

In the Sun school I organised the activity with the inclusion team and, then, on the day of the activity, we invited and presented it as an activity co-organised between the inclusion team and myself. The activity was organised into three stations: social justice, inclusion, and fair assessment. To promote the confidence of the school staff in the activity and motivate them to participate, we agreed with the inclusion team that they would be the facilitators of the groups based on a previously agreed schedule. I assumed a secondary role, complementing the questions asked by the facilitators and managing the times of the activity. In the end, I asked each group to comment on the main reflections, the conclusions of the team based on the topics discussed.

In the case of the Star school, the leadership team preferred that I led the activity because it was easier for them and they believed that it would work well in this manner. I invited the school staff to participate, presenting the general goals of the activity in the weekly school staff meeting and delivering a physical invitation to each of those present

On the day of the activity, I explained the goals and characteristics of the activity both orally and in the written consents. I organised groups at different tables and I provided each group with a list of questions that they should discuss and a paperboard with markers and a post-it on which to write down their main ideas. In the end, I asked each group to comment on their main reflections on the topic discussed.

As a strategy to ensure success in the workshops, I implemented the activity towards the end of the fieldwork period because the multiple interviews conducted in each school provided me with information about the school culture and school staff relationships, and, consequently, gave me a clearer idea of what the best way to design and organise the group activity would be. I also offered food and soft drinks during the activity because, in my experience, this was a good strategy to make the participants more relaxed and put them in a better mood to participate.

- *Focus groups with students*

I chose focus groups to facilitate the exploration of a collective view concerning a topic, addressing a social construction rather than an aggregation of individual opinions (Finch, Lewis, & Turley, 2014). The focus groups included between five and eight students and were mixed in terms of gender. The duration of the focus groups was around one hour. The participants were identified after obtaining authorisation from the parents to allow them to participate in the focus group activity and having received the oral and written consents from students declaring they wished to participate.

As I was less experienced as a researcher in working with young people, I prepared a strategy to ensure success in the workshops in terms of being able to talk with the students fluently and generate a space where they felt safe and trusted me to express their opinions. I made some contextual observations (see next section about observations) in the weeks before conducting the focus groups during breaks and in class lessons. The specific goals of these observations were i) to help ensure that the students did not see me as a total stranger and ii) to observe their behaviour and dynamics before the activity. This strategy was especially relevant at the Moon school because the school staff mentioned that the

students sometimes experienced tensions with adults/authority at the school. For that reason, it was important to see how they behaved with other adults during a lesson. At the Moon school I observed two lessons in the third level[38] (Year 5 and Year 6), a Spanish and a science class, and a lesson at the fourth level (Year 7 and Year 8) in a religious class. At the Star school, I observed two lessons in Year 8 one English class and one maths class. In these lessons, I had the opportunity to see how students with special needs were integrated into the classes and the relationship with the rest of the students. This was helpful to conduct a student focus group where one of the participants was a student with autism, as the observation made me realise that I should act totally naturally because this student followed the instructions just like the other students and his peers helped him when needed (for more details on the lessons observed go to Appendix 4).

- *Observations*

I chose to use the observation technique because I was interested in obtaining information about how the school community, particularly the leadership team and teachers, make decisions about assessment, the SIMCE test, and inclusive practices in a *real* scenario. The observation research technique was an appropriate tool for this purpose as it allows observation of "what are perceived to be naturally occurring behaviours in context" (McNaughton et al. 2014, P. 59).

I observed formal school meeting sessions and also carried out contextual observations. My strategy during the observation was to assume the role of *an observer as a participant*, which means observing as unobtrusively as possible, usually for short periods where one is closer to being a complete observer (McNaughton et al., 2014). This kind of observation reduced the impact of my presence in the meeting. Before the school meeting, the leadership team announced my presence and I explained to the attendees that I would be there to observe and gave them the consent with the research objective, asking them for authorisation to use the observation for research purposes. I chose to observe three kinds of school meetings: firstly, meetings where the school staff discuss certain topics directly linked with my research, such as the SIMCE test, assessment, and inclusive practice. In these observations, I aimed to identify the inclusion concepts, and the decision making and the reasons for the decisions regarding internal and external assessment. Secondly, I observed random meetings to observe what kind of topics were usually discussed and to identify whether they discussed topics related to assessments. Thirdly, I made observations in the schoolyard and in lessons in order to gain some

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[38] The Moon school is organised in a 2x1 modality, meaning that students approve two school years in one academic year.

contextual knowledge about the school and student dynamics. The information from these lessons was used generally. I did not record it, but simply took notes.

- *Survey*

Surveys or questionnaires are used to collect comparable and reliable information from large numbers of participants (Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018), but can also be used to provide information about attitudes to certain topics (Black & Champion, 1976), which is useful for my research. I used the survey to obtain a general view on about key topics such as the opinions and experiences of SIMCE among most of the school staff. The survey was a strategy to reach a larger number of people on the school staff or to reach some that it was not possible to interview. In addition, the survey was a way to obtain information about specific actions regarding SIMCE and to provide a free space for them to offer an opinion about SIMCE. Some people preferred to express their opinion in writing, so I used this strategy to provide them with this opportunity. Thirdly, the use of a survey with the school staff was a way of triangulating with the qualitative sources of information. I used the survey with the school staff, including the leadership team, teachers, integration team, and coexistence team. The topics addressed in the survey were: i) the SIMCE contribution to different areas, ii) SIMCE effects, iii) actions/activities linked to SIMCE, iii) overall view of SIMCE, iv) opinion about the continuation, improvement, or end of SIMCE, and v) open opinion/experience of SIMCE. To see the survey, go to Appendix 6.

Therefore, it is important to clarify that the purpose of the survey was not to have representative information, but to provide a way to expand the chance of participation on the part of members of the school community to enable triangulation with other research tools and as a strategy to collect information on specific topics not considered in the qualitative tools. In this sense, even though the number of participants of the survey was reduced, partly due to the size of the staff teams in the schools of the sample, this information contributed to enrich the information collected with the others research tools.

- *Documentary analysis*

I carried out a detailed analysis of two documents per school, addressing the Institutional Educational Project (*Proyecto Educativo Institucional*, PEI) and the School Improvement Plan (*Plan de Mejoramiento Educativo*, PME). I chose those documents because they are key institutional documents that provide information on the school's priorities and indicate whether SIMCE has a key

role in these priorities. The PEI is a document that communicates the main characteristics and identity of the school to parents and anyone else who wants to know about the establishment. In the PEI, the schools describe their goals, their mission, vision, and their pedagogical and philosophical principles. The PME is a compulsory document for all schools that receive public funds linked to the Preferential Subsidy law (*Ley de Subvención Escolar Preferencial*, SEP). In the PME the schools have to describe the different actions they will carry out during the year regarding the SEP funds. The PME is one of the most important school planning tools defined by the central government.

I examined the PME and PEI documents for 2018, which was the year in which my fieldwork was done, in order to have this information to complement what the research participants told me about their school's priorities and actions regarding SIMCE. The PEI was available on the internet, while I had to request a copy of the PME on a government platform, stating that it was for research purposes.

- *Theoretical framework*

I based the analysis of the data, particularly the coding process, on a particular theoretical framework connected to the social justice dimensions; distribution, recognition, and participation, based on Fraser (1993) and other authors (see section 3.1). In order to apply the framework in the coding process, which was my main strategy to analyse the material, I operationalised the key concept of the social justice dimensions used in this research and built this table to guide the coding process. This operationalisation helped me classify the information into codes that referred to the different dimensions. Table 5 below was not used in a restrictive way. It provided examples about the kind of elements that should be classified in each category, but other elements could also be included.

Table 5

Operationalisation of Social Justice Dimensions for the Analysis Process

Dimension	School role & social justice	Assessment & social justice
Distribution	- Distribution of knowledge (e.g., to measure student knowledge to assess student gaps, to contribute to reducing student gaps) - Distribution of material resources (e.g., family resources, school infrastructure) - Distribution of pedagogical resources (e.g., books, professional) - Consideration of socioeconomic context	- Assessing merit, talents, student knowledge, skills - Opportunity to access the test - Opportunity to demonstrate student knowledge - Equal conditions in the implementation of the test - Consideration of student knowledge gaps in the design, implementation, and interpretation of results in the assessment
Recognition	Consideration of: - Student subjectivity - Student identity - Particular student experiences - Respect for student particularities - Student cultural diversity in terms of the curriculum, lessons, school activities in general - The approach to cultural/linguistic diversity, is it seen as a positive aspect/experience in the school?	- Adaptations according to different student cultures - Multiple ways of assessment considering student diversity - Accommodations/adaptations according to student languages/cultures - Adaptations/modification to times, different forms of assessment, ways of implementation according to student diversity
Participation	There is a concern about or interest in: - The participation of the members of the school in school decisions - Valuing and promoting student participation in school decisions - Listening to the opinion or voice of students regarding their experiences at the school - Importance is given to the school union and student opportunities to participate in schools in general	- Participation of students in the assessment process: design, implementation, interpretation, actions on results - Participation of school staff in the assessment process: implementation, interpretation, actions on results

5.5 Data Analysis

This section presents the different steps of the analysis process and the strategies for data analysis including the different moments of the research.

5.5.1 Steps of the analysis process

Data analysis is an iterative, continuous, and reflective process that starts with the fieldwork and concludes with the final write-up of the thesis (Miles et al., 2020). In accordance with that, I organised my analysis process into five steps, the first during the fieldwork and the four others after completing it (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Steps of the Analysis Process
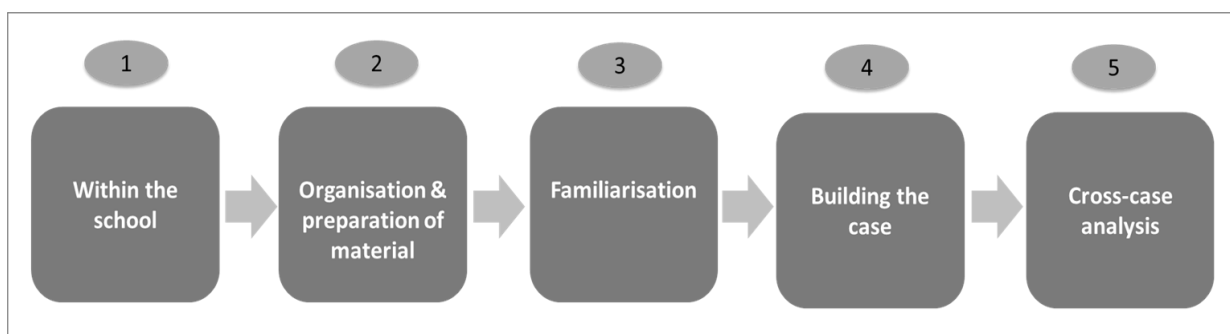
1. *Within the school*

For this step I was in the schools, listening to and observing everything I could. I started by identifying the first elements of the analysis, distinguishing certain differences and similarities between the schools and aspects that could be interesting to examine in greater depth for the different areas of my research. The strategy I followed in this step was to make notes about the school history, school events, key informants, and my first impressions about the experiences regarding the SIMCE test.

In this step, I organised and prepared the material for further systematic analysis of the schools. Following the suggestions of Miles et al. (2020), I organised the material from the schools in different folders according to each school, putting all of the material for each school into one folder: documents, photographs, workshop materials, interviews, observation materials, and fieldnotes. I also organised the transcription process for the qualitative material, the digitalisation of the survey responses in the case of quantitative material, and the process of translation for quotations in Spanish.

With regard to the *transcription process,* I did some of it myself and paid someone else to do the remainder. I decided to do this because after carrying out some transcription, I realised that it would be extremely time-consuming[39] and I consequently decided to prioritise the other steps of the analysis. Some authors (Flick, 2013) understand transcription as the first step of the analysis, arguing that this stage is important to familiarise oneself with the material. However, to avoid losing the advantage of this stage entirely, I did the following: i) transcribed three sets of material, one per school, in order to obtain a general overview of the schools, ii) listened to key parts of some of the recorded material and took notes on them. To guarantee high quality transcription and security of the material, I defined a series of strategies. First, I created a detailed protocol with specific instructions for the transcription process where I requested a literal transcription (the transcription of all the material recorded, including the questions)**.** Second, I meticulously reviewed the transcriptions of the first two audio recordings and after that I conducted random revisions of the rest of the material transcribed. To facilitate this monitoring task, I asked the transcriber to include time signals, which allowed me to go back to the recording and check the translation whenever I wanted.

Regarding *translation*, it should be noted that all the material gathered was collected in the native language of the participants, Spanish, which is also my native language**.** Following the suggestion of Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg (2010) regarding "staying in the original language as long and as much as possible" (p. 315), I decided to keep all the material in Spanish during most of the analysis process because this made it easier to connect with the opinions, moods, and reflections of my participants. Thus, all of the *coding process* (see section 5.5.2), a fundamental step in the analysis was done using my material in Spanish. However, at some point, I required a translation process in order to share, comment on, and reflect on the material collected with my supervisors and peers during the

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[39] I spent nine hours transcribing for each recorded hour of audio, so I calculated that doing the transcription by myself would take me at least three months solely to achieve that.

PhD period. I thus decided to carry out a selective translation process, choosing the quotations and pieces of material that were most interesting to discuss in terms of the key findings of the research. The main challenge of this process was to avoid the loss of meaning in translation (van Nes et al., 2010). The role of the person who carried out this process is key because translation is not automatic, but is an interpretive act (van Nes et al., 2010). As I was the person who conducted the data collection process, and I was familiar with the space and context where the material was collected, I was the best candidate to carry out the translation process. Based on the suggestions of van Nes et al. (2010), instead of doing a literal translation, word for word, I tried to convey the message of the participants using different strategies. One strategy was to add a brief explanation in parenthesis to clarify the meaning (see the words in bold in example 1 below), and sometimes, to retain the original words used where an exact translation was not possible (see example 1). Another strategy was to make the quotations in Spanish simpler, eliminating words and questions from the researcher that did not contribute to understanding of the message (example 2), making the sentences more fluid and the message clearer. I also adopted the strategy of utilising fluid descriptions of meanings using various English formulations (Van Nes et al., 2010).

Example 1

I said to the mother from the **narco family [family belonging to a drug-trafficking gang]:** "I know that the children will probably be drug sellers […] now, what is important to me? That when he goes to buy the drug […] he knows that he cannot shoot a child. […] I am expecting him to behave in a fairer way."

Example 2

Original version in Spanish with all the words and questions.	Clean version
C: **Entonces,** recién este año, por lo que he escuchado en los consejos lo piensan hacer, **ya [...]** la psicopedagoga creo que solicitó que hicieran unas adaptaciones curriculares T: **Ah ya, ya** C: Que no cambiaran el contenido, el objetivo que no se cambiara, pero que hicieran **una [...] una** sutil modificación T: **Claro** C: Para los niños que tienen otro nivel y fue un tema, porque la reacción fue como más pega T: **Claro, porque era como hacer distintas versiones** C: **Sí y en realidad ahí** le bajaron un poco el perfil, así como oye si no es tan difícil, le dieron unos ejemplos los profesores para que se dieran cuenta de que era posible y que era un detalle en realidad.	"Recién este año, por lo que he escuchado en los consejos lo piensan hacer, la psicopedagoga creo que solicitó que hicieran unas adaptaciones curriculares, que no cambiaran el contenido, el objetivo que no se cambiara, pero que hicieran una sutil modificación, para los niños que tienen otro nivel y fue un tema, porque la reacción fue como más pega. Le bajaron un poco el perfil, así como oye si no es tan difícil, le dieron unos ejemplos los profesores para que se dieran cuenta de que era posible y que era un detalle en realidad."

Yet another strategy was to retain the quotations in Spanish in the initial reports along with my translations of them before creating the final version. This gave me the opportunity to read and review the translations many times before removing the quotation in Spanish and checking whether the quotation made sense to my supervisor before producing the consolidated version of the thesis chapters.

3. Familiarisation with the data

In this step, I aimed to have a general impression of the schools, but this time from outside them. I sought to observe elements that I could not observe from inside the school. Thus, in this step I listened to the recordings of some of the interviews I considered key in each school, I read some of my main notes for each school, I reviewed the photographs I took at the schools, and I made a few transcriptions of the activities recorded.

4. Building "the Case" (within-case analysis):

In this stage, I aimed "to describe, understand, and explain what has happened in a single, bounded context—the 'case'" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 131). In this process, I carried out an in-depth analysis of each case, triangulating sources. To do this, I coded all the material collected in each school, including the various sources and school members (see Appendix 4). Subsequently, I analysed the case as a unit; I read and analysed every code considering all the members of the school community, identifying patterns concerning the key topics of the research. Finally, I summarised the key findings in a report I built for each school, which included photographs, quantitative indicators, and a description of the main patterns found across the members of the schools (see cover page of the reports in figure 7). I used a common structure for the three school reports based on the key topic of the thesis to facilitate the cross-case analysis.

Figure 7

Cover Page of the Three Single Case Reports

CASE 1: SUN SCHOOL
[Intercultural school with non-native speakers]
09.01.2020
Word count: 45,619

CASE 2: STAR SCHOOL
[integral education & special needs students]
27.05.2020
Word count: 47,782

CASE 3: MOON SCHOOL
[Second chance school]
08.09.2020
Word count: 47,782
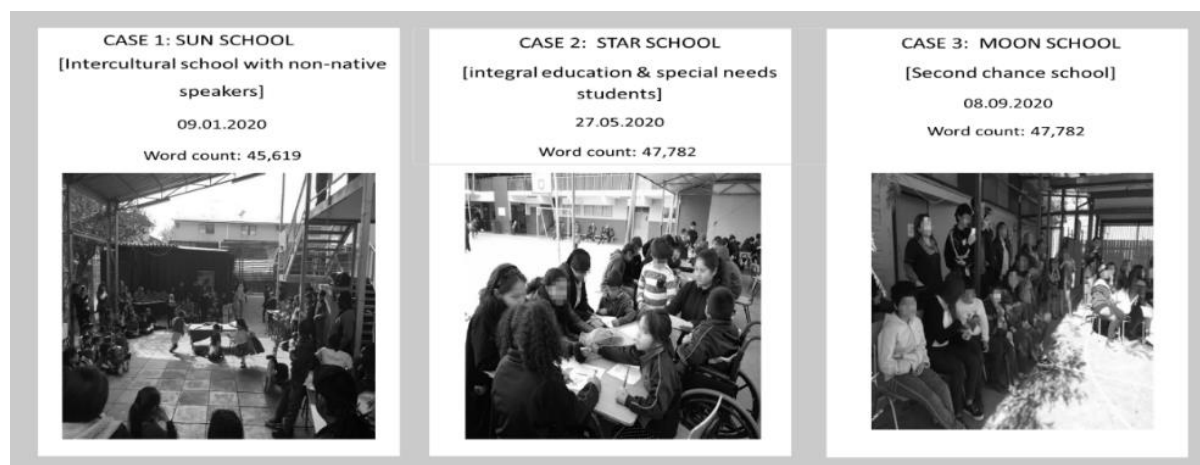
5. Cross-case analysis

In this stage, I compared the three cases previously analysed looking for similarities and differences between schools and identifying common patterns. The cross-analysis enabled a comparative approach to the cases, allowing me to identify the absence or presence of particular phenomena in the various accounts, to explore how the manifestations of phenomena varied between cases, and to explore the interaction between phenomena in different settings (Lewis in Flick, 2013). To facilitate the comparison, I used the strategy of *display* tools, such as matrices and figures (see Appendix 10), which helped to organise, condense, and compact the information to make it immediately accessible in order to see what is happening (Miles et al., 2020). After identifying the main findings by topic, I selected representative quotations to illustrate the patterns found.

5.5.2 Strategies for data analysis

Most of my data was qualitative material; interviews, focus groups, observations, workshops, and documentary analysis. For this material, I used *thematic analysis* based on a *coding process*. For the quantitative material, I conducted statistical analysis using a descriptive process. I used two software programs to manage and support my process of analysis. For the qualitative material I used Nvivo 11 and for the quantitative material I used SPSS 26.

Thematic analysis

I used thematic analysis because this strategy allowed me to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke 2016). These elements fit into my research, which was aimed

at characterising the experiences regarding the SIMCE test and social justice on the part of different members of the schools, identifying common elements within the school community and between different schools. In addition, thematic analysis, instead of focusing on the language and structure of the dialogue or text, focuses on capturing the meaning of the data, that is, on what the text says (Spencer et al. 2014: 272), which was helpful for my research purposes.

Coding process

I chose to use the coding process to analyse my material because it allowed me to manage a huge amount of information The coding process consists of creating labels or codes that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information collected during a study (Miles et al., 2020). Assigning codes to a set of materials such as field notes, interview transcripts, or documents, allows us to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, categories, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences (Miles et al., 2020). The coding process was therefore a helpful tool that facilitated the task of comparing the cases, identifying patterns, similarities and differences, which was an important aim of my research.

There are different ways to create codes. In this study I used *deductive* or a *priori coding*, as well as *deductive coding* (Miles et al., 2020:108). I developed a provisional "start list" of codes based on the contextual aspects and research questions that were relevant to look at according to the literature review. However, during the first steps of analysis of the material collected, new codes emerged and were included in the coding list. Table 6 shows the list of codes I used with the indication of the criteria used to include them.

Table 6

List of Codes and Criteria to Include Them

Codes	Criteria to include*	Codes (cont.)	Criteria to include (cont.)
1. THE SCHOOL CONTEXT		7. FAIR SCHOOL	
- Climate-relationships	LR	- Distribution dimension	LR
- Family profile-school context	C	- Participation dimension	LR
- School activities-general organisation	C	6. SIMCE EXPERIENCE	
- Personal trajectory (interviewees)	C	- Positive opinion of SIMCE	RQ
- School project	C	Negative opinion of SIMCE	RQ
2. NATIONAL LAWS-REGULATIONS		- Proposals-ideas for a new test	RQ
- Inclusion law	LR	- SIMCE impact on learning	RQ
- DUA/decree 83	LR	- SIMCE impact on labour conditions	RQ
- Decree 170	LR	- SIMCE impact on teaching	RQ
3. INCLUSION		- SIMCE & distribution dimension	LR
- Meaning of inclusion	LR	- SIMCE & recognition dimension	LR
- Coexistence team job-history	E	- SIMCE & participation dimension	LR
- Integration team job-history	E	8. WORK WITH HAITIAN STUDENTS	
- Strategies to work with diversity	E	- Family-community	E
- Barriers to inclusion	LR	- Arrival process	E
- Co-teaching	E	- School/teacher strategies	E
4. INTERNAL ASSESSMENT		- Teacher feelings about Haitian students	E
- Current assessment	C	7. FAIR SCHOOL	
- Assessment with SEN students	LR	Distribution dimension	LR
5. FAIR ASSESSMENT		Participation dimension	LR
- Participation	LR	- Recognition dimension	LR
- Recognition	LR	- Student-centred	E
- Distribution	LR	- Barriers-facilitators for fair school	LR
- Limitations for fair assessment	LR	- Access to a safe space	E
- To assess different abilities	E	- Access to school (no selection, etc)	E
- Diverse ways of assessment	E	Access to infrastructure	E
- Language consideration	E	- Access to learning	E
- Objectivity	E	- Inclusivity-diversity	E
- Focus on process	E	- Multiculturality	E
- Qualitative approach	E		
- Student-centred	E		
- Formative	E		
- Contextualised	E		
- Teacher criteria in assessment	E		

* C: Context; E: Emergent code; LR: Literature Review, RQ: Research Question

Documentary analysis: keywords

To analyse the documentary analysis, I carried out an analysis based on keywords: SIMCE, results, test, assessment. I searched for these words and analysed the content of the document regarding these keywords. I also used the documents to extract general information about the school, such as the school identity, student profile, and school objectives.

Descriptive statistical process

To analyse the school staff survey, I used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a software program to analyse statistical information. First, I created a database with the variables equivalent to the survey items. Second, I digitalised the responses of the participants from the paper-based surveys. Third, I realised a process to clean the database, such as correcting the mistakes in the digitalisation process, checking the number of the responses per item and school, and removing repeated cases. Fourth, I conducted a process of recoding a series of variables to facilitate the process of analysis. Fifth, in the case of open questions, I created a system to classify the answers into categories relevant to the research. Finally, I conducted a descriptive analysis of items, using frequency analysis and cross-tables. This strategy was the most appropriate because the total of participants was somewhat reduced[40] to apply other kinds of analysis. The data were analysed considering the sample of three schools together and not one by one, to prevent drawing conclusions from too small a sample of participants.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with full Ethical Approval from the UCL Ethics Committee[41]. I followed the ethical guidelines proposed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and also added some criteria I considered to be important.

5.6.1 Informing about the fundamental aspect of the research

Each participant was informed about i) the purpose of the research and its activities, ii) the voluntary condition of their participation, iii) the right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and

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[40] The total number of participants in the research was reduced (34), partly because the total number of the school staff was reduced, with no more than 30 professional staff members at each school.
[41] UCL Data Protection Registration number: Z6364106/2018/02/36. Date issued: February 9th 2018.

at any time, and iv) the confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data. I explained this information through a formal conversation and written informed consent before conducting any research technique to ensure that all the participants understood. In the case of the students, I prepared an informed consent for them and one for their parents/guardians. I read the informed consent aloud for them before conducting the research technique.

To ensure that every participant understood the conditions of participation, I adapted the consent considering the context and age. In the case of students, I prepared a consent in accordance with their age: with figures, large letters, reduced text, and visually attractive. For parents, I adapted the consents using simpler language without removing the key aspects; I used shorter sentences and less technical language. In the case of illiterate parents, I read them the consent and explained the information sheet.

5.6.1 Privacy and confidentiality

During the data collection, analysis, and writing-up stages I used pseudonyms and kept the data on password-protected computers. I also avoided presenting information that could allow the identification of individuals or schools. In the case of the survey of the school staff, I delivered the survey in an envelope that could be sealed by the person responding to prevent anyone at the school from seeing the survey and reading the responses. The sealed envelope could be returned to me or someone from the leadership team. I also was careful to not pass information or make comments to other people at the school based on the information collected in the context of the research.

5.6.3 Respectful and friendly treatment of research participants

I was particularly concerned about treating all participants fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and freedom from any kind of prejudice. Thus, I was aware of creating a comfortable and protected space for all the participants. To do this, I asked the teacher and school staff where they wanted to be interviewed, to ensure that the space chosen was a safe space for them. Furthermore, I constantly tried to demonstrate respect and my gratitude for their willingness to participate in the research. I organised closing activities to offer my thanks to the school staff for participating in the research and after completing the fieldwork, I sent a formal letter to the headteacher of the school to formally thank them for the participation of the school and their contribution to the research.

In addition, I tried to avoid making unreasonable demands of the participants. The staff at the schools are usually very busy with school tasks. For that reason, I was particularly flexible with the times and the organisation of the activities to avoid overstressing the members of the school. I planned the activities for the times they suggested to me, and I cancelled activities when the teachers told me they had difficulties participating for any reason. I also avoided pressing the school staff about responding the survey quickly, giving them several weeks to complete it.

5.6.4 Rapport with participants and be aware of my position

One of the important elements of the research was to generate a good rapport and trust with my participants. One of my main strategies to achieve that was to participate in activities when invited by the school staff, which were activities of which the school staff felt proud and which they also considered relevant to show me because they considered them to represent the spirit and positive aspects of the school. For instance, at the Star school, I was invited to an English lesson, where the students organised stands with typical food and information based on different countries with flyers in English. At the Moon school, I was invited to attend a concert with a well-known musical band. Attending these activities was an opportunity i) to become more familiar to members of the school and ii) to observe contextual elements regarding the school dynamics and relationships between the members of the establishment. All of this information was useful to become better informed about the school reality and to generate trust with the participants.

Moreover, I am aware that my position in society—social class, gender and age—could influence the approach of participants to me and the research, so I tried to manage this in the best way possible. Firstly, I am studying a PhD abroad, a privileged situation as this is something that only few people from my country can do, so this could generate a distance with the members of the school community. To avoid influencing the participants' responses or attitudes regarding the topics of the research, I tried to behave without assuming any position of hierarchy and showed a respectful and open attitude to them. Another strategy I used was to choose clothing to avoid standing out at the school, that is, not wearing clothing that was either too formal or too casual, following a similar style to the adults at the school. For instance, at the Moon school I decided to use informal clothes because the teachers dressed casually, so I wore jeans and trainers when visiting the school, particularly when I had activities with students, in order to reduce any potential distance with them. My gender and age were other personal features that could influence the approach of the participants to me. I believe that

these elements helped me look like a reliable person that would not affect the members of the school. I used these elements to facilitate the participants' trust in me.

5.6.5 Collaboration with schools

In this step, I wanted to avoid a common practice in research, where the aim of the research is an activity without any direct benefits for the participants. So, in agreement with the school staff, we chose a task in which I could collaborate with the school. The task chosen was within my research/social science skills and did not affect my research goals or imply any ethical conflict. Some of the collaborative tasks I offered the school staff were: systematising information, analysing quantitative or qualitative material, summarising information, searching for information/literature about a topic of interest for the school, teaching the school staff about a particular research tool. The three schools were happy with this idea and we agreed on certain activities where I could help them. At the Sun school, I contributed to analysing a survey applied to the school community. At the Star school, I conducted a focus group with former students to find out about their current experiences after finishing school. At the Moon school, I prepared a schedule of focus groups with students with questions and steps to guide the activity. Finally, I will present a summary of the conclusions of the research to the participants. This information could be delivered in an oral presentation or a written report. This will be done after I complete the whole process of the research.

I considered certain measures to prevent these collaborative actions from influencing the results of the research. First, I clarified, at a different time in the fieldwork, that these activities were exclusively for the use of the school and not for my research. The information was thus not analysed or used at any point for the purpose of my research. Second, I explained that I separated the collaborative activities from the research activities, defining different moments to collaborate with the school, and organising separate meetings from the research activities. Third, I was very clear with all participants about the purposes of the research and the use of information in every research activity in order to avoid confusion**.**

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to explore social justice and experiences of assessment in schools orientated by inclusive projects focused on the national SIMCE test. To achieve this aim, the study design comprised a multiple case study based on a qualitative and interpretivist approach in a

sample of three state-run primary schools located in Santiago that were chosen for their inclusive orientation. The research methods were aligned with the research questions in order to gather data that allowed the full exploration of these issues.

With regard to the data collection, I adopted a triangulation strategy that implied a multimethod approach to data. I thus used different research tools with a variety of participants, conducting a several previously designed qualitative techniques and others that emerged during the process. The process of data analysis was one of the most challenging stages of the research due to the amount of information and the variety of research participants and tools used. To address this stage, the use of systematic strategies for analysis, such as thematic analysis and a coding process were key to organising and reflecting on the material collected. The theoretical framework based on social justice dimensions was also central to guiding the process.

Finally, ethical considerations were a core aspect of my research process. These elements allowed me to comply with ethical standards, but also to reflect on my own position in the research and help to achieve a good rapport with the students and school staff. The respectful, friendly, and professional relationships with the school staff, making reasonable demands of them, and the clear information for the participants contributed to the fluidity of the research and helped me achieve the main goals proposed in the design.

CHAPTER 6. SCHOOL ROLE & CONCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

"They don't live a fair life at all ... so the school can try to give them justice" (Sofía, teacher, Star school / interview).

Introduction

Focusing on the first research question of this study, '*What do school communities understand by social justice?*', this chapter presents an analysis of the views of school staff[42] about the role of the school and their related conceptions of social justice.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first, 'Being a state school', analyses the conditions that characterise state schools and the variables that influence school identity in terms of social justice and the view of the staff. The second section, 'Compensatory role', describes the role that the schools play in their communities, providing things that are not automatically guaranteed for students in disadvantaged situations. The third section, 'Inclusive role', outlines the view of the school staff in relation to a broad concept of inclusion and the strategies implemented to support these aims. The findings revealed that the themes addressed in the various sections of this chapter were strongly connected, as Figure 8 shows; '*Being a state school'* (Section 1) influenced the *compensatory role* and *inclusive role* that the schools have assumed (Section 2 and 3), and these two roles were closely linked to the conceptions of social justice; compensation and inclusion were seen by the school staff as a central element to contribute to building conditions of social justice.

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[42] When I mention the "staff "or "school staff", I refer to the leadership team, the teachers, the coexistence teams, and the integration teams.

Figure 8

Themes of the Chapter and their Connections

SCHOOL ROLE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Being a state school
  - Compensatory role
    - Compensating what its not guaranteed by society
      - Safe space
      - Values/ model of behaviour
      - Valuing students as individual
      - Gate way to society
  - Inclusion role
    - Implementing inclusive practices
      - A broad conception of inclusion
      - Appreciation of different cultures & minorities
      - Equity: not providing the same to all

Contributing to social justice

6.1. Being a state school

> We work with the children that nobody wants (Luisa, teacher, Sun school / interview).

In Chile, state schools occupy the lowest position in the school system, which is evident by their smaller resources, lower prestige, and the fact that they work with students in the most challenging conditions. In this context, the school staff believe they have an important role regarding social justice, offering education and opportunities to students in challenging situations (e.g., those in poor living conditions, with special needs, immigrants, or non-Spanish speakers).

The school staff described the organisation of the school system as highly segregated in terms of social class. Their responses revealed that wealthy people attend private schools, the middle class go to private state-subsidised schools, and the working class go to state-run schools. In addition, private schools and private state-subsidised schools tend to have more economic and cultural capital resources due to family financial contributions, greater prestige due to their infrastructure and social recognition, and better outcomes according to the standardised national test (SIMCE). Alternatively, the staff commented that, as state schools, they catered to students with challenging situations that

tend to be uncommon in private and subsidised private schools, such as socioeconomically vulnerable students, students with special needs, poor-performing students or with behavioural issues, students expelled from other schools, and immigrant students from a low socioeconomic background. Despite the Inclusion Law (*Ley de Inclusion Escolar*- N° 20.845) (MINEDUC, 2015b) having banned student selection in all schools receiving state funding, which include private state-subsidised schools, many of these establishments still find ways of doing so (Carrasco et al., 2017). State schools instead have an inclusive nature due to their openness to all students, which is part of what they see as their contribution to social justice. As an example of the openness of the schools in this study, the parent of Franco, a student with language difficulties from the Star school, commented that the school opened its doors to him from the first instance without putting up any barriers:

> The psychologist said to me: 'Franco has a problem, right?' And I said 'yes'. He told me 'Franco is automatically accepted … we won't consider the test results'. I felt immense joy … we thought that he was going to be rejected because of his language problem! (Parent of Franco, Star school / interview).

Staff at the schools studied claimed that their establishments do not have the conditions they wanted in order to address the students' needs. Their perception is that the central and local governments did not provide them with all the resources needed, such as infrastructure, human resources, and tools to provide sufficient support and attention to address the challenging situations of their students. For example, if the lift at the Star school was out of service, staff would have to carry students in wheelchairs to classes on the second floor. At the Sun school, the teachers did not receive preparation and material to work with students who spoke little or non-native Spanish and instead had to seek their own strategies. At the Moon school, they did not have safe infrastructure that protected them from outside elements (e.g., the school lacked fencing to prevent external people from entering the grounds). Nevertheless, the staff of the schools had the conviction that, despite the challenging conditions of their students and the limited resources they have as a school, they should be there to provide education for these groups of students.

To summarise, the shared feeling among the staff of the schools was that they were fulfilling an important mission that contributes to social justice, offering education and opportunities to a group of students that are not usually welcomed at other schools. After all, their schools were playing an important role in terms of providing education to a group of people in an unfavourable position in society. However, they were aware that a socially just role in schools is not simply about providing

access, but about providing the conditions to allow the students to develop learning, values, and skills to be integrated into society, aspects that are addressed in the following sections.

6.2 Compensatory role

> I think this school has crossed the barrier, not only focusing on the cognitive, on the pedagogical [aspects] but also on the social part, and this make us fairer (teacher, Sun school / workshop)

As described in the previous section, the staff across the schools in the study agreed that their students and their families belong to a sector of the population that usually has fewer opportunities because they are exposed to poor living conditions, such as drugs and crime in their neighbourhoods, family illnesses, low salaries, and reduced access to good quality health services and housing, etc. As a consequence, many of the students do not have an appropriate environment in which to study and grow up. In that context, the staff of the schools assumed a *compensatory role,* which means contributing to provide those aspects of life that are not automatically guaranteed to these students by society. This compensatory role consisted of contributing to different aspects of the students' life experiences, in relation to offering a place of protection and safety, one that values the student as an individual, that provides values and models of behaviour, and a place that represents a gateway to society, which is described below.

6.2.1 A place of protection and safety

> They're exposed to many things outside, both in their families and in their communities …. This is their safe space" (M. Paz, teacher, Star school / interview).

Most of the staff of the schools in the study were concerned about the safety of their students in their communities, in the neighbourhood, and in their homes in some cases.

> They are students who have been victims of bullying, some of them have suffered family abuse, family abandonment, so they come [to school] emotionally damaged. Some of them are drug users, some of them party like they were adults, some smoke from the age of 10 (Lucía, member of the integration team, Moon school / interview).

In that context, the staff suggested the idea of the school as a protective factor for the students. "The school is still the most important protective entity that exists in the community. We have students who would be roaming around the streets, if they didn't come to school" (Gonzalo, teacher, Sun school / Interview). So, the school was seen by the staff as a different place from the local environment and the home, a place where the students can be safe for at least part of each day. In practice, the school assumed the responsibility of meeting basic needs, such as food or certain health issues. In that respect, as the teacher Óscar at the Sun school stated, the school was playing the role of a 'second home', because it was taking responsibility for aspects that go beyond the academic staff:

> If these support networks didn't exist, it would be terrible for this community ... the school is like the children's home, because they receive breakfast, lunch. This school is the opportunity they have to get away from what happens in their homes (Óscar, teacher, Sun school / interview).

This notion of school as the guardian or protector of students was reinforced by the fact that they are state schools. The central government has promoted the notion that state schools should assume some responsibility in order to guarantee certain minimum student rights like health, nutrition, protection in case of sexual abuse, violence in the home, or parental negligence. For this reason, the schools were connected with state and local government institutions such as the local health institution, the childhood protection office (Oficina de Protección de la Infancia, OPD), the national service for children and young people (Servicio de Protección de Menores, SENAME), to provide support when certain student rights were at risk. For example, at the Star school, the teacher Nicole was responsible for arranging and taking students to medical appointments with respect to ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology, and spinal problems.

6.2.3 A place that values students as individuals

Across the three schools, the staff highlighted the importance of treating the students well, treating them with respect, showing them that they are important, and that they deserve attention and affection. They also stated the need to take care of the personal and emotional issues of the students; how they feel, what their home situation is like, and the state of their self-esteem. They also emphasised the relevance of treating the students as individuals who have a voice, a personality, and an identity that must be respected. All of these aspects were considered key at the schools because

the impression was that not all of the students necessarily had the opportunity to guarantee and develop them at home.

The Star and Sun schools had policies for communication and good treatment to increase dialogue and reduce conflict within the school community. The use of dialogue to solve conflicts and the avoidance of punishment was a policy to help students feel welcome at the school, to provide a warm and friendly space for them. Emma, from the integration team at Star school, said: "[we try] to see that everyone is placed in the workshops they want. Those children have good memories of their school because this is a welcoming place, because there's no mistreatment here." (Interview). At the Sun school, the coexistence team promoted dialogue with students as a policy to solve conflicts instead of implementing punishments. At the Moon school, the staff highlighted the relevance of treating the students as a "person". This statement sounds strong, but the staff explained that this practice was not trivial, since many students at the school have low self-esteem, due to bad experiences in their own families or at their previous school, so it is particularly important to show them appreciation. The teacher Nora explained: *"it's to try to make the child feel like a person* [my emphasis] because they arrive with very low self-esteem, because of their parents, a family member, because some teacher at some school has left them marked" (Nora, teacher, Moon school / interview). Francesca, from the same school, said that they were always making efforts to welcome students at the school and convey that this is a place where the students can trust adults "We won't kick you out of here. We'll care of you here. We'll accept you and we'll be waiting for you here." (Francesca, leadership team, Moon School /interview)

The promotion of students' voices is also a way to enhance the expression of their interest and active participation in school issues. At the Sun school, the staff encouraged the formation of a student union, motivating them to hold official elections at the school and naming a teacher to provide support to the union during the year. In the same vein, the inclusion team invited a student representative to join their meetings, where he or she can share their opinion. Similarly, at the Star school, one of the actions defined in the school plan was to enhance and support the participation of the student union and collective organisation in classes.

6.2.4 A place that provides values and a model of behaviour

A strong idea from the staff of the three schools was that a socially just school should not only be responsible for curriculum subjects, but also for the skills and values required to form 'good people'

and to 'educate for life'. Educating for life means conveying fundamental values and teaching students how to behave and interact with others respectfully in society. The belief is that the students will not necessarily learn those aspects from their home experience, because their home environments o may not provide these values and skills, so the staff feel they have a mission to work on these issues with the students.

According to the staff of the schools, educating students about values, and social and ethical principles was not something seen as a secondary priority, but a central aspect of forming individuals. For instance, at the Sun school the teachers considered these points part of the core aspects of the school project: "Developing social aspects, this is a great point that the school has lost over time … " (Elías, teacher, Sun school / interview). Among the rules to live in society that the schools wanted to promote, the teachers mentioned treating others with respect, without violence, not discriminating, and embracing values such as collaboration, solidarity, respect for diversity, and empathy. As an example of the teacher's role in educating on these issues, Carlos, who gave physical education classes, explained that the main focus in these classes was not technical aspects, but values and rules related to interaction with others.

> *We focus essentially on perseverance, not being violent, respect, not only respect for the partner, but also respect for the teacher, the rules of the game, collaborative work, and to be in solidarity with the classmates, all those values that we can observe in a sport or a game* (Carlos, teacher, Star school / interview).

Similarly, Casandra, from the Sun school, commented on the baselines for behaviour, such as respecting people with another skin colour: "He cannot hit another boy because he's black. I'm not going to let him do it. He'll have to hit me first. If he learnt this basic, I'll feel happy" (Casandra, coexistence team, Sun school / Interview).

The staff clarified that the role of the school was not about changing the whole student environment and the social structure, because this is something that is beyond the means of the school, but rather teaching certain key values for life in society. For instance, a member of the coexistence team of the Sun school argued that even a person who sells drugs can have some ethics and the school can help to build on that:

I said to the mother from the narco family [family belonging to a gang of drug-traffickers], 'I know that probably the children will sell drugs ... now, what's important to me? That when he goes to buy the drugs ... he knows that he can't shoot a child .... I expect him to behave in a fairer way' (Casandra, coexistence team, Sun school / interview).

In some cases, the modelling of behaviour and values is not only done with students, but also with parents. At the Sun school, the coexistence team teach the parents about certain rules and principles they should follow at the school regardless of their social conditions and any position of power they may have in relation to the drug-trafficking gangs. For example, parents belonging to these gangs should attend meetings with the school staff just as the other parents do. A social worker described a discussion with a parent involved with drug-trafficking in which she demanded he abide by the school rules: "I said ... 'maybe in your house you shout at your wife. Well, I'm not your wife, I don't have to tolerate it', and he said, 'ok, I'm going to sit down, ok, let's talk' (Casandra, coexistence team, Sun school / interview).

In the case of the Star school, the staff planned different actions to reinforce the links with the families and include them in the cultural activities organised by the schools to promote socio-cultural development and democratic dynamics within the whole school community. In this vein, one of the actions defined was a *plan* "to promote participatory democracy of all members of the educational community, through collective activities where the socio-cultural development of its members is encouraged" (Star school, PME 2018, annual report, p. 19).

Even though most of the staff recognised that the schools were not totally free of the risks and dynamics of the outside world, it was still a friendly space for students, a fairer space where everyone is treated with respect and affection regardless of their social situation or the power that they may have outside.

6.2.5 A place that represents a gateway to society

The three schools highlighted elements that describe an interest in connecting the students with society. There was a belief among the staff of the schools that the groups of students they cater to cannot fully access the opportunities and experiences that society offers to others, in terms of culture, lifestyles, other places, other realities, etc. There was a view that these students and their families were partially disconnected or not totally integrated into certain dimensions of society. In that

context, the schools wanted to contribute to opening up the world to these students, to play the role of being a gateway to society; a *gateway* able to connect the student's world to the rest of the world.

At the Sun school, some teachers explained that the geographical isolation of the school, far from the centre of the city and the local area, along with the low socioeconomic background of the students, creates cultural isolation. The impression was that the students are not generally familiar with other realities such as other cultural expressions, other areas of the city, other ways of living, and other social classes. For instance, some school staff said that students follow musical trends that were quite popular in areas of lower socioeconomic background (e.g., trap, a subgenre of hip hop music) and wear specific clothes, but they are unfamiliar with other cultural trends. In that sense, the teachers interviewed did not criticise the student culture, but they believed it is good for them to be aware of other trends and open their minds to other things, as the teacher Elías said:

I try to carry out complementary reading with other types of topics, to help *them leave this bubble called 'Sun school'* [emphasis added]*,* which is far away from the rest of the city and also from the centre of the local area (Elías, teacher, Sun school / interview)*.*

Other teachers from the Sun school said that activities such as sports tournaments, visits to museums and emblematic parks, and contact with external organisations, such as Fundación San Carlos, which organises science and environment workshops at the school, offer students opportunities to get to know other neighbourhoods and see other places. As described in the annual school plan, these kinds of activities enrich the students' life experience and expand their perspective "Pedagogical trips allow students to have different learning experiences ... they broaden their view of the world that surrounds them and it motivates their commitment to their own training and development" (Sun school, PME document, annual report 2018, p. 6).

In the case of the Star school, one element highlighted by the leadership team and teachers was the connection of the students with the arts. The teachers reported that at home the students did not usually have the opportunity to explore artistic talents and enjoy experiences such as visiting museums, attending theatre plays, listening to classical music, going to art exhibitions, seeing dance, etc. In order to develop this area, different initiatives were introduced such as a school band, visits to art museums, visits to orchestral performances, and artistic interventions at the school, such as a painted mural. In addition to these initiatives, the leadership team introduced workshops, an initiative that reorganised the afternoon activities, enhancing art and other areas of knowledge. The aim was

to offer the students the opportunity to experiment with areas and skills other than traditional subjects and to connect with their interests and motivations, which was seen as part of the school's contribution to social justice.

At the Moon school, the staff also made an effort to bring cultural activities closer to the students and parents. The school implemented an initiative to offer free tickets to families to attend cultural activities such as plays in the city centre or tickets to the zoo, or organised activities outside the school to visit the beach and the mountains. These kinds of activities are something that families did not usually have access to because they cost money or because they are a long way from where they live.

Most of the staff of the schools believed they could make a difference with their students by providing aspects that are not automatically guaranteed by society. First, the idea that the school can offer them a protected and safe space providing certain minimum conditions to begin the learning process. Second, the notion that the school can teach values and promote ways of modelling behaviour in different spaces. Third, the school as a community showed appreciation for the students and treated them with respect and dignity. Fourth, the belief that the school can show students different experiences and realities, offering a broader conception of the world.

6.3. Inclusive role

> "We are a school community that welcomes and values the diversity of its members, being aware of their interests and learning needs" (Star school, PEI 2018, p.4).

In the previous section, it was described how the schools in the study hold a particular position in the school hierarchy—being state schools—in which they have to work in challenging conditions and play the role of compensating different aspects of student life. However, for the staff of the schools, being open to receiving all students and providing a compensatory role is not enough with their social and educational mission; they should be an *inclusive* school. That means being able to recognise and respect student diversity, providing them with opportunities to learn considering their needs and differences.

The idea of *inclusion* was part of what the staff identified as their contribution to social justice in their schools and it was one of the key principles of the schools' projects and ethos. The following section explains the relevance that this concept has for the schools and what it means for them; i) inclusion

understood in a wide sense beyond special needs, ii) inclusion involves respect and appreciation of different cultures and minorities, iii) the relevance of the distinction between equity and equality and the need to act according to the former.

6.3.1 A broad conception of inclusion

Being an *inclusive school* is something that most of the staff, including teachers and the leadership, integration, and coexistence teams, recognised as a central aspect of their school identity and purposes. An example of this is the statement of the concept of inclusion in the Institutional Educational Project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional, PEI), the public document in which the schools describe their identity and goals. The three schools gave the notion of *inclusion* a privileged position in this document, referring to it in key parts of the text. The Sun school defined itself as an "inclusive and intercultural school community" (Sun school, PEI 2018, p.3), highlighting the links between inclusion and interculturality and between diversity and inclusion. The Star school referred to inclusion as one of the pillars of their project: "The backbone of our Institutional Educational Project is inclusion, therefore, the focus for school management is school coexistence and spaces for the development of participatory democracy for all members of the educational community" (Star school, PEI 2018, p. 3). As part of their "fundamental principles" the Moon school mentioned work with diversity and the support for students according to their needs, "To respect the right of all students to be educated, taking responsibility for their learning, through permanent support for those who have difficulties, assuming individual differences and the needs of educational programs as a reality and not a problem" (Moon School, PEI 2018, p. 2).

Therefore, it can be seen that staff's conceptions of inclusion are based on a broad notion of inclusion, moving away from the traditional and more dominant view in the country in previous years only focus on special needs (see section 4.4.4). As part of this notion of inclusion, the staff of the schools highlighted that: i) special needs were not seen as the responsibility of a specific team, but of all the staff at the school, ii) inclusion was not just about students with special needs, but about a different cultural diversity, gender diversity, social diversity, and different school trajectories, iii) 'being inclusive' means addressing student diversity and offering support in accordance with their different needs and promoting the participation of all students in school activities. The schools are trying to realise these notions by implementing some of the strategies described below.

- *Inclusion as a shared responsibility: Collaborative work between teachers and the integration team*

According to their concept of inclusion, the schools studied promote that idea that the issue of inclusion is not the sole responsibility of the *integration teams*—the school teams legally responsible for offering support to students with special needs—but the responsibility of the whole school staff. The schools' leadership teams promote collaborative work between teachers and the integration teams to plan and implement lessons that are more accessible and attractive to all students. The role of the integration team during the lessons is a significant innovation, because, in the past, this team used to work solely outside classrooms, providing support for students with special needs. The collaborative work between teachers and the integration team is still something that is in progress, but with different levels of development depending on the school. For instance, at the Star school, collaborative work was implemented across all school years and teachers. Alternatively, at the Sun school, collaborative work was often done with a large group of teachers, but there was a small group of them who preferred to continue giving the lessons traditionally without the intervention of other professionals. The Sun school also created an *Inclusion team*, composed of representatives of the different school staff, based on the argument that inclusion should be the responsibility of the whole community. One of the key initiatives of this team was to create a project based on "the index for inclusion" (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) to identify barriers to inclusion at the school.

- *Lessons accessible to all students: Universal Learning Design*

Another strategy that the schools were exploring in tandem with a broader concept of inclusion was Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is a framework that guides the school in designing learning environments and lessons that provide access to all students instead of introducing adaptations for a small group in the class (Nelson, 2013).

Following the UDL model, one of the objectives at the schools was to promote a notion of inclusion that takes into account student diversity in the class and does not solely focus on students with special needs. This model was enhanced by the central government through Decree 83 (MINEDUC, 2015a), which called on the schools to introduce this strategy progressively. Although UDL was something promoted by the central government, the willingness of a significant part of the school staff to explore the strategy was a sign of agreement with a broader notion of inclusion. The three schools studied were all involved with UDL, but on different levels. At the Star school, most of the teachers planned lessons with the introduction of elements to engage all the students and the teachers generally

commented on the positive effects of some of the UDL strategies. Helia, a maths teacher from the Star school, decided to introduce practical activities with visual material in maths lessons, because the students were highly engaged with this kind of material. "It's an accommodation for the whole class, so, for example, in maths, we work with a lot of concrete material, a lot of drawing, a lot of colours. It works! the kids engaged a lot [with the activities]" (Helia, teacher, Star school).

At the Sun school the inclusion team organised different training lessons to implement this approach, but this was not introduced by the teachers as a regular practice. At the Moon school, they had not implemented formal training on this method and only some particular teachers had started to explore this on their own initiative.

6.3.2 Respect and appreciation of different cultures and minorities

For the schools studied, respect and appreciation of different cultures and minorities is key to developing an inclusive culture. Inclusion was not understood solely as an issue of offsetting "the deficits" of the students, but as a possibility of enriching the experience of school life through work with diversity. The three schools had a discourse of respecting different cultures and minorities, but, due to their student profile, they emphasised inclusive practices with some particular groups, which is described in the following subsections.

Interculturality, respect and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds: Sun school

The Sun school staff describe the school as an intercultural space, a community that is "inclusive and intercultural" (PEI document, 2018, p. 3). In line with this, the school promoted knowledge and respect of cultures from other countries such Palestine, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela, and carried out work to highlight the indigenous roots of one of the most important native groups in Chile, the Mapuches. Some of the initiatives related to the intercultural project included the organisation of an annual intercultural market; the introduction of signs, decoration, and information on the noticeboard referring to different cultures at the school; and the introduction of important celebrations for the Mapuche people, such as the Mapuche new year in June, *We Tripantu*. Some teachers also introduced elements of Mapuche knowledge into their lessons, such as Mapuche counting in Mapudungun (Mapuche language). The school staff felt that the school community was progressively more willing to respect and value the Mapuche culture, a heritage that people previously used to deny because they preferred not to be seen as indigenous. As an example, a teacher mentioned that after the *We Tripantru* celebration at the school, "a parent raised his hand and began to speak in Mapudungun and

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thanked all the people for appreciating the Mapuche culture." (Gonzalo, teacher, Sun School / interview)

Respect and appreciation of students with special needs: Star school

The Star school had a particular emphasis on including students with special needs. The staff argued that the school was open to special needs students, not because they were following the law, but because they believed in the importance of educating with diversity. They said that students with certain difficulties have the right to receive the proper support and, at the same time, students without special needs have the right to the experience of living in a diverse space. In my own experience as a researcher at the school, I perceived the recognition and integration of students with special needs in the daily activities of the school. For example, I had the chance to include Emilio, a Year 8 student with autism, in one of my focus groups with the students. The teacher delivered the invitation and authorisation letter to his parents as she did with all the parents. The school did not create any obstacles to working with him in the focus group.

Respecting different school trajectories and life stories: the Moon school

Among the three schools in the study, the Moon school worked with the most vulnerable group of students in socioeconomic and academic terms. Some of the students have illiterate parents, or families involved in crime, there are special needs students without early stimulation, students who have repeated several years, and many others who have been expelled from different schools. However, the school staff did not judge the students' social backgrounds and life stories and tried to provide a friendly space to promote their learning. For the school staff, it does not matter if a student has been expelled from another school, if they lack family support, or if they have been involved in criminal activity. As the teacher Diamela explained, some students are seen as thieves outside the school, but at the school they are seen solely as students. "This boy who's a thief ... has the same opportunities as other students. Here at the school, he's a student" (Diamela, teacher, Moon school / interview). Therefore, the Moon school was constantly monitoring the students' personal situations, offering support via the coexistence team, connecting them with local and state organisations, introducing strategies to engage the students with the school experience, such as the organisation of cultural activities with musical bands, trips outside the school, and visits to theatres and historical sites in the neighbourhood.

The three schools declare that they are aware of the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment for students of gender minorities. The Moon school's *school vision* states that they "educate children, young people, and adults based on human rights, respect for diversity (social, cultural, and gender), and the development of reflective thinking" (Moon school, PEI document 2018, p. 1), and they organised activities promoting the value of affective and loving relationships between individuals regardless of their gender identity. In the case of the Sun school, they implemented training to facilitate work on inclusion and gender diversity (Sun school, PME 2018, implementation report) and promoted a positive attitude among classmates and parents regarding a transsexual student in their process of transition. In the case of the Star school, the leadership team described a supportive environment for homosexual students. As an example, a member of the leadership team told me how a lesbian student decided to reveal her gender identity and received support from her teachers and classmates.

> We organised a workshop about sexuality. We asked if anyone wanted to give a testimony, so she stood up and said that she was a lesbian and that she had felt welcome here and her classmates started to applaud her. It was such an exciting moment, everyone clapped her, others cried, they hugged each other. It was a beautiful moment (member of the leadership team, Star school / interview).

6.3.3 Equity versus equality: not providing the same to all

The staff of the schools highlighted the concept of *equity* as a fair way to address student diversity and their needs. For them, there was a clear distinction between equality and equity: *Equality* means offering the same to all students regardless of their differences, whereas *equity* means offering what the students need according to their characteristics, conditions, and needs. In the school staff workshops at the Star school, one of the groups explained this distinction as follows:

> 'Equality' isn't the same as 'equity' when we say that all students should have the same possibilities. The fact is that students with more difficulties [for instance social, academic, or financial] won't not be able to access opportunities in the same way (Member of the integration team, Star school / workshop).

In the view of the school teams, equity and ultimately a fair school is related to adapting school procedures, as Mónica from the Moon school explained: "A fair education means adapting, whether that's the student's curricular programme or in the social benefits you provide, the thing is to adapt according to the student profile." (Interview). One key aspect of equity is to adapt some of the school rules and offer compensatory measures, such as providing more opportunities when students experience difficulties. That means giving them additional support to learn and in terms of emotional/personal dimensions, as well as considering some of the difficulties that students can face, such as family, health, or academic problems, special needs, or others. Some of the main measures that the schools introduced in this vein are described below.

Hiring professionals to offer additional support to students

The schools have expanded their integration and coexistence teams in recent years, hiring professionals with specialised knowledge to offer additional support to students in terms of academic and personal/social aspects. For instance, the Sun and Star schools hired specialised teachers to have professionals to support students with special needs and those with learning gaps. The Star school hired teaching assistants to complement the role of the teachers, giving lessons, offering support to the students that required it (Star school, PME 2018, annual report p.25). At the Moon school, the leadership team hired two professionals to introduce personal support in maths and language for students with large learning gaps. The students interviewed confirmed that this initiative was a possibility to learn and made the distinction with previous schools where the teachers did not make a significant effort to teach them. "She taught me the units. I didn't know those things because in other schools they didn't teach me ... they made me pass the course just like that because I was so disorganised" (Student, Moon school / focus group fourth level -Year 5 & Year 6-[43]).

Moreover, the coexistence teams, usually composed of a social worker, a psychologist, and sometimes a counsellor (Star and Sun schools) and a cultural facilitator (Sun school), were also key in the schools studied in terms of providing support for social issues, student wellbeing, and making efforts to avoid student dropping out. These teams analysed the student environment and family conditions, providing activating support and connections with other state institutions to help the families. They also monitored and offered support to students with high levels of absences, and they promoted friendly spaces in the schools (e.g., working to transform punishments to spaces of dialogue with

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[43] At the Moon school, due to its 2x1 modality level, the fourth level corresponds to Year 7 and Year 8 at regular schools.

students). The three schools made a significant effort to strengthen these teams, hiring professionals with high levels of preparation.

The introduction of professionals that could offer additional support to students was seen by the staff as a policy that contributed to achieving educational equity, as Celia from the integration team at the Star school stated: "The fact that the school made an effort to hire this team [special needs teachers] speaks very well of the school … this shows that the school is seeking justice, social equality" (Celia, integration team, Star school / interview).

Introducing flexibility regarding traditional school regulations

Nationally regulated aspects of the schools, such as the national curriculum, the school improvement project policy (PME) that encourages the school to formulate a plan for certain areas, and the Framework for Good Teaching (*Marco de la Buena Enseñanza,* MBE) that defines standards for teaching, mean that the schools tend to follow similar ways of organisation. However, the schools in the study introduced modifications in particular aspects to offer more equitable conditions to their students. Some of the modifications involved behavioural issues, student allocation at the school level, and teaching dynamics.

As regards behavioural issues, the Star and Sun schools introduced flexibility regarding student punishments. Student suspensions, taking students out of the classroom as punishment, and student expulsions are some of the measures normally taken in Chilean schools, but the Sun and Star schools reduced these sanctions to the minimum to avoid reducing students' opportunities to learn. Celia, from the integration team at the Star school, explained that the school tended to explore alternative measures instead of applying drastic punishments such as expulsion: "The solution for children with conflicts *isn't to throw them out; it's not taking punitive measures* [emphasis added]. We're always seeking a solution and a thousand solutions if necessary" (Celia, Integration team, Star school / interview).

The school that introduced the most flexibilisation was the Moon school, such as by introducing flexibility regarding students remaining in the classroom. The typical dynamic in Chilean schools is to keep the students in the classroom, except for specific subjects such as physical education. However, at the Moon school, some students had difficulties remaining in the classroom for a long time. They were not used to that, they lost concentration and got bored and frustrated very quickly, generating

disruptive behaviour. Therefore, the staff decided to allow certain students to leave the classroom and remain in the schoolyard and rest while their peers were in the class. For the teachers, this measure respected the students' needs and helped keep the student at school. The belief is that not allowing some students to leave the classroom would make it more difficult for some of them to remain at the school. Another change introduced by the Moon school involved student allocation at the school level and the process to define their passage to the following level. In Chile, there are specific rules to allocate students to school levels according to age and year criteria. However, at the Moon school, the staff discussed the different student cases and took decisions based on what they believed was best for the student. For instance, for one student that would usually have to repeat the year because of their low marks, the school decided to pass him to the next level because their analysis was that, due to his age (being considered too old to remain at the same level) and his capabilities, he would be better going on to the next level.

To summarise, based on the staff's perceptions, their schools were introducing practices that favoured equity and student inclusion. The Star school highlighted its capacity to integrate students with special needs, while the Sun school underlined its work to promote the recognition of different cultures and indigenous backgrounds, and the Moon school emphasised its efforts to work with students who were usually excluded from the educational system. A key element in this process was the notion of inclusion connected with the idea of student diversity. The understanding of the staff was that the schools and the students face different situations depending on their family stories, personal student characteristics, and current life conditions. Therefore, the view was that the schools needed to act following the principle of equity, adapting certain school practices.

Conclusion

The findings of this chapter reveal that the distinction between *equity* and *equality* was something that the school staff stated was a central aspect of social justice in the schools, along with the notion of inclusive practices. Their conception of social justice was based on the idea of offering what the students required in accordance with their needs (notion of equity), promoting inclusive conditions, meaning adapt the support, teaching strategies, and school rules to guarantee all students the possibly of participation, learning, and being respected in the school environment, without discrimination regardless of their differences. In contrast, providing the same treatment, the same support, and the same teaching strategies for everyone across the country and within the schools (notion of equality), was not considered to be fair. Some of the strategies to advance with the inclusive practices

implemented by the schools included collaboration between the integration team and teachers, the introduction of teaching strategies to offer learning opportunities to all students, hiring specialised professionals to offer additional support to students, and adapting traditional school rules to enhance student wellbeing and the positive experience at the school. In addition, the school staff declared that they were working to provide a safe space where the students are valued as individuals, educating them in positive behaviours and values, and connecting the students with different aspects of society.

The distinction between equity and equality seemed to be especially important in these schools because of their status as state schools, and the consequent challenging working conditions compared with other schools. The distinction between equity and equality also emerged as a significant aspect in the next chapter on conceptions of assessment and social justice.

CHAPTER 7. CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT & SOCIAL JUSTICE

To me, a fair assessment would be each child demonstrating what they know (Maite, leadership team, Star school / interview).

Introduction

Focusing on the research question '*What are the conceptions of social justice regarding assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these conceptions?*', this chapter outlines conceptions of *fair assessment* and perceptions of the SIMCE test based on the understanding of fairness from the perspective of a range of staff at the three schools. The results of the research revealed that the staff of the schools had conceptions about fair assessment that differed from the way that they perceived the SIMCE test in terms of the various dimensions addressed: *what?* (focus), *what for?* (purpose), *for whom?* (student and school profile), *who?* (the role of the school staff), and *how?* (forms of fair assessment) (see Figure 9 below). Similar to the results presented in the previous chapter on the role of the school and social justice, the findings showed that the differences in these dimensions seemed to be connected with the distinction between the principles of *equality* and *equity* that the staff perceived and highlighted as a key aspect of their conceptions of social justice.

Figure 9

Views of assessment. A Comparison between 'Fair assessment' and the SIMCE test based on the Perceptions of the School Staff

Dimension	'Fair assessment'	SIMCE
• Focus *(what?)*	The student	The standard
• Purpose *(what for?)*	Pedagogical To inform school staff	Control - comparison To inform central authorities
• Student/school profile *(whom?)*	Assumption of diversity	Assumption of homogeneity
• School staff role *(who?)*	Teachers & integration team is key	No role for school staff
• Assessment practices *(how?)*	Diverse & flexible adapted to students needs	Standard & rigid No adaptations

The chapter aims to compare the staff's notions of fair assessment and their view of the SIMCE test organised into five main sections. The first of these addresses the conception of the focus for a fair assessment and the implications for the understanding of assessment. The second section addresses the purpose of a fair assessment and the consequences that this has for the school communities. The third section outlines the ideas about the assumptions made about the student and school profiles and the potential negative effects of these assumptions. The fourth section describes the schools' ideas about the role that the internal staff should have to play to contribute to fair assessment. The fifth section outlines the staff's ideas about fairer ways of assessment.

7.1 The distinction between equality and equity as a key aspect

The distinction between *equality* and *equity* was a key aspect across the staff of the schools in terms of what constitutes fair assessment. For the staff, the notion of *equality* was based on the idea that the same test is applied to all the students in all the schools in the country and under the same conditions, regardless of the characteristics of the school and the students. In contrast, their notions of *equity* were based on the idea that a test should consider the particularities of a school and its students, allowing all of the students to demonstrate what they know, in addition to their progression, and the schools to show their achievements with the students. Following this notion of equity, the staff's view of *fair assessment* highlighted the relevance of focusing on the students' learning (instead of the national standard), informing the school staff for a pedagogical purpose (rather than informing central authorities focused on objectives of comparison and control), acknowledging the diversity among the students and schools (instead of assuming homogeneity), considering the key role of the school staff (rather than marginalising the role of the school staff to guarantee equal conditions across the country), and introducing adaptations in accordance with their students' needs (instead of maintaining standard conditions for the test). In contrast, in line with the notion of *equality,* SIMCE was seen as a test based on external parameters, where the particular features of the students and the school and their particular role as school staff are not taken into account, either in the process of design or implementation of the assessment.

7.2 'What?': the focus of assessment

The following section presents the school staff's perception about the focus (*what?*) regarding a *fair assessment*, comparing with their opinions and experiences regarding the SIMCE test. As shown in Table 7, the notion of the focus for a fair assessment is based on three elements: i) student learning,

ii) student progression, and iii) diverse areas of learning. Alternatively, the perception of SIMCE was that its focus was on student performance compared with the standard and assessing specific skills defined centrally.

Table 7

The focus of assessment: Fair assessment versus the SIMCE test

Fair assessment	SIMCE test
Focus: the student	Focus: the standard
- Assessing the student's knowledge regarding *what was taught* - Assessing the student's progression - Considers diverse areas of knowledge connected to the school's priorities and the student's needs	- Assessing the student's performance compared with *national standards* - Assessing the final performance - Considers specific skills defined centrally

7.2.1 Assessing the students' knowledge

Teachers and leadership teams at the three schools pointed out that assessment should measure what the student really knows. This was an important concern, due to the staff's perception that an external assessment such as SIMCE was not sensitive to the knowledge of their students. They argued that many of their students, particularly those with special needs, with learning gaps, and those who are learning Spanish, were below the levels expected according to the national standards and the SIMCE test was consequently not able to capture their progress. For instance, the teacher Diamela from the Moon school claimed that SIMCE was not sensitive to the learning achievements of one of the girls that works with her in the workshops, because she has various reading problems. In the girl's school level (Year 5 -Year 6), the SIMCE test assumes that the students read fluently, so the skills they have developed are obscured by their inability to read fluently.

> That test [SIMCE] isn't in line with the school reality. This student that I mentioned [the student who cannot read fluently] who is in the third level [equivalent to Year 5 and 6], but has knowledge at first- or second- level [equivalent to Year 3 and 4] ... that test can't measure that student's learning (Diamela, teacher, Moon school / interview).

The teachers from the three schools explained that they had to adjust the learning goals according to their students' skills or knowledge because many of them lack the abilities to address the content defined in the national curriculum. In practice, that means that teachers go back to certain content and skills defined for lower school years and reorganise the order of the content to address the needs of their students. Therefore, the content delivered by the teachers often did not match that assessed by SIMCE[44]. The SIMCE test measures certain contents that the students do not have the opportunity to learn because they have not been taught about them. Moreover, according to the interviewees from the three schools, the SIMCE results could be highly influenced by preparation for the test. As such, some of the teachers from the Sun and Star schools stated that positive SIMCE results say more about training for the test than about the real knowledge that students have. In that respect, the perception was that high results on SIMCE can be the result of a particular strategy or even a consequence of 'cheating' practices.

Therefore, the aspects described above show the perception of the teachers that SIMCE has difficulty in measuring the students' knowledge properly. Firstly, they have the opinion that SIMCE is unable to assess student learning because it tends to be below the level of knowledge expected for their age in accordance with the national curriculum. Secondly, they have perception that the SIMCE content does not necessarily match what the teachers teach the students, because they had to adapt the teaching goals according to the students' levels. This situation reflects two problems: a validity problem and a social justice problem. There is a validity problem, because the test is unable to measure what the student knows because it is not sensitive to their knowledge (Isaacs et al., 2013), and there is a social justice problem, because the students are tested on some contents that they do not even have the opportunity to learn (Gipps & Stobart, 2009)

7.2.2 Assessing the student's progression

Regarding the focus of assessment, most of the teachers interviewed across the three schools mentioned showing the student's learning progression as one of the key elements for fair assessment. They considered that fair assessment does not have to focus solely on the final results, as the teachers

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[44] This issue could be connected to what Gordon Stobart mentioned referring to the distance between what the test measures (the curriculum) and the opportunity to be taught on the curriculum. According to the author, this distance has negative consequences in terms of fairness (C. Gipps & Stobart, 2010).

perceive that SIMCE does, but also on what happens during the learning process. One of the main arguments for this was the need to consider *the starting point* of the students.

For instance, at the Star school, the teachers highlighted the achievements of students with special needs as positive aspects, explaining that even though they did not reach the national goals expected for their school level, they have made significant progress over time, which they considered very important to recognise. The teacher Amanda explained the importance of capturing this progress, describing the progression she saw in a student with autism:

> One child on the autism spectrum, who used to draw in the classroom all day, now he wants to participate in groups. Before he would be alone ... now he can work in a team, he wants to contribute. This is good. (Amanda, teacher, Star school / interview).

Similarly, Carolina at the Moon school, who taught in a workshop with students with large gaps in language, emphasised the importance of recording student progression during the lessons and giving personalised feedback to students based on her observations on the class activities, something that she does not observe in her experience of the SIMCE test.

In addition, some of the teachers at the three schools argued that the learning process cannot be measured at a single point in time. Constant observation is needed with several assessments over time to be able to monitor and identify student progression, as the teacher Daniel argued: "I can't measure something at the end without having carried a process to learn and be able to teach. When I review the activities they do every day, I'm looking to see if they're progressing or not" (Daniel, teacher, Sun school / interview).

At the Star school, the staff mentioned strategies to carry out assessment according to *different student learning paths*. The school has introduced certain initiatives in line with this idea, such as by using Axel, a computer programme that can identify the student's learning level and define tasks in accordance with that. Based on the individual student's performance, the programme can identify their level of knowledge on the subject and then provide appropriate tasks, offering different degrees of complexity between the students. The teachers stated that this programme was a fair model for working with children and conducting assessment because it was able to identify student learning and

define differentiated tasks. The professional team of the Integration Programme[45] is using the *PASI strategy* with students with special needs, which is an individual work plan that includes learning goals based on a previous diagnosis:

> In the integration Programme, children with learning needs have a PASI, which is a curriculum evaluation program where you see the student's skills; you assess their skills and based on that you create a plan. Then you work on your plan and you go step by step. That's a good tool (Member of the Integration team, Star school / workshop,)*.

When discussing potential connections between student progression and SIMCE, the teachers interviewed at all three schools felt that SIMCE provided a static picture of the student's learning and was unable to measure their progress, which was unfair. The teams explained that their schools were working with several students who were below the levels of knowledge and skills expected according to the national standards, but who had made significant progress over time. The impression was thus that, unfortunately, SIMCE was not sensitive to these changes and was therefore not able to represent student progress. For example, at the Star school, the teacher Stefani pointed out that significant progress by a student in Year 2 was not reflected on the SIMCE test.

> It wasn't true that this child didn't know anything. He did know how to write a word [and] this word should be assessed because he was able to write it. Before that, he never wrote it and now he did (Stefani, teacher, Star school / interview).

7.2.3 Assessing diverse areas of knowledge

The staff of the schools mentioned that a fair assessment should consider student achievements in diverse areas of knowledge, not just the areas considered in the SIMCE test, but also other cognitive dimensions, as well as emotional and social dimensions. According to the staff, assessment should be connected with a broader conception of education linked to the emphasis of the school: artistic abilities, social abilities, capacity to work in groups, inclusive culture, and the contents and skills prioritised by the schools in accordance with the students' needs, etc. The staff mentioned some ideas about how to consider diverse areas of knowledge, such as the methodology of carrying out projects as a way of enhancing student skills relevant for their development, student autonomy, capacity to

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[45] The formal school programme that works with special needs students in every school in the country.

work on a long process, and ability to learn to work in groups, complementing the skills of others and collaborating.

With regard to SIMCE, the predominant view at the schools was that SIMCE had a reduced capacity to address different areas of knowledge, because it focuses on certain subjects and specific skills and contents within those subjects. The feeling was that SIMCE did not consider key aspects of student education. To explain this idea, a teacher from the Sun school referred to the metaphor of the book *The Little Prince* by Saint-Exupéry, "the essential is invisible to the eyes," suggesting that "the essential is invisible to SIMCE"[46] (Gonzalo, teacher, Sun school / interview). The staff at the schools explained that the focus on particular areas, along with the external pressure to obtain good results on SIMCE, could have the effect of teaching to the test and narrowing the curriculum. This means the teachers tend to focus on the subjects and skills assessed by SIMCE, neglecting other subjects and skills, as Adriana at the Sun school described:

> She [a teacher from a year with SIMCE assessments] only worked on language and mathematics. She taught history after the SIMCE .... These children didn't have arts and their classes were more focused on 'facsimiles' [exercises similar to the SIMCE test] than on other things (Adriana, Integration team, Sun school / interview).

In addition, staff members across the three schools argued in the interviews that excessive attention to SIMCE promoted a teaching style based on memorisation and mechanical learning processes: "They work with SIMCE, repeating, repeating, repeating. Children aren't machines!" (Hugo, teacher, Sun school / Interview). This discourages work on complex skills, as another teacher claimed: "It's often like that, an automation of responses. These processes generate a mental block to avoid the cognitive processes of finding the solutions for themselves" (Carlos, teacher, Star school). In line with the perceptions reported in interviews, when the school staff were asked in an open question of the survey about the main effects of SIMCE at the school[47], they mentioned a series of elements linked to the narrowing of curriculum, such as "[SIMCE] makes learning mechanical" (member of the integration team, Sun school / survey), "[SIMCE implies] disconnection from the process of development" (member of the coexistence team, Star school / survey), "Only SIMCE subjects are prioritised" (teacher, Star school / survey), "Students don't develop life skills" (teacher, Star school / survey).

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[46] This metaphor was used by the campaign "Stop to SIMCE" (Alto al SIMCE) (Montero et al., 2019)
[47] This item was an open question in the survey *"What are the main effects of SIMCE at the school?* To answer the respondents should write three main effects of SIMCE on the school.

The attention to certain areas of knowledge due to SIMCE makes the staff of the schools feel that the school's achievements in other dimensions are made invisible, especially those related to integral and comprehensive education and the promotion of inclusive values, which are key aspects of the schools' projects and priorities. In that vein, Adela from the leadership team of the Star school mentioned in the final comments section of the survey:

> The [SIMCE] assessment doesn't demonstrate the comprehensive educational development of our students. Therefore, it goes against the concepts that are at the base of our educational projects, such as inclusion and civic education (Adela, leadership team, Star school / survey).

In a similar line, when I asked the teacher Paulina whether SIMCE could be an obstacle to the school project, she replied "Yes, because if they assess us according to SIMCE we're a bad school and according to that we would have to undergo intervention and if there's intervention the project ends." (Star school / interview). A teacher in the final comments of the survey added "the SIMCE test doesn't assess the quality of work and comprehensive human development, it's only a superficial aspect in the inequality of conditions (teacher, Star school final / survey).

Despite the criticisms of SIMCE, there are some positive views among the teachers. There was a group of teachers from the first cycle[48] of education at the Sun school that defended SIMCE, arguing that it had beneficial effects on student learning. They claimed that the kind of abilities that SIMCE prioritises were relevant and useful for students. In their view, SIMCE did not promote just basic skills, but analytical and relevant skills such as problem solving, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. They also argued that SIMCE is based on the national curriculum, so focusing on what SIMCE focuses on was what they would ordinarily be doing and it therefore did not alter their teaching. Finally, they claimed that SIMCE provided useful information about the students' learning, and this information led teachers to seek new strategies to improve, as noted by the teacher Diego. "When you see negative results [on SIMCE], we try to improve the way we teach, the way we see contents, the way we carry out the activities" (Diego, teacher, Sun school / interview). Other teachers from the Sun and Star schools also explained that, for them, the problem with SIMCE was not the test itself, but the excessive importance given to the test. For instance, a teacher answer in the final open question of the survey:

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[48] *First cycle* referred to the four first years of primary education (Year 1 to Year 4), *second cycle* referred to Year 5 and Year 6 of primary education.

"I believe that SIMCE should be an opportunity to address student 'learning, but if the learning is based on this instrument, the richness and quality are lost" (teacher, Star school / survey).

7.3 *'For what?'*: The purpose of assessment

This current section presents the perception of the school staff about the purpose (*'for what'*) concerning fair assessment. As shown in Table 8, The notion of fair assessment differs from what the school staff identified in the SIMCE test. In a fair assessment, the expected purpose was *pedagogical*, while in SIMCE the purpose perceived was *control* and *comparison.*

Table 8

The purpose of assessment: Fair assessment versus the SIMCE test

Fair assessment	SIMCE test
The purpose: pedagogical	The purpose: control-comparison
- To inform teachers/school staff about student learning - To take pedagogical decisions in the classroom/to offer support to students	- To inform central authorities about the school performance - To classify schools and compare school performances

Most of the teachers and leadership teams at the three schools suggested that a fair assessment should provide helpful information to guide teachers' knowledge about student learning and help support them. Assessment should offer useful information about the students' level of learning, their progression, their strengths and weaknesses, and help teachers' identify the priorities to address with students, as Maite, a member of the leader team of the Star school noted:

> *For me, a fair assessment would be that each child could demonstrate what they know …. In that way, the teacher can make decisions* [emphasis added] and show the students different paths to continue developing themselves [my emphasis] (Maite, leadership team, Star school / workshop).

In contrast with these expectations, the predominant view among the staff regarding SIMCE is that the test was not helpful in pedagogical terms. Indeed, a simple majority in the survey (53%, n=17) disagree with the statement that SIMCE provided useful information to improve the teaching and learning process at the school (Table 9).

Table 9

SIMCE provide useful information to improve the teaching & learning process

		Frequency	Valid percentage
Valid	Agree	15	46.9%
	Disagree	17	53.1%
	Total	32	100.0%

In addition, the vast majority (87%, n = 26) believe that SIMCE did not encourage the school to achieve academic learning with all the students (Table 10).

Table 10

SIMCE encourage learning with all the students

		Frequency	Valid percentage
Valid	Agree	4	13.3%
	Disagree	26	86.7%
	Total	30	100.0%
Missing	System	4	
Total		34	

The results in Tables 9 and 10 reinforce the idea that SIMCE has limitations as a pedagogical tool.

Another element regarding the assessment purpose highlighted among the staff of the schools was that assessment should be based on the contents and skills taught in the lessons and should relate to the school's priorities. With regard to this expectation, the view was that SIMCE, as a standardised

test, did not take into account the contents and skills prioritised by the school and what was effectively taught during the lessons. The teachers and school teams therefore tend to see a disconnect between the focus of SIMCE and the school's learning goals. A clear example of this was seen in the Moon school. The school prioritised the skills and contents to teach in accordance with the students' needs and considering the particularity of the school—the 2x1 modality—a modality in which the students study two school levels in one academic year.

Instead of being a pedagogical tool, the impression of several members of the staff of the schools was that SIMCE represented a tool for the purposes of *control and comparison* for the central government, linked to the authorities' interest in rankings. The school ranking based on SIMCE and the consequences associated with SIMCE results were very present in the discourse of the teachers. For instance, the teacher Helia from the Star school stated that SIMCE was not contributing to student learning, but classifying the school and teacher performance at different levels: "Who is SIMCE for? It's not for the children, it's for them [the government] to classify. It's to say 'here there are good teachers, bad teachers, here the education is good, and here it's bad'" (Helia, teacher, Star school / interview).

Some teachers went even further and suggested that SIMCE was a strategy to control the school's initiatives because it forced them to pay attention to SIMCE instead of other priorities: "*SIMCE is a wolf in sheep's clothing* [emphasis added] because the mask of the assessment of learning hides the strategy of controlling educational projects and for social modelling" (teacher, Star school /survey-final comments section).

As explained in the chapter on the Chilean case (section 4.4.1), the *comparison purpose* of SIMCE is related to the marketisation of Chilean education. Student enrolment is not centrally organised, so schools have to compete to attract families and thus receive state funding. In this competitive scenario, SIMCE is the formal tool delivered by the school to inform parents about school quality. An example of SIMCE's role in this marketisation system was mentioned by the staff of the Sun school in the workshop: the use of SIMCE for publicity. They stated that the schools with high SIMCE scores used the scores for publicity to attract more students, so instead of using the test to assess learning, it was actually used to carry out marketing, offering rewards and punishments to school in a behavioural strategy, as the teacher Elías explained:

Finally, what do the schools do? They advertise their good achievements and if they do badly, what do they do? They hide it, I don't see justice in any sense. I still see the behavioural notion, [SIMCE as] a mistake, a punishment and, if you did well, a reward (Elías, teacher, Sun school / interview).

In short, the control and comparison purposes of SIMCE, combined with the segregated and marketised school system, means SIMCE has significant limitations to be a pedagogical tool. The predominant view was that SIMCE does not assess student learning in relation to the contents and skills taught, and it does not provide helpful information to make decisions on teaching practices and student support that includes all students.

7.4 *'Whom?':* Student & school profile

The following section presents the views of the school staff about the assessment assumptions regarding the student and school profiles. As can be seen in Table 11, there was a contrast between what the school staff expected in terms of the assumptions for the student and school profiles for a *fair assessment* and their view of the SIMCE assumptions. For the staff, a fair assessment recognised the student and school diversity, considering the students' experience and the school context. In contrast, they saw that SIMCE was based on an assumption of homogeneity regarding the student experience and school context. They point to a series of negative consequences based on the assumption of homogeneity in the assessment.

Table 11

Student and school profile assumptions: Fair assessment versus the SIMCE test

Fair assessment: assumption of diversity	SIMCE: assumption of homogeneity
Students	
- Assessment should consider the student diversity (e.g., learning, cultural, social background) -Assessment should provide all the students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge regardless of their differences. -Assessment should avoid negative assessment experiences due to student diversity	- SIMCE does not consider student diversity (learning, cultural, social background) -SIMCE does not allow all the students to demonstrate their knowledge -SIMCE generates some negative student experiences due to the failure to consider student diversity
School context	
-Assessment should consider the school context (e.g., school priorities, resources, student profile) -Assessment should capture what the school has achieved in different contexts -Assessment should avoid detrimental effects linked to the context, such as school stigmatisation and social segregation	-SIMCE does not consider the school context (e.g., school priorities, resources, student profile) -SIMCE is not able to capture the school achievements regarding different contexts -SIMCE tends to generate stigmatisation and social segregation due to the failure to consider the school context

7.4.1 (Non) consideration of student diversity

The staff of the three schools highlighted the importance of considering the student diversity to create a fair assessment, in terms of culture, social background, and personal experience. "[The test should] allow all of the students to contribute from their own experience, from their own learning, from their own culture, and their point of view" (Luisa, teacher, Sun school / interview). According to them, the recognition of diversity was key to letting the students demonstrate their knowledge regardless of their differences.

Different members of the school staff argued that standardised tests, whether external such as SIMCE or internal, did not take into account the students' experience and background, because they are conducted in a standardised way based on one format and one means of implementation: written, individual multiple-choice tests, with long texts, and solely in Spanish. As a result, these tests offer fewer opportunities to certain groups to perform well, such as poor students, non-native Spanish

speakers, and students with special needs. For instance, at the Sun school, some teachers said that internal assessment was not fair to non-native Spanish speakers, because the system did not provide a translated test, preventing them from demonstrating their knowledge. Non-native Spanish speakers tend to perform poorly in their first year at the school and, consequently, some of them have to repeat the year. This negative situation was not only related to repeating the school year, but also the frustration that they experience in terms of assessments, whether internal or external, as the teacher Mariana noted:

> Some children suffer because they don't understand anything that's happening …. How do we assess them? Is it fair to make them repeat the year? It's complicated because later the same group will take the SIMCE (Mariana, teacher, Sun school / interview).

Members of staff at the three schools also commented that the standardised test did not consider the socioeconomic factors that influence the students' approach and skills to address assessments. For instance, students in poor living conditions with parents who have a lack of formal education and a lack of experience with books will probably have more difficulties dealing with written assessments. Students with interrupted school trajectories, with traumatic experiences of schooling due to constant failure and the stigma of being low-performing students will also have more difficulties dealing with standardised tests that have to be answered in one specific format and in a specific period of time, as will those students who have been absent from school for a long period due to personal or family reasons compared with those who have attended all the lessons in the year. At the Moon school, the teachers argued that the conflictive relationship with the school and the frustrating experience with certain academic activities such as reading make it difficult for their students to deal with written tests. For that reason, one of the school leaders suggested that other methods of assessment could be a more appropriate way to look at the learning process of the students, such as oral examinations. Similarly, at the Sun school, a member of the integration team argued that some students would be more able to answer a test if it related to their life experience, such as their experience of selling goods at the market, suggesting that, for these students, it would be easier to answer maths question if they were asked orally and referred to products sold in a market. At the Star school, it was argued that some students with special needs have certain adaptations or teacher mediation in order to be able to answer some kinds of tests. Therefore, the staff across the three schools argued that it is important to introduce changes in assessment to respond to the needs of different students, such as modifications or accommodations for students with special needs, those with severe difficulties in reading, or non-native Spanish speakers.

- Negative consequences for students due to non-consideration of students' diversity

With regard to SIMCE in particular, teachers across the schools felt that the test did not consider personal and contextual differences for students, generating barriers for them to demonstrate learning and also leading to some negative experiences with respect to assessment. For instance, a teacher from Sun School, in the final comments section of the survey wrote: "It [SIMCE] isn't adapted to particular realities, such as students who are not Spanish-speaking [e.g., Haitian, Palestinian] and it does not consider children with SEN [special education needs]" (teacher, Sun school / survey). The fact that it is a long written test, covering content that the students have not necessary been taught in lessons, solely in Spanish, and without modifications and the possibility of teacher mediation, represented barriers for students to perform well on the test.

The experience at the Moon school was a clearer example of this situation. In this school most of the students did not fully complete the test, with some students only able to complete half of it, others only read the first few pages, and others just a few lines. However, due to the rules for application of SIMCE, students were instructed to remain in the classroom, seated there for a long time with the test in front of them, even if they were unable to read. The teachers reported that the fact that the students were not able to answer the test generated feelings of frustration and even rage among the students. "She started doing the test and realised that she had no idea and started crying with despair and anguish" (Victoria, teacher, Moon school / interview). As a consequence of this situation, some students display disrespectful behaviour with the test takers, destroy the test during its application, or disturb their peers, as Sebastian, from the leadership team described:

> "The stressful situation of the test has repercussions in behavioural terms ... they argued with the evaluator, they took it [the test] and ripped it up, or began to bother their peers and finally they had to leave the classroom, altering the whole situation" (Sebastian, leadership team, Moon school / interview).

The view of the school staff was not only that the test did not consider the students' diversity in the assessment, but also that SIMCE did not promote work with diverse students. Table 12 shows that 75% (n=24) of the respondents believed that SIMCE discouraged work with diverse students.

Table 12

What do you think about the SIMCE test?

		Frequency	Valid percentage
id	Encourages work with diverse students	3	9.4%
	Does not encourage work with diverse students or discourages work with diverse students	5	15.6%
	Discourages work with diverse students	24	75.0%
	Total	32	100.0%
Missing	System	2	
Total		34	

7.4.2 (Non) consideration of the school context:

The staff of the schools emphasised the relevance of considering the school context in the assessment process**.** The predominant view was that a fair assessment, even if external, should consider the school context, such as the family profile, school resources, the academic level of the students, and student stability/rotation at the schools. According to the staff, these elements are not considered by SIMCE, implying it has limitations in representing the school achievements and has potential negative effects on social justice, such as school stigmatisation and social segregation, an argument expanded in the subsections below.

SIMCE does not allow the school to demonstrate achievements with the students

With regard to SIMCE, the staff of the three schools claimed that the test does not take into account the school context. They argue that the schools had significant differences in terms of their material conditions and student profiles. There were schools with more resources, families with higher educational levels and possibilities of offering more support, students who lived in safe environments with a high quality of life, and, on the other hand, students and schools that had to deal with social issues, less support, and low resources. Therefore, several teachers across the schools believe that the application of the same test is unfair because of this reason, as noted by Carlos:

I insist, I think that you can't do a single test for the whole country, because a school that's located in San Carlos de Apoquindo [a wealthy neighbourhood of Santiago] can't have the same test as a school that's located here in XX [a poor and stigmatised neighbourhood] ... the stimulation that those [wealthy] children have, versus the children located in our district ... there's a huge gap there (Carlos, teacher Star school / interview).

The feeling of unfairness about applying the same test across the schools was clear at the Moon school. The staff claimed that the school was at a disadvantage regarding the SIMCE test. In the three schools, the students tend to have an irregular educational trajectory that may include several year repetitions, expulsion from other schools, and big gaps in learning compared with the national curriculum. However, the Moon school was treated the same in terms of SIMCE as other schools, being expected to reach the standards that all schools of the country are expected to achieve:

[SIMCE] doesn't benefit us. Here they [the teachers] have to adapt certain aspects pedagogically ... so when SIMCE is taken we'll always have this difficulty. As long as they see us as a mainstream school, we'll never achieve the expected score (Mónica, coexistence team, Moon school / interview).

The feeling among the staff of the schools was that SIMCE did not reflect the schools' efforts and achievements with the students, contributing to an incorrect image being formed about its work. In the survey, in response to the open questions about the effects of SIMCE, the respondents claimed "[SIMCE] doesn't contribute to the [school] project" (teacher, Star school / survey), or there is "little recognition of the school's work" (Amalia, teacher, Moon school / survey).

Negative effects on social justice such as school stigmatisation and social segregation

SIMCE also was considered unfair among the staff of the schools studied because it is used to compare the quality of education between schools from very different contexts[49] which contributes to the stigmatisation of poor and state schools and reinforces social segregation within the school system. The school staff argued that state schools tend to have lower SIMCE results because they generally work with the students and families in more disadvantaged situations. Therefore, in practice, the

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[49] The Quality Assurance System law (Sistema de aseguramiento de la calidad - N° 20.529) (MINEDUC, 2011a) defined a system in which all schools in the country are ranked in terms of performance levels based on the assessment of learning standards. The SIMCE test is the tool used to assess performance on these learning standards in each school (MINEDUC, 2014) (See Appendix 2).

SIMCE test gives the message that state schools are the poorest in terms of education quality, which was considered highly unfair. As an example of this, in one of open question on the survey teachers pointed to SIMCE effects such as: "it stigmatises due to poor results" (teacher, Star school / survey), or "wrong perception of parents" (teacher, Sun school / survey). In the interviews, some staff members from the Sun school went further and suggested that SIMCE contributes to the reproduction of social segregation and the unequal social structure in the school system: "I will be very categorical about this, SIMCE is a segregating instrument" (leadership team, Sun school / interview), "the only thing that the test does year after year is highlight the socioeconomic division of the country" (Javier, teacher, Sun school / interview). The belief of these teachers was that SIMCE represents a mirror for these social differences, but also a tool that reinforces them, thus contributing to social injustice, as the teacher Luisa from the Sun School commented:

> *There is no social justice with SIMCE structured like this* [emphasis added] because those who will always go on to succeed are the children who always have everything; the children who are at a paid school ... those who have had the opportunity to go to other countries ... *I think SIMCE contributes to making the difference deeper* [emphasis added] (Luisa, teacher, Sun school / interview).

7.5 'Who?': The role of the school staff

The following section describes the staff's view of the role of teachers and school teams in a fair assessment and what they perceived about SIMCE regarding these roles. As seen in Table 13, one of the findings is that the schools studied highlighted the key role of teachers and integration teams in the provision of fair assessment of students. In contrast, the view of SIMCE was that the role of teachers or other members of the staff was absent from the key stages of the assessment process, which was considered negative in terms of fair assessment.

Table 13

Teacher and school role

	Fair assessment	**SIMCE**
Teacher/school staff role	- Teacher & integration team role is key - Principle: to adjust assessment according to students' needs/conditions	- No role for teachers or other members of school staff - Principle: to guarantee the same assessment conditions to all

When asking the staff why the role of teachers and integration team was considered so important to provide a fair assessment, they argued that they were the people who could identify when the students have difficulties and need adaptations in terms of teaching strategies and assessment. In their opinion, the teachers and integration teams handle key information about the students' learning; the starting point of the students, their progression, and the pending areas to develop. Besides the academic dimension, they can also observe subjective aspects of students that can affect the assessment results and the assessment experience: such as when students were not emotionally well in the case of personal or family problems that could hinder good performance. Even though there were formal external tools to identify students with special needs, in practice, adaptations are also needed for students without a formal diagnosis of special needs, for those with learning gaps, for those with personal or social issues, and for non-native Spanish speakers, etc. There were a series of situations in which the teachers and integration team had to make decisions on adjustments, in terms to accommodations and adaptations to assessment to make it accessible and offer equitable opportunities to all. To some extent, the internal team acted as mediators between the assessment and the students because they identified the needs and academic and personal conditions of students, and designed and implemented the assessment in accordance with those factors. An example of this is what happens during the implementation of internal assessments: the teacher in charge of the class or some member of the integration team introduces certain *accommodations to the setting*, such as reading the test to students who were not yet able to read, writing the answers for them, providing additional explanation to students who required it, explaining the instructions and the concepts that impeded the students from answering the test, or translating questions to students orally in the case of non-native Spanish speakers. The teachers also introduced *scheduling accommodations* such as giving certain students more time to answer, or delaying the test for the students that were not in a positive state to take it due to circumstantial situations (e.g., students who could not attend the school

for a long time due to illness or family problems, students who were not fluent in Spanish, and those with emotional or medical problems on the day of the test). The teachers value the possibility of making adjustments to provide all the students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they know:

> If the child knows some content, you read and write what they tell you. For example, I read him the story and I ask him a question and I write down everything he tells me because I'm evaluating what he understands, not whether he knows how to write it (Amanda, teacher, Star school / interview).

In contrast, the majority view among the school staff was that SIMCE did not include strategies to make the test accessible to all students as the teachers at the school were doing, as SIMCE uses the same test design, the same format, and the same conditions of implementation across the country. In that sense, the feeling among the teachers was that SIMCE was not consistent with the conditions in which the students are used to working at the schools, which are more flexible with them. For instance, at the Star school, the teacher Maria Paz claimed that the school was introducing different kinds of materials or strategies and offering the support the students needed to carry out the activities, but the SIMCE test did not consider any of these aspects, as she noted:

> These students aren't used to sitting down and looking at a sheet of paper for so many hours [as in the case of the SIMCE test]. At this school they do things differently. They'll be with a sheet of paper for 10 minutes, but with that they'll be doing other things as well. We're diversifying activities all the time to keep their attention (Maria Paz, teacher, Star school / interview).

7.6 *'How?':* fair assessment format

This section outlines the forms of assessment that the staff of the three schools studied considered fairer considered with their perceptions regarding SIMCE. As we can see in Table 14, the main finding was that *flexible assessment enabling the introduction of accommodations and modifications* and *non-traditional assessment* were considered fairer ways of assessment, while SIMCE was considered a rigid form of assessment that has limitations to address student diversity.

Table 14

Fair assessment practices

Fair assessment	SIMCE test
Flexible assessment	Rigid - standardised assessment
- Accommodations according to students' needs. - Diverse forms of assessment. - Non-traditional forms of assessment are considered fairer formats (e.g., projects, team assessment).	- Standardised test, no accommodations. - One way of assessing - using the same format for everyone. - Traditional format of assessment (e.g., written, individual, multiple-choice questions).

7.6.1 Accommodations and modifications to make assessment accessible to all:

With regard to the design of assessment, the staff of the schools introduced accommodation*s* in the internal school assessment focused on the *level of difficulty of the test,* making it shorter, removing distractors, and simplifying some questions. These changes were made in the case of students with special needs, students with learning gaps in the subject, and non-native Spanish speakers who were not fluent. For instance, María Paz from the Star school introduced changes to the test to include tasks that students with special needs could do, such as replacing a task related to interpretation with one involving recognition. In addition, the staff introduced accommodations into the *presentation of the test* to help make the assessment accessible to all the students and create a more friendly format that would enhance the students' involvement with the assessment, such as larger text and a more visual format (images), particularly aiding students with visual impairments and those with difficulties in reading. The idea of reducing the difficulty of the test was to avoid exposing students to questions that the teachers already knew that they would not be able to answer and that could generate anxiety and frustration. "It doesn't make sense to come up with a test that you know that the student isn't going to answer" (Diamela, teacher, Moon school / interview). Furthermore, some teachers made adjustments to assessments in order to evaluate the students' progress and not just their results, especially for those that had gaps in the contents/skills assessed. For example, the physical education teachers at the Sun school customised sports assessment exercises, taking into account students' current physical condition and previous experience of playing sports, so that every student could achieve the maximum score despite their different levels of performance.

7.6.2 Diverse forms of assessment

The staff of the schools agree that a fairer way of assessment was providing diverse forms of assessment. Several teachers across the three schools stated that a fair assessment policy should offer different ways of assessment in order to respond to different student needs, skills, and learning styles. Many of the teachers interviewed said that they tried to mix different forms of assessment during the year, combining individual and group assessments, multiple-choice and open answers, and written and oral presentations, among others. According to the teachers, the use of different kinds of activities and formats for assessment give more opportunities to students to fit in and do something that they feel comfortable, motivated and capable of doing. The belief was that a single type of assessment benefits a specific group of students who are more at ease with that kind of format. In contrast, different forms of assessment with a variety of formats provide more opportunities for students to show their knowledge. The assumption was that the introduction of diverse forms of assessment would make it easier for students with different learning styles and needs to feel involved in the assessment and be able to participate and demonstrate their knowledge without being punished with a low mark. For instance, a teacher from the Star school reported that she had seven students who were not yet able to read, so she organised oral presentations in groups to allow them to participate under the same conditions as their peers who could read.

> Some children aren't able to read, but they deliver oral presentations and they present very nice work. They read books in their family and bring the work here ... I can show the wonderful work that they've presented, so I assessed that. I don't know if the mark is important, but it can be assessed in different ways: a student can have a very low mark on a written test, but in a presentation, he/she can have a 7 [the highest mark] because in that area it does work (Stefani teacher, Star school / Interview).

Non-traditional forms of assessment are perceived as fairer

Among the staff of the schools, there was a tendency to classify some forms of assessment as fairer than others, making a distinction between *traditional* and *non-traditional* forms of assessment. Those they called "traditional forms of assessment", such as written, multiple-choice summative and individual tests were seen as more rigid, predetermined by the teachers, with less freedom, and fewer opportunities to connect to the student's voice and interests. In contrast, "non-traditional" assessments, such as oral tests, team assessments, qualitative assessments, and evaluations based on

projects, were seen as providing more space for creativity, greater opportunities to explore skills, and more openness to student talents and interests. For instance, an oral test was seen by teachers as a form of assessment that was accessible to most of the students, and open questions were considered to be a format that allowed the students to explain their opinion and let them express their voice, while team assessments allowed them to complement the skills of different students and promote collaboration between them, qualitative assessments were viewed as a way to facilitate recording of students' process, and formative assessment provided the opportunity to offer feedback to students. Work on projects also was seen by teachers as a form of fairer assessment because it offered the possibility of evaluating student performance during a process and gave the students a chance to explore different skills, thus providing them with more opportunities be involved and demonstrate what they know. For instance, at the Moon school, the staff implemented the methodology of project-based learning (*Aprendizaje Basado on Proyectos,* ABP), a method in which the students address contents and skills from different subjects in a single project.

With regard to SIMCE, the staff of the schools argued that the SIMCE test was too rigid in terms of the format of assessment and it should instead consider a wider range of possibilities to be fairer: "The SIMCE shouldn't just be a written test of content. It should cover different styles of teaching or student learning" (teacher, Sun school/ survey[50]). Teachers and members of the integration teams across the three schools argued that the format and setting of the test were extremely rigid, since it was a written test, that had to be done at a specific time, in a specific place, with a specified length, and not allowing any intervention by the teachers.

In short, there was a view among the staff of the three schools that some assessment formats are fairer than others. Those considered to be fairer were linked to non-traditional forms of assessment, such as oral tests and teamwork, while SIMCE and the traditional form of assessment, involving writing, individual testing, and rigid formats, are considered problematic in terms of fairness due to their limitations to introduce adjustments and offer diversity for students with different needs, interests, and learning styles.

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[50] Quotation from the final comments section, which was an open question.

Conclusion

The findings in this chapter revealed marked differences between what the school staff perceived as key aspects for fair assessment and what they observed about SIMCE. These differences seemed to be related to the staff's distinction between *equality* and *equity*, which is line with the findings of the previous chapter, where this distinction also emerged as a central element. For the staff, SIMCE was linked to assessment practices that seek to ensure the same conditions for all the students and schools across the country (notion of *equality*), while fair assessments were linked to practices that seeks to guarantee opportunities to participate, be involved, and demonstrate progress in learning regardless of the differences between students and schools (notion of *Equity*). In relation to this distinction between equality and equity, the staff observed a series of limitations in SIMCE to consider it a fair test. For instance, with regard to *the focus of assessment*, SIMCE was seen as being focused on an external standard, instead of focusing on the student, including their starting point and different areas of knowledge. Looking at the *purpose*, the perception was that SIMCE works more as a tool for control and comparison on the part of central authorities than a pedagogical tool aimed at providing information to the school staff to support student learning. With respect to *the student and school profile*, the view was that SIMCE treated the schools and students under the assumption of homogeneity, ignoring differences in terms of context, experiences, and diversity among the students and the schools. Regarding *the role played by the school staff* in the assessment process, the perception was that, in order to provide the same conditions to all candidates, teachers and staff were marginalised in the process of design and implementation, preventing the internal teams from contributing to a fair assessment. In relation to the *test format*, SIMCE was considered a rigid and traditional test with serious limitations to provide access and participation to all students.

The staff of the schools also observed a series of negative consequences of SIMCE linked to social justice. In terms of school practices these involve narrowing of the curriculum that neglects subjects and skills not assessed by SIMCE, while with respect to the student experience these entail negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, and frustration. With regard to the status of the school and the educational system, it can lead to stigmatisation due to low SIMCE results and potentially contribute to social segregation. These perceptions of the consequences of SIMCE are in line with the evidence reported in the international literature about the effects of high-stakes testing (see section 2.3.2). The descriptions provided by the staff of the schools regarding the SIMCE impact on school life are addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8. IMPACTS OF SIMCE

> If you ask me if I'm scared about SIMCE, the truth is yes, I am (Amanda, teacher, Star school / interview).

Introduction

Focusing on the research question for this study, '*How does SIMCE influence school practices and the experiences of the school community?',* this chapter examines the SIMCE test's influence on school life, including the staff and the students' experience, exploring to what extent SIMCE affects school practices and the school community's experiences, the differences and similarities regarding SIMCE's influence in the schools studied, and the factors behind this influence. In order to address these topics, the chapter is organised into three sections: i) SIMCE is not the focus, ii) SIMCE impact: No escape?, and iii) Factors explaining SIMCE's influence. As Figure 10 shows, one of the main findings was a paradox between the general discourse about the impact of SIMCE and what happens in practice at the schools. On the one hand, there was a discourse that *SIMCE is not the focus* of the schools and, on the other hand, the descriptions of school practices and experiences of the staff indicate that SIMCE does have a significant influence on life at the school. Both external and internal factors help to explain SIMCE's influence on the school. The findings also show a predominant perception among the staff that the influence of SIMCE is not a help for the schools' projects in terms of their orientation towards inclusion, which is connected to the debate on the contribution of high-stakes testing to social justice addressed in the literature review (see section 2.3.2).

Figure 10

Impact of SIMCE: Perceptions from the School Staff
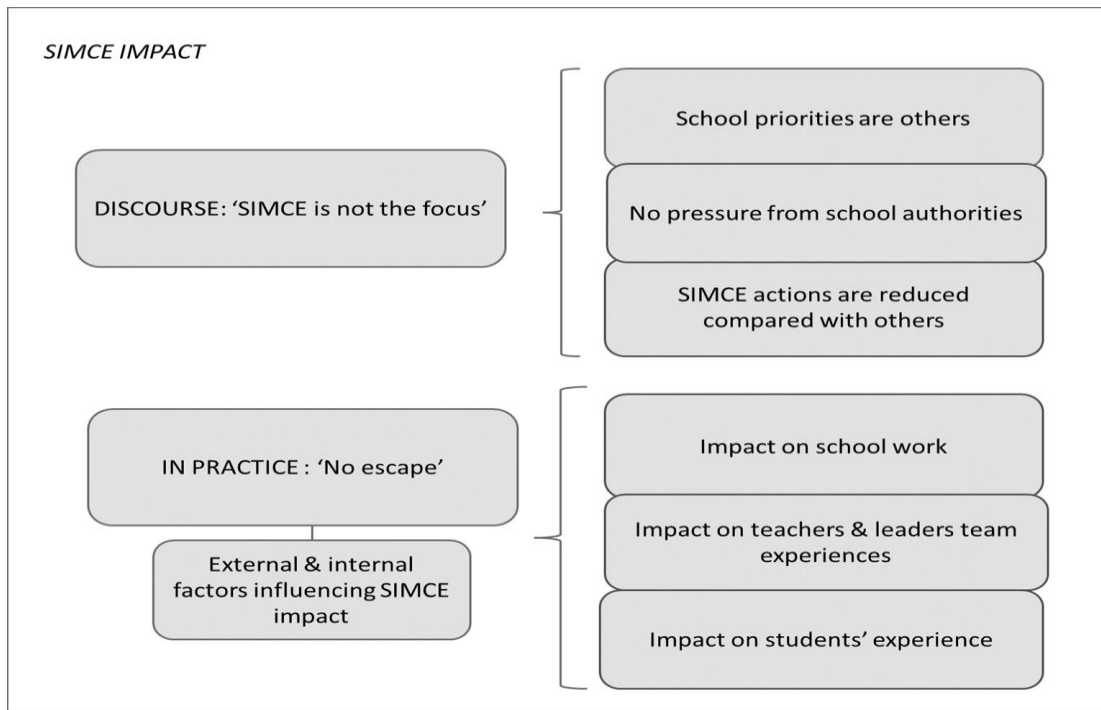
8.1 'SIMCE is not the focus'

> SIMCE is done because it has to be done, but our objective is to provide students with the tools they need at this moment, not to prepare for SIMCE (Carlos, teacher, Star school / interview).

The staff at all three schools often stated quite strongly that "SIMCE is not the focus" at their school. The argument is that i) the school has other priorities, ii) there is no pressure from the school authorities regarding SIMCE, and iii) the school does not train students for SIMCE as much as other schools do.

8.1.1 School priorities are different from SIMCE

Regarding the first argument that the "the school has other priorities", the staff at all three schools claimed that SIMCE was not the main focus. Different staff members explained that SIMCE is something that schools have to do because it is stipulated by the law, but the main objectives of their school are not linked to SIMCE. They emphasised that their goals were things other than SIMCE. At the Star school, the staff said that the main objective was to provide a comprehensive education to students and offer inclusive education "We don't work towards SIMCE, but we work to achieve the comprehensive development of students in all areas" (Paulina, teacher, Star school / interview). This view was confirmed by the newly hired teachers "When I did the job interview here, they told me that SIMCE wasn't an issue for them, that it had never been an issue, and that it was never going to be an issue …. When I arrived here I realised that this is the position they have" (Nicole, new teacher, Star school / interview). At the Moon school, the teachers' perception was that, due to the complex social reality in which the school was located, the SIMCE test was not a priority "I think that for everyone here SIMCE isn't appropriate in the context of the students; it's not a priority for the establishment" (Mauro, teacher, Moon school / interview). At the Sun school, most of the staff agreed that the main goals were to provide a comprehensive education to students based on values, life skills, and fundamental learning: "SIMCE isn't relevant, Sun school has an emphasis on children's rights. It's necessary to educate them comprehensively and offer them an appropriate environment for learning" (Omar, leadership team, Sun school / interview).

At the three schools, the discourse that *SIMCE is not the focus* was consistent in the written descriptions presented in their institutional educational project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional, PEI), which is one of the most important institutional documents of the school. In this document, none of the schools referred to SIMCE as something that they had particular concern about. According to the stated missions, the main goals of the schools did not focus on achieving good results on the external test, but to train the student in a comprehensively way considering different areas of development that go beyond the content of the national curriculum. In this document, the Moon school stated in their mission that "We seek to enhance the emotional, artistic, and intellectual development of all our students, based on the development of meaningful learning, good treatment, and equal opportunities" (Moon school, PEI 2018, p.1). The Sun school declared "our educational community promotes the development of our students at the biosocial-educational level, in artistic, sports, intercultural, and environmental aspects, to form critical individuals, who are thoughtful, respectful of themselves, of diversity, and the environment" (Sun school, PEI 2018, p. 11). Finally, the Star

school's mission states "We are a school community that welcomes and values the diversity of its members, being aware of their interests and learning needs, fostering development opportunities that consider health, learning, and the creative expression of people" (Star school, PEI 2018, p. 4).

Agreeing with the views reported by the participants and the general spirit of the institutional documents reviewed, my observations also suggested that SIMCE was not at the centre of the staff's concerns at the time of the research. When observing school staff meetings, I heard them discuss other issues other than SIMCE. At the Sun school, there was discussion and organisation of activities regarding interculturality, inclusion, and coexistence issues (observation of school meetings - sessions 1 & 2, Sun school), while at the Star school, they talked about the introduction of inclusive practices in lessons, the policy of good treatment at the school, and collaborative work between teachers and the integration team (observation of the staff meeting - session 2, Star school), and in the case of Moon school the staff conversed about student behaviour and social issues acting as barriers to students' commitment to school activities (observation of the staff meeting -session 2, Moon school). In terms of activities at the schools and in the classes to which I was invited, I observed that the focus was not on SIMCE, but rather on actions involving artistic or sports activities, collaborative work between students, and team presentations (see Appendix 4).

Moreover, the predominant impression from the staff was that their schools did not change their priorities due to SIMCE. As can be seen in Table 15 below, when the school staff were asked whether SIMCE makes them neglect school priorities, most of the respondents (73%, n=22), disagreed. These results help explain why the staff felt that SIMCE was not the focus of the schools. They lead us to think that the perception was that the school could handle possible pressure related to SIMCE and avoid neglecting its objectives.

Table 15
Does SIMCE makes us neglect our school's priorities?

		Frequency	Valid percentage
Valid	Agree	8	26.7%
	Disagree	22	73.3%
	Total	30	100.0%
Missing	System	4	
Total		34	

8.1.2 No pressure from school leadership teams

Teachers across the three schools reported that they do not feel pressure from the leadership team, which was one of the arguments that SIMCE was not the focus. One teacher from the Sun school stated: "I don't see any pressure from the headteacher about obtaining good results" (Mariana, teacher Sun School / interview). The teachers said that the leadership team promoted the comprehensive education of students and teaching in accordance with student needs. As an example of this, teachers from the Star school mentioned that they had the freedom to plan lessons in line with the students' needs rather than focusing on the SIMCE test "working on SIMCE isn't an issue here. There's no pressure to improve the results; at least it's not the main focus. The freedom they give me, the autonomy they give me is to do what the student needs in the classroom" (Helia, teacher, Star school / interview). In the case of the Star and Sun schools, the perception that there was no pressure from the leadership teams seemed to be in contrast with the previous leadership teams at the schools. Prior to the current leadership teams, both the Star and Sun schools had headteachers who were strongly orientated towards SIMCE results and promoted actions in relation to the test, such as workshops to prepare the students in the key subjects and skills measured by SIMCE, lesson material following the test methodology, and SIMCE mock tests. Stephany a teacher from the Star school, said:

> All the tests were like SIMCE tests. I did everything as a SIMCE test because my classes were SIMCE ... we did SIMCE mocks all week. I remember that year I had some folders that the leadership reviewed (Isidora, Star school / interview).

However, at the time of the research, both schools were led by headteacher for whom SIMCE was not a priority and they did not promote any activity with students or teaching practices related to SIMCE.

Indeed, as the headteacher of the Sun school explained, they wanted to make a change in terms of the previous focus of the school, removing the emphasis on SIMCE that it used to have:

> We tried to minimise the standardised test as much as possible. We're no longer going to work towards the standardised test, we're not even going to do the language workshops or maths workshops that the school used to do before [for SIMCE purposes] (Omar, leadership team, Sun school / interview).

In that context, the teachers at the Star and the Sun schools felt that the situation was different from the past; they were no longer forced to introduce activities linked to SIMCE, reinforcing the idea that the school was not focused on SIMCE. In the case of the Moon school, the situation was different. It had historically had poor results on SIMCE but did not train for the test. Staff worked intensively to offer support and produce learning in their students, but without SIMCE results being the main objective.

8.1.3 Reduced SIMCE influence compared with other schools

At the three schools, a comparative argument is raised to support the idea that they did not focus on SIMCE. The members of the school communities, including the staff, parents, and students, argued that the SIMCE test was significantly less important at their schools than at many other schools in the country. It was claimed that, at other schools, the whole school plan and staff energy were orientated towards obtaining good results on the test, a situation that they did not observe at their schools. According to them, actions linked to SIMCE were reduced compared with what occurs at other schools. In this vein, the mother of Martina, a student in the fifth level of the Sun school stated (first cycle of primary education):

> At other schools the children were preparing from the beginning of the year, they were developing SIMCE essays, weekly essays. Here at this school it's not the same. They prepare the students really well but it's not like because the SIMCE test is coming they started going over the contents for the year. They prepared for SIMCE just a month before the test (Martina's mother, parent Year 5, Sun school / interview).

Similarly, the students from the second cycle of basic education at the three schools also supported the idea that SIMCE was not a priority for their teachers unlike at other schools. Students from the

eighth level at the Sun school said, "here, they're not like 'do well [on SIMCE] or you have to leave the school, like at other schools'. At my other school they prepared us [for SIMCE], they gave us several exercise guides" (student focus group, Sun school). In a similar vein, the Year 8 students at the Star school said regarding their teacher "they don't care [about the SIMCE test]". However, for younger students, those who had recently taken the SIMCE at Year 4, SIMCE sounds much more important and that it has consequences for them as students and for the school.

Despite the discourse that *SIMCE is not the focus*, we will see in the next section that SIMCE is part of school life and has an impact on school activities and the concerns of the staff.

8.2 SIMCE impact: No escape?

> Even if you say 'no, it's not important at this school' ... you're still thinking about SIMCE" (Isidora, teacher, Star school / interview).

As we saw in the previous section, the predominant view at the schools was that *SIMCE is not the focus.* However, the descriptions about the influence of SIMCE on school work and the experiences of members of the school communities revealed that the test has a not inconsiderable role in school life. The following section outlines SIMCE's impact on the school, divided into: i) SIMCE's influence on school practices, ii) SIMCE's impact on the experience of the school staff, iii) SIMCE's impact on the experience of students, iv) SIMCE's impact: a general balance.

8.2.1 SIMCE's impact on school practices

The practices described by the staff members show that SIMCE is indeed present in school life. The staff introduced a series of actions at the schools related to the SIMCE test linked to i) school management practices, ii) teachers' practices, iii) actions with students, and iv) actions with parents. The results revealed that the schools reported actions in all these dimensions, but with different levels of intensity. As shown in Table 16, the Sun and Moon schools tend to present a larger number of actions linked to SIMCE than the Star school. However, at the Sun school various actions were only followed by a group of teachers.

Table 16

School activities linked to SIMCE

Areas of impact	Actions linked to SIMCE		Moon school	Sun school	Star school
School management	Institutional documents	Reference to SIMCE in the school's Institutional Educational Project (PEI)[*]	----	X	---
		Reference to SIMCE in the School Improvement Plan (PME) [*]	X	---	X
	Work spaces	SIMCE analysis in school meetings[**]	X	X	X
	SIMCE training	Workshop focus on SIMCE [***]	--	--	--
		Reproduction of SIMCE implementation conditions[**]	X	--	--
		Mock SIMCE tests as a general measure[**][*]	X		X
	Allocation of more hours to subjects assessed by SIMCE [**][***]	-	-	-	-
	School resources	Hiring professionals/staff to support work on the areas assessed by SIMCE [***]	-	--	----
		Reallocation of teachers to obtain better results [***]	----	----	
		Hiring external educational technical assistance focused on SIMCE [*][**]	-	-	-
Teacher practices	Lessons focused on SIMCE subjects [**]			X/2	
	Mock SIMCE tests during lessons [**] [****]		X	X/2	
	Classroom assessments based on the SIMCE format [**][***]		X	X/2	
	Activities to familiarise students with the SIMCE test [**] [***]		X	X/2	
Students	General information about SIMCE [**]		X	X/2	X
	Food rewards [**]		X		
	Mark rewards [**]		X		
	Collecting them from their homes [**]		X		
Parents	Providing general information about SIMCE [**]		X	X	X
	Asking for help to reinforce SIMCE content [**]			X /2	

*Information from school institutional documents (PME 2018 & PEI 2018)

** Information obtained from interviews conducted in the study (school staff, parents, and students)

*** Information obtained from the survey conducted in the study

**** Information obtained from the observations conducted in the study

X/2 Action only followed by a group of teachers.

School management practices:

As shown in Table 16, in the first dimension referring to school management practices, the three schools reported actions with respect to institutional documents and collective working spaces, in terms of the general school meeting. The Moon and Star schools carried out actions regarding SIMCE training. There were no actions involving the reallocation of resources to improve SIMCE results.

- Institutional documents

In order to analyse this dimension, I reviewed two of the most important school institutional documents: the Institutional Educational Project document (Proyecto Educativo Institucional, PEI)[51] and the School Improvement Plan (Plan de Mejoramiento Escolar, PME)[52]. These documents are usually drafted by the school leadership team with the participation of other members of staff. The PEI is a document intended to communicate the main characteristics and identity of the school to parents and anyone else who wants to know about it. It usually contains the school goals, mission, vision, and pedagogical and philosophical principles. What stands out with respect to this document is that the Sun school was the only one in the study that made explicit reference to SIMCE. The SIMCE results for the last three years are presented, highlighting the times the school achieved "academic excellence", a central government classification in which SIMCE is the main indicator. The lack of mention of SIMCE at the other two schools suggests that SIMCE was not something that they would like to emphasise with parents and the rest of the community. That could be because their SIMCE results were not particularly high, but it could also be because it was not considered to be significant for the school identity.

With respect to the PME document, two of the three schools (Moon and Star) mentioned SIMCE. At the Moon school there was an action aimed at developing language and maths skills in students where SIMCE material was indicated as one of the inputs. The other actions were linked to the council authority, delivering economic incentives to teachers whose students achieved good results on SIMCE. At the Star school, the document referred to mock SIMCE exams for students at the Year 4 and Year 6

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[51] The PEI is a document in which the schools describe their goals, their mission, vision, and their pedagogical and philosophical principles, and their identity.
[52] The PME is a compulsory document for all the school receiving public resources linked to the Preferential Subvention Law. In this document, the schools have to describe the different actions they will carry out during the year with regard to SEP resources.

implemented by the council authority and a digital platform with a repository of mock SIMCE tests. The Sun school did not outline any actions referring to SIMCE in the PME 2018.

The mention of SIMCE in the PME document at two of the schools was not surprising, because school goals linked to SIMCE were compulsory until 2014 (MINEDUC, 2015c). At the time of the research, the reference to the SIMCE score was not compulsory, but as the school were asked to include goals and actions to improve their performance, several teams tended to mention SIMCE results as indicators of that. Moreover, some of the SIMCE actions were linked to the local authorities, which reflects interest in SIMCE that goes beyond the school staff. So, even though the PME is a document defined by the school staff, there were some guidelines that could influence the references to external results such as SIMCE.

- Work spaces for school staff: General school meetings

The general school staff meeting was a weekly activity carried out by the leadership teams where all the school staff members took part. The teachers and leadership team reported that the schools dedicated one or more sessions to analysing SIMCE results. In these meetings, the staff reviewed the SIMCE scores by subject and year and identified the levels and subjects with the most difficulties, examining possible factors to explain the results. At the Star school, the analysis of SIMCE in the school meeting was particularly important for the school staff to reflect on the students' learning. They used the SIMCE results along with other assessment results to carry out a diagnosis of student learning:

> When the SIMCE results arrived at the school, they were analysed with the idea that SIMCE is not the fundamental objective of the school, but with very significant concern because the results indicate that students are not developing the skills and competencies necessary for their level and that is something to be worried about (Sergio, teacher, Star school / interview).

At the other schools, when analysing SIMCE in meetings, they defined certain actions to improve results. For example, at the Sun school they decided to introduce classroom visits from the school deputy headteacher to offer teaching suggestions.

As shown in Table 16, with regard to SIMCE training, none of the current leadership teams had introduced compulsory workshops focused on the test, such as workshops aimed at training SIMCE skills. However, the Moon school introduced a reproduction of the SIMCE test conditions for the internal assessment, which is organised by the leadership team and applied in all years of the school at the same time. In this assessment, they imitated the characteristics of SIMCE, with all levels taking the test at the same time, in a serious and quiet environment, with multiple-choice questions, and the use of an answer sheet like SIMCE. In addition, the Star school mentioned providing SIMCE training in the PME 2018, but as an activity proposed by the council.

With respect to school resources, the staff did not mention the reallocation of economic and human resources by the leadership team to improve SIMCE results. Also, none of the staff at the three schools reported any reallocation of teachers between levels or subjects to achieve better SIMCE results, and none of the schools hired professionals/staff specifically to support the work at the levels assessed by SIMCE.

Teaching practices in the classroom

As regards teaching practices linked to SIMCE, there were different situations at the various schools. At the Moon school, there were general mock SIMCE tests in all school years, imitating the format, items, and implementation conditions, and teachers tried to follow the SIMCE format for classroom assessments. These were actions promoted by the leadership team and implemented by most of the teachers. Meanwhile, at the Sun school these actions were also carried out by a specific group of teachers from the first cycle of education. The Star school did not report any specific teaching practices in classrooms in connection with SIMCE at the time of the research.

Actions aimed at student engagement with the test

The three schools participating in the research all carried out actions linked to student engagement with SIMCE, but with different levels of intensity. At all three, teachers offer some general information about SIMCE and the test application conditions, describing what SIMCE is about, the format, the personal details the students will have to complete, and the presence of external people who will be responsible for applying the test, and they motivated the students to attend the school on the day of the test. However, the Moon school organised specific strategies to engage the students with the test

and encouraged them to take it. For instance, they provided food before the test, such chocolate snacks, and food after the test to reward the students for their efforts. Some teachers also offered students an additional mark if they attended the school on the day of the test and took it. In addition, the staff decided to collect some students from their homes to encourage them to take the test. Neither the Sun or Star schools reported these kinds of measures.

Actions aimed at parents

In terms of actions aimed at parents, teachers at the three schools gave some general information to them about the SIMCE test, such as outlining its characteristics, the process of taking SIMCE, the importance of the students attending school on the day of the test, and the need to arrive on time. This information was generally communicated in school-parent meetings. However, at the Sun school, teachers from the first cycle of education also requested help from parents to reiterate key teaching content linked to SIMCE some weeks before the test. This was the only school where teachers asked parents to be actively involved to help prepare the students for the test.

To summarise, the three schools did carry out actions linked to SIMCE, but with certain differences in terms of the level of intensity and generalisation. At the Moon school, several activities were carried out with regard to school practices, teaching practices, students, and parents, and these were promoted across the school. At the Sun school, the actions were focused on teaching practices, but particularly on one group of teachers. At the Star school, analysis of SIMCE was important for collective reflection on the students' learning, but this did not have consequences in terms of teaching practices. These differences seem to be connected with the elements of the school histories described in section 8.3.2 of this chapter

8.2.2 SIMCE impact on the school staff experience

Stress

As we described in the first section, 'SIMCE is not the focus', the teachers' discourse was they did not receive pressure from the current school authorities to increase the focus on SIMCE. The message from their leadership teams was to concentrate on providing comprehensive education to the students, which includes improving their learning and also being concerned about their social and emotional skills. However, the teachers and the leadership team also recognised that SIMCE generates certain stress in the school teams, which seems to be linked to external pressure and the schools'

histories regarding SIMCE (see section 8.3). For instance, when the staff were asked in the survey about the main effects of SIMCE at the school, one of the impacts mentioned most often was the stress and pressure that SIMCE generates among the teachers: "Too much unnecessary pressure" (teacher, Sun school / survey), "a burden on the teacher and the management team" (Sergio, teacher, Star school), "work stress for teachers" (member of the coexistence team, Sun school / survey), "[SIMCE] generates tension among the teachers" (member of the leadership team, Sun school / survey). The responses to the same question also mentioned *"competitiveness between teachers"* (member of the integration team, Sun school / survey), "the definition of teacher capability according to [SIMCE] results" (Giovanna, teacher, Star school / survey), revealing that SIMCE has impacts on the staff's experiences.

Recognition and professional judgement based on SIMCE

The school communities were not indifferent to the SIMCE results. When SIMCE outcomes were good, the tendency at the three schools was a feeling of relief and a reason to be happy and celebrate. Positive SIMCE results were seen as good news and, consequently, the school and local authorities organised actions to recognise the teachers' work. As an example, when the Moon school received the news about an improvement in SIMCE scores in 2017, it was published in a local paper, the council authorities visited the school to congratulate the school staff, and they offered public recognition to the teachers in an event held with the staff and parents. As one of the teachers commented: "the ladies from the 'high aristocracy' of the corporation [the local authorities] visited us and told us that our school was one of the best on SIMCE in 2017, the teachers received congratulations" (Amalia, teacher, Moon school / interview). In a similar vein, at the Sun school, the former headteacher offered recognition and even certain privileges to teachers who improved SIMCE results, such as asking for long periods of leave without criticism from the leadership team. In the case of good SIMCE results, recognition was not only given to teachers, but also the students. For instance, at the Moon school, when the SIMCE results improved in 2017, the school staff congratulated the students and organised a lunch for the staff and students to celebrate together.

In contrast, when the SIMCE results were poor, this was bad news for the school communities. The teachers tended to feel guilty and judged professionally, and the leadership team pressured them to take action to improve the results. For instance, at the Star school, the negative news about low SIMCE results, along with other poor results on local assessments, led the leadership team to conclude that the school was in a worrying situation in terms of student learning. One of the members of the leadership team used a dramatic medical metaphor to illustrate the situation in a school meeting: "We

have to think that these results [SIMCE results] are like when more than half of a doctor's patients are dead—something bad is happening there" (member of the leadership team, observation of the school meeting – session 1). In the case of the Moon school, the long history of low SIMCE results was experienced in the school staff as a burden that the school had to shoulder and as if it was part of their destiny. The teacher Javiera described this situation using a religious metaphor "SIMCE has always been like our cross ... it's a cross we bear because of being inadequate [in terms of SIMCE results]. Regardless of what we did well, we're still in the same category" (Javiera, teacher, Moon school / interview).

At the time of the research, the teachers emphasised that the leadership teams did not implement actions or deliver messages to judge the teachers' performance based on the SIMCE results, but some of them still felt concerned about the results and possible professional judgments. The perception among some teachers of the three schools was that even if their school did not focus on SIMCE, they would be judged on the results SIMCE at some point "Even if they tell you that the school project isn't like that [focused on SIMCE], you know that they're going to evaluate using it" (Camila, teacher, Sun school). In a similar vein, Jeanette at the Sun school mentioned the pressure that teachers feel "as a teacher, you feel pressured, because if SIMCE is going badly or well, the teacher is responsible. It's not the school, it's the teacher, it's your class. So, the teacher feels a degree of anxiety" (Jeanette, teacher, Sun school / interview). It should be noted that concerns about professional judgement based on SIMCE at the three schools were particularly strong among the teachers working in the first cycle of education and responsible for the classes at Year 4. The feelings of responsibility about SIMCE at this level can be explained because, at primary cycle (Year 1 to Year 4), the teacher usually took the responsibility to teach a student group for a long period of time: for two years (first and second school years, and third and fourth school years), or for four years (between the first and four school years). In addition, unlike the teacher in the second cycle, at the first cycle teachers teach almost all the subjects (except for sports, art, and music) to their class. In practice, this situation meant that the teachers in charge of fourth-level school years, feel the responsibility of the SIMCE results taken in that school year. The teachers for these years explained that even if they do not receive pressure from the leadership team and the school's focus is not on SIMCE, they still feel pressure to obtain good results, as noted by the teacher Isidora:

> I feel that unconsciously, when you're giving classes at Year 4 and you know that SIMCE will be taken in your class, even if you say 'no, it's not important at this school', because I really believe that there's no one that works towards SIMCE at this school, you're still thinking about SIMCE (Isidora, teacher, Star school / interview).

Being singled out/judged because of SIMCE results was something that also impacted the teachers who are critical of the standardised national test. At the Star school, one teacher who worked in one of the key levels assessed on SIMCE (fourth level) explained that she did not prepare the students for the test, because she prioritised the development of other skills in students that she considered more important. However, she was anxious and even scared, because SIMCE would probably not reflect her students' learning.

> If you ask me if I'm scared about SIMCE, the truth is that yes, I am, because … for me there are other things that are more important than the content itself. So, I spend a lot of time on the personal training of children, on their comprehension skills, so it scares me because, of course, they [SIMCE evaluators] don't measure that (Amanda, teacher, Star school / interview).

Despite the feeling of stress and the impact on professional recognition that SIMCE tends to generate among the staff, there was a group of teachers, mainly from the second cycle of the Sun and Star schools, that did not feel strongly impacted by SIMCE. For this group of teachers at the Sun school, SIMCE's influence on teaching responded to a traditional style of teaching focused on student behaviour, with very strict discipline in the classroom, and conductive teaching strategy (memorisation, repetition, reward, and punishment). For this group of teachers at the Star school, if the leadership team does not pressure them on the SIMCE results and they really want to focus on their students' learning, they are therefore not obliged to spend energy on the results of the test.

8.2.3 SIMCE impact on student experience

The students also have their own particular experiences regarding SIMCE. This section outlines some of the details of this experience.

SIMCE as an event that is part of the student's school life

All of the students from Year 5 and Year 8 consulted in the research clearly remembered the SIMCE test, even those who took the examination two years ago. They remembered the day of the test, its general characteristics, the prior preparation, and the conversation they had with their teacher regarding the test. They also have memories about actions taken after the test, and they were able to share their own impressions about what the test represents for the school, its purposes, and consequences.

The students of the three schools had fresh memories about the day of the test. They recalled that they had to arrive early at the school and that they were instructed to behave well. At the Sun school, the students also remembered that they had to come to the school in the morning instead of the afternoon as they usually did. At the Moon school, the students from Year 5 remembered that in some cases the school staff went to the students' homes to collect them to take the test. At the Star school, the students recalled the implements provided by the examinators, an eraser and pencil for every child.

Furthermore, the students from the three schools remembered activities linked to SIMCE both before and after the test. With regard to preparation for SIMCE, students from the first cycle at the Sun and Moon schools said they did SIMCE mock exams as preparation. At the Sun school, students from Year 5 mentioned that had several SIMCE mock exams before taking the test, especially in maths and language. At the Moon school, they also made mention of taking mock tests. I had the opportunity to attend a SIMCE mock exam at the Moon school, which was taken in March, several months before the date of the SIMCE test (in October). Meanwhile, at the Star school the students did not mention taking mock tests, but they did do certain exercises in classes to practice for SIMCE.

In addition, the students across the schools remembered the congratulations and rewards received when the school obtained positive SIMCE results. For instance, a student from Year 8 at the Sun school said that the headteacher visited the class to congratulate them for the results, and students from Year 5 remember a small party they had in the classroom when they received the news about the SIMCE results.

SIMCE purposes and consequences for the school from the perspective of students

The students from the three schools studied had similar ideas regarding the purpose of SIMCE. In their opinion, SIMCE was mainly to assess the quality of the school and teachers: "To see whether the school is good or not" (Student, Star school / focus group Year 5). However, some students mentioned other purposes. At the Moon and Star schools, a couple of students commented that SIMCE was useful to assess student learning during the year and to know whether they were prepared for secondary school. At the Sun school, some students stated that SIMCE was done to compete with other schools, "I think it [SIMCE test] is to beat the other schools and make this school the best" (Student, Sun school / focus group Year 5).

The students consulted also agreed that producing having poor SIMCE results was a negative situation for the school, because if they had a low SIMCE score, "everyone will be sad" as a student from Year 5 of the Sun school said. The students argued that with a low SIMCE score, people might think the

school was not teaching the students adequately. On the other hand, students from the Star school emphasised that a good score contributes to building a positive image of the school among the community.

In terms of the consequences, the students from the three schools recognised that there were negative effects related to low SIMCE results. When they were asked about what could happen if the school had poor results, they mentioned serious consequences for the school and the teachers: possible closure of the school, the reduction of resources, firing of teachers, or penalties. As an example, a student from Moon school said, "they [the government] could reduce the resources to prevent so many stupid children coming here" and a student from Star school stated that "they [central authorities] could abolish the school, they could close the school forever" (Student, Star school / focus group Year 5). The students recognised that some of these messages about the consequences SIMCE had been communicated by the teachers:

> I don't know whether in the fourth or third year the teacher [name] told us that this test was to help the teachers because if they didn't do well on the test, the teachers would leave [Student, Star school / focus group Year 5]

Anxiety because of the test: more among younger students

Anxiety among students caused by the SIMCE test was something reported by the school community members particularly in younger students. In the focus group of Year 5, the students said that they or some of their peers experienced physical symptoms linked to the SIMCE test, such as feeling faint and mental stress. Some of them (at the Star and Sun schools) were worried because they believed that there would be consequences for them regarding their scores. Some of them were not sure about being able to answer all the questions on the test, and others felt the responsibility of obtaining good results due to the reputation of the class, a situation that they found stressful. Here is an example of the students' thoughts as they recalled the time of the test:

> - What we remember is that, yes, some classmates were nervous.
> - They were really worried about the mark, because everyone believed that they were going to get things wrong, that they were going to get things wrong because of their nerves.
> - [I held] the pencil in the test and it was like I was shaking, I was passing out from the nerves.
>
> (Student focus group, Year 5, Sun school)

Consistent with the students' narrative, when the school staff were asked about the main effects of SIMCE at the school in the survey, they mentioned the negative student experience regarding SIMCE, such as *"frustration"* (teacher, Moon school / survey), "nervousness" (member of the coexistence team, Sun school / survey), "stress among students" (teacher, Star school / survey). The school staff also mentioned aspects linked to the lack of meaning that this test has for students such as "experience of lack of sense when answering questions not coherent with the context" (teacher, Moon school / survey), "unmotivated students" (member of leadership team, Star school / survey), "boring" (teacher, Moon school / survey).

However, the negative experience for older students seemed to be less common. The students from the eighth level at the three schools were much more relaxed about SIMCE. They recognised that there were consequences for the schools but no direct consequences for them as students. They did not express strong feelings of anxiety or high levels of stress due to the test.

8.2.4 SIMCE impact: a general balance

The data collected reveals that most of the staff across the three schools studied agreed that SIMCE did not provide benefits to the schools. When the staff of the schools were consulted in the survey about their perception of SIMCE's impact on education quality at the school, more than half of them expressed a critical opinion, as 56.3% (n=18) believed that SIMCE impoverishes the quality of education while only 9.4% (n=3) of the respondents believed that SIMCE improves education quality.

Table 17

What do you think about SIMCE?

		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	Impoverishes the quality of education	18	56.3%
	Does not improve or impoverish the quality of education	11	34.4%
	Improves the quality of education	3	9.4%
	Total	32	100.0
Missing	System	2	
Total		34	

Similarly, when the school staff were asked whether SIMCE benefits the school's work, the vast majority did not believe there were positive effects due to the test, with 46.9% (n=15) of the respondents stating that SIMCE undermines the school's work and 37.5% (n=12) saying they did not see any benefits.

Table 18

What do you think about the SIMCE test?

		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	Benefits schoolwork	5	15.6%
	Does not benefit or undermine the school's work	12	37.5%
	Undermines the school's work	15	46.9%
	Total	32	100.0%
Missing	System	2	
Total		34	

In addition, the vast majority (90%, n=38) stated that SIMCE did not contribute to the school project, which represents the school's objectives and ethos.

Table 19

SIMCE encourage learning with all the students

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	Agree	3	8.8%	9.7%
	Disagree	28	82.4%	90.3%
	Total	31	91.2%	100.0%
Missing	System	3	8.8%	
Total		34	100.0%	

Consistent with the critical opinions about SIMCE's contribution to the schools, when the participants were asked about their opinion about the continuation of SIMCE, most of them said that SIMCE should be removed (67.7%, n=21), while only around a third (32%, n=10) of the respondents wanted to improve it, and none of them wanted to keep the SIMCE test unchanged.

Table 20

According to your opinion, SIMCE should …

		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	Be improved	10	32.3%
	Be removed	21	67.7%
	Total	31	100.0%
Missing	System	3	
Total		34	

These results led me to think that the staff acknowledged that SIMCE has some effects on school life but more in terms of its negative influence, which probably explains their critical position regarding the test. The following sections present the possible factors explaining SIMCE's influence on the schools.

8.3 Factors explaining SIMCE's influence

> If the school produces a good SIMCE, salaries are better ... the school receives more money ... so we all want to do well on SIMCE (Alberto, teacher, Sun school / interview).

The following sections outline some of the key factors that seemed to be influencing the level of SIMCE's impact on the schools, such as external pressure and elements that emerged from the school histories.

8.3.1 External pressures

The previous section, '*SIMCE impact: No escape?',* described how the test influenced school practices and impacted the school communities' experiences. External pressure seems to be one of the factors that explains this influence on the schools. The following section describes the external pressure from the central level (government) and the local level (council authorities).

Pressure from the central level

The SIMCE was often seen as a way of control from the central level. The staff of the schools, including the leadership team and teachers, said that when SIMCE results were poor, the state acted through the Education Quality Agency and arrived at the school to look at and exert pressure on the school.

This use of SIMCE was one of the main criticisms of the test by the leadership teams and the school staff in general. The opinion of Maite from the Star school was an example of this perspective:

> I have nothing against SIMCE … against the physical test itself. I don't throw stones at it, because it helps us to assess where we are, to know that we're failing in reading comprehension, but how this data is being used! That is, you get a low score and the whole state apparatus is dropped onto the school (Member of leadership team, Star school / interview).

The central level of pressure linked to SIMCE is legally rooted in the Quality Assurance System (Sistema de Aseguramiento de la Calidad, SAC) (see section 4.4.1). The SAC defines a performance classification system, according to which the schools are ranked with different levels of performance, and those at the lowest level can be closed (MINEDUC, 2011a). So, this classification is not something that the school staff are able to ignore.

Besides the threat of possible closure due to low results as defined in the law, the Education Quality Agency and the superintendence exert pressure by carrying out visits to schools with poor results. This was the situation of the Moon school for many years, which was described by the Deputy Headteacher as *a* "painful process". On their visits, the Agency team strongly criticised the teaching practices, indicating that the lessons lacked a clear purpose and did not entail challenging questions for the students. The school staff considered that the Education Quality Agency did not understand the school project and the challenges they had, and the feeling was that their school was outside the Agency's standards and classifications. For some teachers, the presence of the Education Quality Agency seemed to be a demoralising situation and a reason why they would like to halt their visits to the school:

> Why I would like to improve the [SIMCE] results? To make the Agency stop coming to visit us every year. They don't understand that we're a school with a different educational project, different from having good SIMCE results .... The fact that an institution comes here to tell us that we're doing everything wrong ... it's demoralising (Victoria, teacher, Moon School / interview).

A different pressure from the central level in relation to SIMCE was the National System of Assessment of School Performance (*Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de Desempeño, SNED).* The SNED is a national policy that provides a significant economic bonus to teachers and the leadership team, and an amount

of money to be used at the school. In order to receive those resources, the school must be classified in the category of *Academic excellence* (*Excelencia Académica*), which is defined on an index in which SIMCE has a weight of 65%. So, positive results on SIMCE were seen as an opportunity to increase the teacher's salaries and access materials that the school required. On the contrary, poor SIMCE results were seen as thwarting the opportunity to receive additional resources. The teacher Alberto from the Sun School explained the consequences of obtaining high SIMCE results:

> If the school produces good SIMCE results, the salaries are better ... the school receives more money and, of course, we need balls, more balls … for example, we need 40 balls, so we all want to do well on SIMCE, we'll work towards SIMCE to receive better reading material (Alberto, teacher, Sun school / interview).

Pressure from local authorities

Similar to the dynamic at the central level described above, the local authorities tend to evaluate the school's work mainly based on the SIMCE results. According to the interviewees, some local authorities were willing to consider other dimensions of the school's work other than SIMCE, but in the end, they looked at SIMCE because it was the indicator traditionally used to assess school performance, as the teacher Luisa noted:

> Even if the mayor says that he's not interested in SIMCE, he says 'we're paying so many teachers to do that, to do the workshop on this and it turns out that there are no results'. That's what they say, because the result is having a good score, that's the measure, that's the goal, the [SIMCE] score (Luisa, teacher, Sun school / interview).

Therefore, SIMCE scores were important for receiving support from local authorities. If the schools achieved high SIMCE results or improved their results, the school was in a better position to be heard, to receive attention and help from the local authorities. "When you have good results, the bureaucratic process takes much less time than if you have bad results" (Camilo, leadership team, Moon school). In that situation, the schools tend to have more power to demand resources, repairs of equipment, replacement of furniture, etc. As an example, the teachers and leadership team from the Moon school reported that after the improvement in their SIMCE results, many of the dealings with local authorities were easier, it was possible to obtain furniture and have infrastructure or equipment repaired more quickly.

The impression of the school staff was that obtaining good SIMCE results and high student enrolment were factors that definitely helped the school to achieve the conditions to survive over time, even if this was not explicit, as Lucía from the integration team of the Moon school stated: "It's not that they make this a condition, it's implicit. A good SIMCE score, a good PSU [university admissions test], good enrolment means validation for the school, continuation." The implicit message from local authorities was that a school with constantly poor SIMCE results will have problems obtaining support from the council and even remaining open. This feeling was not too far removed from reality, because, according to the legislation, a school that remains in the lowest school performance category for more than three years, which is mainly based on SIMCE, should be closed (Quality Assurance System law) (MINEDUC, 2011a).

Furthermore, the staff at the Sun and Moon schools explained that when the schools were in a vulnerable position, as they had been in the past, the SIMCE results became more important. In particular, the Sun school was at risk in the past because the place where the school building was located did not belong to the council but was only lent to it. This created a series of problems for the council regarding the infrastructure and expansion of the school. In that context, good SIMCE results were a factor to avoid school closure: "Many times, they were about to close [the school]. The only thing that kept the school alive, in quotation marks, was the good [results] the learning achievements that we had. This was an argument not to close it" (Jeanette, teacher, Sun school / interview). Similarly, when the school's SIMCE results declined, the staff were worried about possible closure. "In the year 2000 there was a rumour that [the school] would disappear if the SIMCE results continued declining" (Luisa, teacher, Sun school / interview). In the case of the Moon school, its vulnerable position was based on the fact that it was a small school with low funding (because the funding schools receive is in proportional to the number of students enrolled). So, for the Sun and Moon schools, good SIMCE results were a *protective factor*, because it was an indicator that the school was doing a good job and consequently it was worthwhile for the authorities to keep the school open and offer it support.

Moreover, the authorities exerted pressure not only by offering support in accordance with the school performance, but also by introducing certain 'punishments' when they did not perform well. For instance, a teacher from the Moon school commented that the year before the research, the local authorities punished the state-run schools because of the previous poor SIMCE results, giving the staff fewer days off. In addition to this, some school staff said that in the case of poor test results, some councils even removed the headteacher if the school was unable to improve the SIMCE scores.

To summarise, there was an external framework of pressure connected to SIMCE, at both national and local level. The possibilities for schools to negotiate, to access resources, to obtain support from the authorities, and to survive in the long term are strongly influenced by their SIMCE results. High SIMCE results provide them with better conditions to negotiate with local authorities, more resources, less risk of closure, and less control from the central level. On the contrary, poor SIMCE results represented a risk for schools in terms of their validation and the potential reduction of support from local authorities and, even worse, the threat of being closed if the results remained poor over time.

8.3.2 The school histories behind SIMCE's influence

As we saw in the subsection 'SIMCE's influence on school practices', the influence of the test varies between the three schools studied. In order to explore these differences, this section outlines the evolution of the schools' emphasis on SIMCE (Figure 11) and the key events in their history that help to explain that evolution (Figure 12).

Figure 11 represents two moments in the schools' histories; the time of the fieldwork (2018), here called *Moment 2* (M2), and a previous time, *Moment 1* (M1), identified by the school staff as a different time from 2018 in terms of the approach to SIMCE. The figure shows that the emphasis on actions related to SIMCE were different between the two points in time and both between and within the schools. At M1, the Star and Sun schools had high levels of actions related to SIMCE, while the Moon school only had a minor level of such actions. However, at M2 (2018), the situation changed: the Moon school had more actions linked to SIMCE than the other two, while the Star school had the lowest number of actions and the Sun school was in the middle.
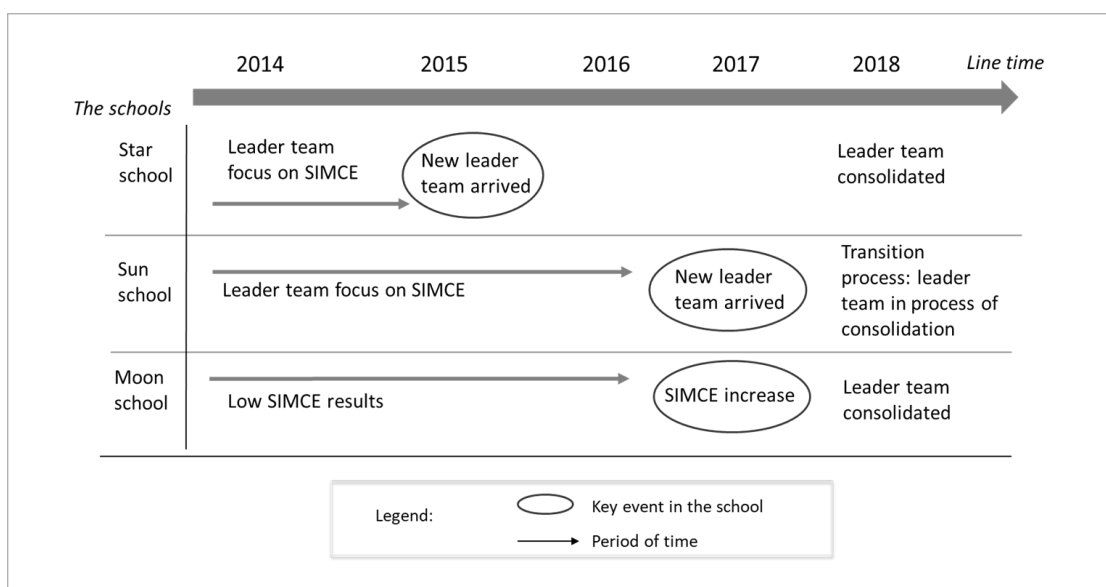
Figure 11

Evolution of SIMCE Emphasis in Schools
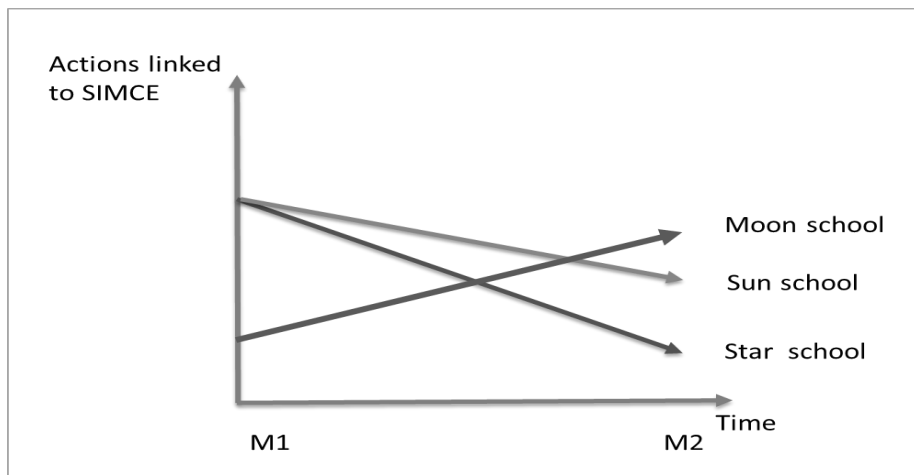
According to the elements reported in the staff interviews, there were key events in the school history that explained the approaches to SIMCE in each school over time. As shown in Figure 12, at the Star and Sun schools, the key event was the arrival of new leadership teams bringing new approaches to SIMCE in 2015 and 2017, respectively, but with different levels of consolidation at the time of the research (2018). At the Moon school, the key event was the achievement of good SIMCE results in a context of a long history of low results (2017).

Figure 12

Key events in the schools' SIMCE Approaches over Time

Closer inspection of Figure 12 allows us to observe that the Star and Sun schools had similar situations; both schools, the Star school before 2015 and Sun school before 2017, respectively, were led by headteachers orientated towards SIMCE results. In a second stage, since 2015 at the Star school and since 2017 at the Sun school, both schools had new leadership teams, periods in which SIMCE was not a priority. However, there were some differences between the two establishments. At the time of the research, at Sun school the headteacher was relatively new, so it was in a process of adaptation to the new leadership team. In that context, even though the discourse of the leadership team was to move towards an inclusive project, shifting away from SIMCE training, there was a group of teachers, mainly from the first cycle, who continued with a logic related to SIMCE (teaching to the test). Alternatively, in 2018, as shown in Figure 12, the leadership team of the Star school was consolidated, managing to convince the different school teams and staff to work towards the same project based on a strong notion of inclusion, where SIMCE was seen as one of the sources to understand student learning. In the case of the Moon school, the situation was different. Before 2017, the school used to achieve low SIMCE scores and the belief was that the social challenging situation prevented the school from improving its results and, consequently, it did not actively introduce actions to prepare for SIMCE. However, the story changed in 2017 when it received positive news about its 2016 SIMCE results, which increased significantly, even surpassing the state schools in the council. This gave the school an entirely different attitude to SIMCE. The school staff wanted to maintain the good results, so the school started to implement a series of measures to prepare the students for the test: mock SIMCE assessments based on the official format and skills, conversations with the students about the relevance of SIMCE, and actions to motivate student participation on the day of the test, such as offering a good marks or other rewards, as the teacher Victoria explained:

> Last year the interest in SIMCE started at the school and in all the breaks [school breaks] we talked about how we would have SIMCE and that we were going to pick up [the students] to make them come to the school to take the test, that we were going to have food, chocolates, as a reward and to make them relax (Victoria, teacher, Moon school / interview).

With regard to the history of the SIMCE results, the situation of the Moon school was different from that of the Sun and Star schools. These latter two establishments did not have consistently low SIMCE results, but their scores fluctuated; some years they improved the SIMCE results and some years they were worse.

Conclusion

The results reveal that there was a paradox between the discourse and the practice regarding the impact of SIMCE. On the one hand, the discourse of the school staff was that "SIMCE is not the focus of the school", supported by arguments that the school had other priorities, that teachers were not subject to pressure from the school authorities, and that the schools' actions with respect to SIMCE were minimal compared with other schools. On the other hand, the description of the practice showed that SIMCE had a significant influence on school life, on the schools' work and the experiences of members of the school communities. The results showed that SIMCE had an impact on certain general school practices, teaching practices, and actions linked to students and parents. However, there were differences between schools in terms of the intensity and level of the SIMCE impacts linked to the schools' histories.

Despite the differences between the schools, SIMCE was part of the experiences of students and staff across the schools. Low SIMCE results represented the risk of a negative professional judgment, fewer resources, less consideration from the local authorities, and intensive control from the central government. In contrast, high results represented greater opportunities for the school in terms of resources, positive attention from the authorities, and public recognition. The influence of SIMCE across the schools seemed to be related to the high accountability system, which generates external pressure from the central level, but also from the local level, particularly from council authorities. Therefore, the findings suggest that there was no chance to escape from SIMCE in any drastic way. Even though there were groups of teachers and leadership teams willing to reduce the importance of SIMCE in the work done at the school, the SIMCE test still seemed to influence school life in multiple dimensions.

Moreover, there was a predominant perception across the staff of the schools was that SIMCE did not contribute to the school projects that were orientated towards inclusive principles and it tended to generate negative feelings in terms of the experiences of the members of the school community. The critical opinions about SIMCE's contribution seem to be connected to the results presented in Chapter 7, where the school staff considered SIMCE to be an assessment policy that did not take into account student diversity, student experience, or school context, aspects that are very relevant to the staff and the school projects.

CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION CHAPTER

Introduction

The previous chapters present the findings of the study with regard to the main themes and issues that emerge from the data collected. In this chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to the research questions using a theoretical framework on social justice based on Nancy Fraser's work. In particular, I refer to the three dimensions of social justice: *distribution, recognition*, and *participation.* The *distribution* dimension involves economic or material aspects aimed at equitable distribution of goods, income, and cultural aspects, with the inclusion of education, such as equitable access, universal knowledge, and skills for the whole population. The *recognition* dimension refers to cultural aspects of social justice regarding social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication, seeking positive affirmation of cultural differences, promoting diversity within society, and legitimising diverse cultural knowledge. The *participation* dimension considers political aspects related to inclusion and the participation of individuals and groups in decision-making processes, making it possible for them to influence the institutions, policies, and processes that affect their lives, with the goal of more equitable distribution of power.

I divide the chapter into three main sections that discuss each of the research questions: i) What do three Chilean state school communities with an inclusive orientation understand by social justice in schools? ii) What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice? ?, and iii) How does SIMCE impact school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice? Each section begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion. At the end of the chapter, I present a conclusion on all three sections.

9.1 Compensation and inclusion as key aspects for the notion of social justice: strong determination of the role of the state school

Introduction

This section discusses the research question: *What do three Chilean state school communities understand by social justice in schools?* The study finds that the school staff participating in the research have a conception of socially just schools based on the notion of compensation (equity) and

inclusion, which represent an approach that differs from the neoliberal model established in the Chilean educational system, which follows principles such as competition and merit. The results of the study reveal that social justice as seen by the school staff was strongly influenced by the position of their school in the system: being a state school in a highly segregated society.

9.1.1 Compensation

The chapter on conceptions of social justice (Chapter 7) reveals that the position of the schools in the national education system is key to understanding the role that they play with their students and their conceptions about social justice. As a state school, they work with students and families exposed to poor living conditions with fewer opportunities to access education and other aspects of society. The school staff thus assumed a *compensatory role*, which means contributing to providing those aspects of life that are not automatically guaranteed to these students by society.

In line with the literature (see section 4.1), which shows that the Chilean educational system is one of those with the highest levels of social and academic segregation in the world (Bellei, 2015) with *educational ghettos* structured by social classes, where state schools concentrate students from low and medium-low socioeconomic groups (Cornejo, 2018; PNUD, 2017), the staff of the schools describe the organisation of the educational system as highly segregated and hierarchical, with different levels of resources, prestige, and pedagogical challenges In this context, state schools face the most challenging position in the system as they have fewer resources, less prestige, and have to work with students in more challenging conditions (those in poor living conditions, with special needs, immigrants who are not Spanish speakers, etc).

In this context, the schools in this study assumed a compensatory role directly connected to social justice, trying to compensate for what society offers to other students but does not guarantee for the groups of students and families that these schools serve (see section 6.2). The compensatory role and the notion of justice in these schools are based on the idea of *equity* that is closely related to John Rawls' view on social justice (see section 3.1). Teachers and other members of the school staff emphasise the distinction between equality and equity, where equality means offering the same to all students regardless of their differences and equity entails providing what the students need in accordance with their characteristics, conditions, and needs. The school staff thus felt responsible for the academic education of the students, but also the need to work on other dimensions of their students' lives, such as providing a safe space, values, and models of behaviour to help connect the

students to the rest of society, as well as a place that values them as individuals, recognising their personality and identity (see section 6.2).

These findings reflect the relevance of the school context and the inequalities of the educational system. State schools have the same requirements as private schools; they receive funding based on student attendance, they have to take SIMCE, and they are classified in the same school performance system as the rest of the schools in the country (see section 4.4.3). However, they do not work with the same students and family profile, they do not have the same materials, and they work in much more challenging conditions than the rest of the schools (Cornejo, 2018). Therefore, what we have is schools with unequal conditions, but with equal performance demands, which defines a disadvantaged position for state schools. In addition, these policies reflect that there are no compensation principles from the central level regarding schools; the schools that do not achieve the targets outlined in the national standards and remain in the insufficient performance categories have to close (MINEDUC, 2011a). This leads to the idea of `failing schools' (Falabella, 2019) or 'loser school' in the accountability system (Munoz-Chereau, González, & Meyers, 2020), and the fact that the schools in this position are those who work with more challenging conditions, in Chile, being state schools and schools that serve populations from medium-low socioeconomic level (Agencia Calidad, 2018).

9.1.2 Inclusion

This notion of compensation is closely connected to the idea of inclusion in schools, meaning recognising and respecting student diversity, providing them with opportunities to learn considering their needs and differences. The staff supported a broad notion of inclusion, which was probably influenced by inclusion policies at the central level (see section 4.4.4), but also by the schools' commitments to inclusion. In that context, i) special needs are not seen as the responsibility of a specific team, but of all the staff at the school; ii) inclusion is not just about students with special needs, but involves a different kind of student diversity, including cultural, gender, and social diversity, as well as different school trajectories; iii) 'being inclusive' means addressing student diversity and offering support according to the students' differing needs and promoting the participation of all them in school activities. The schools thus introduced a series of strategies to progress in terms of inclusive practices, such as collaborative work between teachers and the integration team, exploring methodologies to make lessons more accessible for all students (e.g., Universal Learning Design), activities to teach them about indigenous culture, generating a friendly environment for gender

diversity, promoting the inclusion of students with special need in all school academic and artistic activities, hiring professionals to provide additional academic support to those students who needed it, and introducing flexibility regarding traditional school standards. Therefore, the school staff in this research suggested a notion of the school role and social justice that differs from the market logic and conflicts with the idea of justice in education based on merit and competition which was introduced under the neoliberal model imposed during the dictatorship (see section 4.4.1)

This neoliberal model, which still governs the educational system (see section 4.4.3), is based on a utilitarian approach, where justice is seen as providing conditions for fair competition between individuals (see section 3.1), so inequality in academic, social, or economic outcomes is not considered unfair if it is a result of competition between individuals (or institutions) based on their merit and talents (Bolívar, 2012). In contrast, the idea of justice on the part of most of the interviewees includes the notion that the school should provide the tools and support to allow students to be successful regardless of their differences, and therefore academic failure is not seen as an individual responsibility, but as something where different agents have a shared responsibility, including the students, the family, and also the school, which provides the resources to develop students' skills (see Analysis, section 6.2 & section 6.3). The Moon school was the paradigmatic example in this sense, that is to say, a school that takes responsibility to reinsert and provide essential skills to students who have been seen as failures in the past and who have been expelled or forced to repeat academic years. Under the neoliberal model, on the other hand, academic success is seen as an individual attribute. If you succeed at school or if you have a negative performance or experience at school, it is your responsibility because you did not make enough effort, you lacked sufficient talent, or because you did not choose the right school for you (see section 3.1)

Conclusion

To the staff, the contribution of the school to social justice is based on its role in terms of compensation and inclusion, both based on the principle of equity. These notions are reinforced by the staff's particular position in the social context and the academically segregated educational system where, as state schools, they serve the most vulnerable students in society. This idea of their role as a school and their contribution to social justice differs from the market dynamic, where education is mainly seen as a space that offers equal conditions for fair competition between students. In contrast with this dynamic, the conviction of the staff participating in the research is that the school has a relevant responsibility in student learning, not in terms of competition, but to develop key skills and

enable progression in student learning to allow them to be integrated into society and build their personal projects.

These findings lead us to think that in the schools with inclusive orientation, the principles of compensation characteristic of the educational policy in the 1990s predominate (Martinic, 2010a) which is closer to a Rawlsian perspective of social justice (Bolívar, 2012), and the initial attempt to enact inclusive policies during the 2000s (Matus & Rojas, 2015; MINEDUC, 2005), rather than a utilitarian notion of social justice based on the market principles imposed during the dictatorship (Corvalán & García-Huidobro, 2016) that remain in the current system (Acuña et al., 2019). These differences in social justice conceptions between the school staff and policies on education could potentially be related to the different conceptions of social justice in assessment.

9.2 Social justice, fairness, and assessment: the contrast between SIMCE policy and the view of the school staff

Introduction

This section addresses the second research question: *What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice?* The results of the research reveals that the school staff's conceptions of fair assessment significantly differ from what they perceive as the main features of the SIMCE test. These differences include: the purpose, the focus of assessment, the student and school profile, the school staff's role, and assessment practices. This section explains how the differences relate to theoretical notions of social justice and assessment:

- The utilitarian approach versus the Rawlsian approach to a distributive dimension of social justice.
- Accountability versus the pedagogical approach to assessment purposes.
- A traditional-technical view of fairness versus the sociocultural approach to fairness.

9.2.1 The utilitarian approach versus the Rawlsian approach to a distributive dimension of social justice

The school staff's conceptions about fair assessment differ from the way that in which they perceive the SIMCE test. The findings suggest that one of the reasons explaining this difference is the existence

of varying approaches to distributive justice in assessment. The SIMCE test and the staff's conceptions about assessment are both aimed at contributing to a distributive dimension of social justice. However, I argue that these are based on two different approaches to distribution. The SIMCE test seems to be based on a liberal-utilitarian approach and the school staff's ideas follow a Rawlsian approach.

On the one hand, SIMCE is part of a policy that seeks to promote quality of education in all schools in the country to offer equal opportunities of education to all students and, consequently, the goal is to promote the distribution/generation of essential knowledge (defined in the national curriculum) across the population (see section 4.3). On the other hand, the school staff's conceptions of social justice are based on providing education that helps to compensate for the inequalities between different groups, addressing aspects that are not provided by families or society in general (see Chapter 6), and offering an assessment that contributes to recognising student differences and needs, giving them opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge regardless of those differences (see Chapter 7). So, both SIMCE and the staff's conceptions are in line with distributive goals, but use different approaches: the liberal-utilitarian approach on the part of SIMCE and the Rawlsian approach on the part of the school staff (see Table 21).

Table 21

Distributive Approach to Social Justice

	SIMCE: Liberal-utilitarian approach	School staff: Rawlsian approach.
Principles of justice	Equality/equal opportunities	Equity/fair opportunities
Main interest	Maximisation of benefits for all	Benefits for the most disadvantaged
Mechanism for justice	Competition	Compensation

The staff of the schools tend to believe in a distributive notion of justice in assessment based on the Rawlsian approach, because they mention principles and mechanisms that are very closely related to this concept. In particular, the staff at all three schools usually follow a principle of *equity*. They believe that a fair assessment should consider student differences and introduce changes to give them all the opportunity to participate and demonstrate their progress even if their conditions are deficient and their academic levels are lower than the rest. So, the staff seek to offer additional support and tools to those who have greater difficulties taking the test, with the idea of offering *fairness*, *equal opportunities*, and *compensation*, reflecting the Rawlsian approach (Bolívar, 2012). For instance, the

staff aim to compensate those students who are suffer more disadvantaged conditions, such as those with special needs, with cognitive difficulties, long absences from school, with personal or family problems, or those with delayed school trajectories who could have difficulties answering long written tests without the mediation of their teachers. To compensate, teachers introduced accommodations and modifications to the test, such as reducing the difficulty, providing more time to answer, allowing them to take the test at a different time, or acting as a mediator by reading or explaining the questions (see section 7.5).

In contrast, SIMCE seems to be based on a liberal-utilitarian approach that follows a notion of *equality* based on principles of competition (Acuña et al., 2019). Even though SIMCE policy did have a period when it had compensatory purposes (the 1990s) (see section 4.4.2) and evaluative aims (2000s) (see section 4.4.2), the market purpose based on the utilitarian perspective never disappeared throughout the history of the assessment (see chapter 4). In addition, the test is based on a principle of equality: policymakers argue that it offers equal opportunities for all students because it provides the same conditions of assessment to all students and schools across the country regardless of the differences between them; the test is taken on the same day at the same time by all eligible students nationwide, with the same instructions, the same times to answer, and the same kind of external supervision. Moreover, SIMCE is based on competition. On the basis of school funding according to student enrolment, SIMCE was introduced to promote competition in results as a way stimulate school improvement (Acuña et al., 2019; Campos et al., 2015; Gysling, 2015). The assumption was that, due to the SIMCE pressure and competition, the assessment would improve educational outcomes and lead to an increase in the quality of education. These ideas are consistent with a utilitarian approach (Bolívar, 2012) based on the *maximisation of the majority*, even if this causes harm to minorities (see section 3.1). So, there was no consideration for schools that had to deal with more challenging conditions and those that failed to achieve good SIMCE results. According to this policy, these schools should abandon the educational market, causing detrimental effects for disadvantaged groups. In this case, the fact that poor schools should be closed for producing low SIMCE results was not seen as a problematic aspect. Competition principles predominated over those based on compensation.

The following section addresses the differences between the school staff and SIMCE regarding the approach to assessment.

9.2.1 Pedagogical approach versus the accountability approach to assessment

This research suggests that there are different approaches to fair assessment between the research participants and the SIMCE test; a *Pedagogical approach* and an *Accountability approach* respectively, which has implications for the *purpose and focus, and the school staff's role* in assessment (see Table 22 below).

Table 22

Accountability and Pedagogical Approaches

	Accountability approach	**Pedagogical approach**
Purpose	To compare/control school performance	To support the teaching-learning process
Focus	The national standard	The student
School staff role	No role	Leading role

The purpose: comparison versus supporting the teaching-learning process

The school staff in the research consider that the main approach to fair assessment should be *pedagogical*, which means that the main purpose is to support the teaching-learning process, serving pedagogical decisions in the classroom, which include providing information about student learning and students' progress (see section 7.3). However, in their view, SIMCE has significant limitations in terms of its pedagogical purposes, mainly because it does not provide detailed information about students and their progress considering their personal and socio-cultural contexts. Research by Manzi et al., (2014) and Ortiz (2012) note that SIMCE has limitations in terms of contributing key information for teaching strategies, reflecting the findings of official SIMCE committees (Comisión SIMCE, 2003, 2015).

With regard to the view of the school staff, the purpose of SIMCE is focused on accountability, and particularly on *control-comparison* of schools (Acuña et al., 2019), which means informing central authorities about performance and classifying and comparing schools. The main perception among the staff was that the control and comparison purpose of SIMCE is based on a high-stakes accountability system that ignores the pedagogical purpose they expect for fair assessment (see section 6.3). According to the staff, SIMCE's focus was on classifying schools to compare school performance and as a mechanism to exert pressure on schools to improve learning standards. This is not far from what the SIMCE policy formally declares. One of the accountability purposes mentioned

by the SIMCE committee (Comisión SIMCE, 2015) is that the goals of SIMCE include "making professional educational communities responsible for the learning of their students" (Comisión SIMCE, 2015, p. 68). The comparison and control purposes identified by the school staff are in line with the local and global agenda of accountability in education based on high-stakes testing. Internationally, high-stakes tests were intended to generate information about student performance with the purpose of evaluating school performance and making educational agents responsible for the results (Sahlberg, 2016). In Chile, in line with the Evaluative State based on control of state schools, which was consolidated in the 2000s (see section 4.4.3), SIMCE was linked to a performance classification system where the schools were labelled according to their level of performance, receiving sanctions and rewards, mainly based on the test results. Based on these classifications, everyone can see a school's performance and compare it with other schools, which was one of the reasons to introduce the test in the 1980s.

The focus: the student versus the standard

The school staff's position is that the focus of assessment should be the students and not national standards, centring on their students in relation to the activities and dimensions they work on during lessons and school activities. In this sense, for the staff, a fair and helpful assessment should inform about the learning and progress of their students considering their different aspects (see section 7.2).

Alternatively, the perception of SIMCE is that it is focused on external standards; skills defined centrally, following the national curriculum, without considering the school emphasis in accordance with the students' needs. The idea that SIMCE is centred on a standard is confirmed by local authors (Gysling, 2015; Meckes & Carrasco, 2010), who argue that SIMCE was used during the 1990s as a mechanism to have all schools follow the standards of learning defined in the national curriculum, with the aim of generating equal quality of education across them (Gysling & Rozas, in press). In this sense, it could be argued that SIMCE is connected to the notion of *equality of teaching* (*Igualdad de enseñanza*) which means providing equivalent quality of teaching to every student (Bolívar, 2012). This notion is connected to conceptions of social justice in the central governments in Latin America in the 1990s (Bolívar, 2012), where offering homogenous quality of education to everyone was seen as a value, and the assumption was that a test such as SIMCE could contribute to that (Gysling & Rozas, in press)

So, for the school staff, the emphasis is on student learning and the distribution of knowledge, in line with the Rawlsian approach (Rozas et al., 2020), but not in the way that the central policy operated, focusing on national standards and averages, but instead regarding their own classes and students in a particular year, with their particular backgrounds and family contexts.

School staff role: Leading role versus marginalised role

The results reveal that for the staff of the schools, the participation of the school teams, particularly the teaching and inclusion teams, was crucial for fair assessment in the different stages of the process. However, they argue that they have reduced participation in the SIMCE test, which is limited to receiving the results, which is in line with the local literature, pointing to the low participation of school teachers in the design of SIMCE (Flórez, 2015; Rozas et al., 2020). The staff claim that the SIMCE test does not allow the teachers to intervene and mediate in any of the stages of the test. An illustrative example they give is that they were not allowed to be in the room when SIMCE is taken, which they say prevents them from contributing to providing fairer assessment conditions to students.

The staff argue that they have privileged knowledge about the students in terms of their abilities, contexts, and personal situations that could be relevant to consider in the different stages of the assessment process (see section 7.5). They emphasise their effective link with the students that facilitates the role of adults during the assessment process and in order to gather information to identify possible factors affecting the students' performance. The strategies mentioned offering fairer conditions for students, including the introduction of modifications to the test and the use of diverse types and formats of assessment in order to make it accessible to all students and offer equitable opportunities to participate, be involved, and motivate all the students in accordance with their different needs, skills, and learning styles. They point to their potential role as *mediators*[53] who can offer support to students that need it, for example, by providing additional explanations to non-native speakers, reading instructions for students who have difficulties reading, or even writing the answers for students who are unable to write[54]. With regard to the interpretation of the results, some teachers mention that they can observe student progression and identify some of the factors affecting their performance, possibly taking decisions to adapt the scale to assign scores or to repeat the assessment

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[53] To explore the notion of teachers as mediators, could be helpful to review the concept of 'Mediated learning experiences" from Reuven Feuerstein (Feuerstein, Feuerstein, & Falik, 2010; Feuerstein et al., 1985)
[54] There are some students with special needs or who have had delays in their school trajectory (repetitions of years or school expulsions) who are not able to read or write adequately.

In contrast, the perception is that the SIMCE test does not allow the teachers to intervene and mediate in any of the stages, which prevents the school staff from helping to offer fairer assessment conditions to the students. SIMCE policy does not consider the participation of teachers in the tests in either the design or implementation processes, even forbidding the presence of classroom teachers during the application of the assessment. With regard to the test materials, only specific items are published to provide examples about the kind of questions included in the assessment, but no one can have access to the full test (Flórez, 2013). As a consequence, the test cannot be used for formative purposes, such as for review in lessons to provide feedback to the students (Flórez, 2013).

Therefore, there are different views of the role of school staff in the assessment. The staff themselves think that the teachers' play a relevant role to provide a fairer assessment, while SIMCE policy only allows a reduced role for the staff, according to the employees and the literature.

9.2.3 Traditional-technical approach to fairness versus the sociocultural-consequentialist approach

Based on the key elements for a fair assessment mentioned by the staff, it can be argued that there are different approaches to fairness in assessment. The school staff's conception of assessment is similar to the sociocultural approach, while SIMCE displays aspects in line with the traditional approach to fairness based on equality.

Table 23

Approach to Fairness in Assessment

	Traditional-technical approach to fairness (SIMCE policy)	Sociocultural and consequentialist approach (view of school staff)
Main principle	-Equality -Equal conditions for all	-Equity -Differentiated conditions according to student needs/contexts
The role of context	-Reduced consideration of the context, as the main focus is on the test itself and its implementation	-Contextual elements outside the test should be considered, such as the previous conditions of the test application
The consideration of consequences	-Further use and consequences are not considered a responsibility in the test policy	-The use and consequences should be considered -Consideration of student experience (frustration, failure, stigmatisation)
The way to address diversity	-Avoiding bias (DIF studies) -Assumption of homogeneity among schools and students -Minimal accommodations/modifications	-Assumption of diversity among schools and students -Considers different experiences of education and assessments

Regarding the *main principles of assessment*, SIMCE seems to be based on a *principle of equality*, meaning that a *fair test* is one that provides the same conditions to all candidates and schools to apply the assessment in terms of the contents, the format, and all implementation conditions (time, day, non-intervention of school staff, etc.). Meanwhile, for the school staff, a fair test is based on a *principle of equity*, meaning adapting the test design and implementation conditions in accordance with student contexts and needs, which implies making modifications (changes to the contents), accommodations (changes to the format), using the school staff as mediators, or adapting the implementation conditions (time, place, etc). This latter view is closer to a s*ociocultural approach* (Gipps, 1999) to fairness in assessment. From this perspective, it is argued that the traditional view of fairness centred on the notion of equality is simplistic and other elements, such as the experiences and contextual conditions of the candidates outside the test, should be considered (Gipps & Stobart, 2009).

With regard to *the role of context*, the school staff argue that fair tests should consider the different contextual conditions of the schools and students, such as the family profile, the school resources, the academic level of the student, and student stability/rotation at the schools. In their view, not considering these aspects in the SIMCE test means it has limitations to represent the school's achievements (see section 7.4). Similar to this view, some local authors (Flórez, 2015; Gysling & Rozas, in press; Rozas et al., 2020) contend that even though SIMCE policy currently includes certain indicators and processes to consider the diversity of contexts, such as the inclusion of information about the performance of the schools in comparison with others with similar socioeconomic levels, or processes to check gender and geographical location (rural/urban) bias, this is not sufficient in terms of considering the diverse profiles of students and contextual conditions from a perspective of recognition. For instance, Flórez (2015) states that no steps are taken in developing the SIMCE test to control for socioeconomic bias or language and cultural barriers as potential sources of construct-irrelevant variance. In addition, Rozas et al. (2020) explain that even though SIMCE results are currently provided with comparative information on how the establishment fared in comparison with others of a similar socioeconomic level, this does not represent a control for the socioeconomic effect, which shows a deficit in terms of considering the context.

Moreover, the sociocultural perspective on fairness is that the traditional view of fairness centred on the notion of equality is simplistic and other elements, such as the experiences and contextual conditions of the candidates outside the test, should also be considered (Gipps & Stobart, 2009). It is argued that a fair assessment policy should consider the contextual conditions of the candidates (Gipps & Stobart, 2010; Stobart, 2005), such as their access to resources and conditions prior to the test, what and how the students are taught, and the impacts in the teaching and learning process.

In relation to the *consequences of the test,* the school staff argue that a fair test should avoid negative consequences for school communities. In the case of SIMCE, these include the stigmatisation of poor schools and the contribution to social segregation within schools (see section VII.4), negative consequences for students such as feelings of frustration, stress, and anxiety generated by the test, particularly among those who have learning gaps, and the perception of the students that low SIMCE scores could have negative impacts for their teachers and schools (see section 8.2). Similar to the view of the school staff, consequentialists argue that the uses of the test and its social consequences should be included in the analysis of the test validity and fairness (Crooks et al., 1996; Messick, 1993), even suggesting that its validity could be questioned if serious negative impacts occur (Crooks et al., 1996, p. 279), including personal and psychological aspects such as reducing motivation and self-efficacy,

increasing anxiety, and causing stress. This approach is significant for the Chilean context because the national literature (see section 4.5) and parent and student movements (see section 4.6) have reported SIMCE consequences linked to discrimination against students and negative feelings among the students themselves, which could affect the validity of the SIMCE test, according to the consequentialist approach (Crooks et al., 1996). In contrast, in a traditional-technical approach to fairness, the further consequences of test are not considered to be the responsibility of the test policies, so the focus to build a fair assessment should be on the test itself (design, implementation) (see section 2.2.4)

As regards *the way to address diversity*, the school staff state that SIMCE works on the assumption of homogeneity among students and school profiles (see section 7.4). It is argued that SIMCE is used to measure student learning across the country to define different levels of school performance with consequences for school communities, underlining the assumption of student and school homogeneity. Alternatively, the school staff across the three schools in the research have a different view of the student and school profiles, holding the idea that the students and schools across the country are different and, consequently, the conditions to carry out the teaching and learning process should also be different (see section 7.6).

In line with the school staff's view of SIMCE, various researchers (see Filer, 2000; LaCelle-Peterson, 2000; McArthur, 2018) state that, according to the traditional view of fairness, a particularly standardised assessment and test indicate an assumption of homogeneity among students and schools (Filer, 2000; LaCelle-Peterson, 2000; McArthur, 2018c). It is argued that there are "assumptions of sameness" (McArthur, 2018c, p. 46) that consider students to live, study, and complete assessments under normal/same conditions and what does not fit into this normality is seen as an exception. In that sense, different treatment and accommodations are applied only in very special circumstances (McArthur, 2018c, p. 46). This is consistent with what happens with SIMCE, where accommodations are an exception. There are none for students with special needs except for those with specific physical difficulties—visual and auditory impairments—and only in certain levels and tests (see section 4.4.4).

The traditional technical approach to fairness addresses diversity by avoiding *construct-irrelevance variance*, conducting Differential Item Functioning (DIF) studies to avoid bias with certain groups of the population, introducing special accommodations and modifications for test-takers with special needs (ETS, 2009; Nisbet & Shaw, 2020) (see section 2.2.4). However, from other perspectives based on sociocultural approaches, that view addresses diversity more as a problem to solve than as a form

of knowledge to include (Flórez et al., 2018). It is argued that from a traditional perspective of fairness there no attempt to consider diversity is a form of knowledge to include, but the aim to ensure that differences do not interfere with the possibility of providing a correct homogeneous response (Flórez et al., 2018), which is in contrast to the participation and recognition approaches to assessment, where the idea is to value and legitimise other forms of assessment (Flórez et al., 2018). It could be said that something similar happens with SIMCE, as there is no consideration of cultural differences between students regarding the contents, format, or conditions of implementation. Thus, with regard to non-native Spanish speakers, the only consideration is that schools can allow students who do not speak Spanish to avoid taking the SIMCE test during their first year in Chile (Agencia Calidad, 2019), and there are no accommodations or adaptions to the test based on the students' difficulties or lags due to interrupted school trajectories (see section 4.4.4). SIMCE as a tool that generates tension). Unlike SIMCE, the sociocultural approach in assessment (Gipps, 1995; Gipps & Stobart, 2009) makes a series of suggestions that are aimed at contributing to achieving higher levels of fairness in assessment by addressing the students' diversity. For instance, Gipps (1995) proposes providing a range of assessment tasks involving a variety of contexts, a range of modes within the assessment, and a range of response formats and styles. Some of these strategies were proposed by the teachers in this study in order to provide more opportunities to all the students to do something which they feel comfortable with, motivated for, and capable of doing (see section 7.6).

Conclusion

The way that the participants in this study understand fair assessment differs significantly from how they perceive the SIMCE test. These divergences are based on different approaches regarding the central elements of assessments: i) different approaches to the distribution role of assessment (the utilitarian approach versus the Rawlsian approach, ii) different approaches to assessment purposes (accountability versus pedagogical purposes), and iii) different approaches to fairness (traditional-technical view of fairness versus the sociocultural approach).

Firstly, their views appear to be dominated by justice based on the notion of equity, compensation, and benefits for the most vulnerable—identified as the *Rawlsian perspective* of social justice. This contrasts with their view of SIMCE, which is underpinned by principles of equality based on competition and justice related to the maximisation of benefits—a *liberal-utilitarian approach* to social justice.

Secondly, the school staff support the idea of assessment based on a *pedagogical approach*, focused on student learning and progression, with the main purpose being to contribute to the teaching and learning process and assigning a leading role to the school staff under the assumption that this allows fairer conditions of assessment to be provided to students. In contrast, the perception is that SIMCE is based on an *accountability approach*, with the focus on national standards, where the main purposes are control and the comparison of results, neglecting the pedagogical purpose, which confirms the evidence reported in local research and the characteristics of SIMCE described in the formal documentation and expert committee that evaluated SIMCE policy. In addition to this, the role given to school staff is reduced in the different stages of the SIMCE process, under the assumption that this will provide more objectivity to the process and guarantee equal conditions for all candidates, which is seen as a core aspect of fairness and justice in assessments.

Thirdly, the findings reveal that the school staff's views are more closely related to the sociocultural approach to fairness than to the traditional and technical approach to fairness. In particular, the school staff support the principle of equity over the principle of equality in assessment, attribute a relevant role to the context of assessment (school and student contexts), and highlight the consideration of the consequences for students and schools, and assumptions of diversity among the schools and the students, all aspects that are present in the sociocultural approach to assessment. These findings are consistent with the claims of some researchers (Broadfoot, 1979a; Gipps, 1999; Stobart, 2008a) who argue that conceptions and practices regarding the field of assessment, but social phenomenon influenced by the historical and political context, and theoretical and philosophical perspectives.

9.3 SIMCE impact on schools: No escape from SIMCE and limited contribution to dimensions of social justice

Introduction

This section addresses the third research question: *How does SIMCE impact school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice?* As seen in Chapter 6, the findings show that SIMCE effectively influenced the work and experiences of the members of the school communities.

The evidence reveals that SIMCE has an impact not only in schools that are highly focused on academic results and standardised tests, but even in those with inclusive projects. Even though the schools in this study were able to retain their main goals regarding the orientation towards inclusion and

experienced lower SIMCE impacts than many other schools in the country, they were unable to escape the influence of the test. SIMCE impacts some of the actions of the leadership teams and even some teachers' practices. However, this varies between the schools and the findings show that the impacts are mediated by external and internal factors. This section discusses these issues using the three dimensions of social justice presented in the introduction of the chapter: distribution, recognition, and participation.

9.3.1 Distribution dimension

The findings suggest that SIMCE has difficulties producing positive effects in terms of the distribution dimension of social justice. First, it does not contribute to actions that are orientated towards improving student learning. Second, it appears to contribute to social and academic segregation, which affects students from vulnerable groups.

The teachers' perceptions are that SIMCE does not support improvements for their schools mainly because the measurements do not capture the achievement or progress of these students and reduce the opportunities of learning for students in certain levels (curriculum narrowing). This is contrary to what is proposed in the *distribution dimension* of social justice, where assessment should contribute to reducing learning gaps and promote equitable distribution of pedagogical and material resources among students and schools (Rozas et al., 2020) (see section 3.1).

Schools cannot "escape" the impact of SIMCE. The findings show that there is a clear influence of SIMCE on school management and particularly on teachers' practices in two of the schools. In terms of school management, the influence is reflected in the use of SIMCE in the institutional planning tools and in the staff's analyses of student learning. With regard to teaching practices, two of the schools reported *teaching to the tes*t practices (Stobart, 2008: 124), which involve strategies directly linked to improving results on the external test, and *curriculum narrowing* on the part of some teachers, which implies *prioritisation* of the subjects and skills measured on the test (Brill et al., 2018; Stobart, 2008). A group of teachers focused lessons on subjects and skills measured by SIMCE, implemented classroom assessments that imitated the SIMCE model, and one school introduced mock SIMCE tests in primary levels to prepare students. These practices are in line with the international and national evidence on the impact of high-stakes testing on teaching practices. The international literature shows that in different countries with high-stakes testing, such as the United States (Koretz, 2005; S. Nichols et al., 2012), Australia (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012), or the United Kingdom (Stobart, 2008), there

is teaching to the test and curriculum narrowing, with implications for the organisation of school resources, school times, and teacher and student routines (Artiles, 2011; Koretz, 2017) (see section 2.3).

Even though the findings show that SIMCE impacts school management and certain teaching practices, these effects did not seem to contribute to improvements in school processes to help to increase students' learning. The research indicates that the influence of SIMCE did not produce a substantive contribution to the work of the school from the perspective of the staff, and even negatively affected its work. For instance, 46.9% of the school respondents believed that SIMCE undermines the work of the school, while 37.5% did not see any benefits. In addition, the vast majority (90%) stated that SIMCE did not contribute to the school project, while 56.3% believed that SIMCE impoverishes the quality of education, and most (67.7%) said that SIMCE should be removed (see section 8.2). These results are consistent with the views shown in one of the largest surveys of teachers in the county some years ago, which revealed that the majority of the participants believed that SIMCE was impoverishing the teaching-learning process rather than contributing to improving the quality of schools (CIDE, 2012).

In addition, the findings show that teachers perceive SIMCE as reproducing social differences and social segregation in schools. Similarly, local studies suggest that SIMCE increases inequality between schools, due to the stigmatisation of state schools, and leads to academic and social segregation that harms students in disadvantaged positions (Treviño, Valenzuela, & Villalobos, 2014). Likewise, there is international literature suggesting that high-stakes assessments, rather than contributing to improve equality in society, are contributing to the stigmatisation of schools catering to poor populations and increasing social segregation in the school system (Au, 2020; Veleda, Rivas, & Mezzadra, 2011). The school staff's perceptions about the social segregation effects of SIMCE are in line with the arguments of some authors on the sociology of education who have warned about the role of assessment in the social reproduction process, as assessment legitimises the privileges of wealthy students to the detriment of students from low socioeconomic levels, contributing to the reproduction of social classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1993; Broadfoot, 1979a; Dubet, 2004; Gipps, 1999; Gipps & Stobart, 2009; Perrenoud, 2015). According to these authors, assessment thus increases student inequality, which is the perception of the staff regarding SIMCE, due to its effects on social and academic segregation between schools.

9.3.2 Recognition dimension

SIMCE does not seem to contribute to the recognition dimension, for three main reasons. First, because the test does not consider and promote work with student diversity, second because SIMCE implies a lack of recognition of the teachers and school work, and third because it tends to generate stigmatisation for poor school communities. These aspects reflect a deficit in the SIMCE policy with regard to the recognition dimension of social justice (Gysling & Rozas, in press; Rozas et al., 2020).

First, the school staff argue that SIMCE does not consider student and school diversity and does not promote or value work with diverse students, such as those with special needs, those from other countries, and students with difficulties to perform well on the test. The belief is that SIMCE does not offer equitable opportunities to students to participate and be involved in the test, because it does not consider the different conditions and sociocultural backgrounds of the students (see section 7.4.1 & section 7.4.2). These perceptions are consistent with local studies that report cases where SIMCE disincentivises work with diverse students, particularly those with special educational needs or poor academic performance (Acuña et al., 2014; Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Rojas, Falabella, & Alarcón, 2016). The aspects described by the school staff and in the literature contrast with a perspective of recognition, in which assessment should consider cultural and contextual differences and actively promote the value of cultural differences (Flórez & Rozas, 2020). In contrast, the perception of the school staff is that the SIMCE test does not promote work with diverse students.

Second, the lack of recognition of the work of the school staff and the achievements of the community is another important aspect. When SIMCE results are poor, the teachers tend to feel guilty and judged professionally, the leadership team is pressured to take actions to improve results or face a reduction in resources, and the students feel that this is bad for their teachers and the school's future (see section 8.2). The concern among the school staff due to SIMCE is a phenomenon reported in previous studies, particularly in schools classified in low-performance categories, which is described by Rojas & Leyton (2014) as the "semantics of pain" (*semántica del dolor*, in Spanish], referring to negative feelings on the part of teachers regarding the accountability policy based on SIMCE results. The school staff feel frustration that the test results do not reflect student achievement (Campos & Guerrero, 2016), risk school closure and job losses (Rojas & Leyton, 2014), and lead to judgement of them professionally (Acuña et al., 2014). The students in this research recognised the negative effects linked to low SIMCE results, such as possible school closure, the reduction of resources, teachers losing their jobs, or application of penalties, as well as the social perception that the school was not providing a

satisfactory education for its students. Similarly, some local studies (e.g., Arredondo, 2019) report that students perceive negative stigma for their schools when they achieve low SIMCE results.

Third, the school staff mention the way that SIMCE can provoke social stigmatisation of the poorest schools and promote social segregation. These schools serve vulnerable student populations that tend to have more difficulties to achieve high academic results, so poor SIMCE results negatively impact the image and prestige of the school in the community, motivating middle-class families to choose private schools, contributing to the division of social classes. The stigmatisation of school communities due to high-stakes testing is also reported in the international literature, such as in the United States (Hursh, 2013) and also in Latin America (Veleda et al., 2011).

9.3.3 Participation dimension

SIMCE does not consider the role of the school staff in the process of assessment in terms of the design, implementation, or interpretation of the results. This reveals a limitation of SIMCE in the participation dimension of social justice, because from this perfective, the inclusion and participation of individuals and groups in the institutions, policies, and processes affecting their lives is of central importance (Adams & Zuñiga, 2016).

The school staff refer to the lack of teacher participation in the SIMCE process (see section 7.5). The teachers say that they have no chance of acting in the various stages of SIMCE, considering the design, implementation, and interpretation of results, preventing them from creating fairer assessment conditions for all students according to their needs, such as introducing accommodations, making modifications to the design, or acting as mediators during the test-taking process. The lack of participation of the school team in the SIMCE process is also reported in local research (Flórez, 2015; Gysling & Rozas, in press; Rozas et al., 2020), which points out that the current accountability system in Chile with SIMCE at the core is characterised by being hierarchical, where teachers have no significant participation in the decisions made in design, implementation, and the interpretation of results.

The relevance of the participation of different educational agents in the assessment process, including teachers and students, is mentioned in the literature review. Democratically oriented assessment such as *Democratic evaluation* (see Greene, 2006)*, Deliberative democratic evaluation* (House & Howe, 2000), *Critical evaluation* (see Greene, 2006)*,* and *Responsive evaluation* (R. Stake & Abma, 2005) underlines the importance of including the stakeholders related to the issue evaluated, considering

their interests and engaging them in decisions (Greene, 2006; Howe, 2010). Other examples like *Communicative evaluation* linked to dialogic pedagogy (Miguel Del Pino, 2014) and *Inclusive evaluation* (Ferrer-Esteban, 2007), which is related to the Learning Communities model, understand assessment as a collaborative construction based on dialogue and orientation to solve the real problems of the school and its participants. In addition, With regard to large-scale assessment linked to accountability systems, various authors (Ranson, Thrupp, Sahlberg, Darling-Hammond, & O'Neill, as cited in Flórez & Rozas, 2020) suggest democratic alternatives where professional responsibility is at the core of the accountability dynamic instead of external control having a leading role based on high-stakes testing (see section 3.3).

The SIMCE test therefore shows significant limitations regarding the participation of teachers and the school staff in the different stages of the assessment process, which is confirmed by the findings of this research and the national literature on the topic.

9.4 Factors in the impact of SIMCE

The findings suggest that SIMCE does not impact schools in the same way, which is substantiated by two lines of evidence. The schools in this research did not report having any extreme exclusionary practices due to the SIMCE test, unlike some schools described in other local studies. Second, there are certain differences in the impacts at the three schools studied, demonstrating disparate levels of intensity of the SIMCE effects. According to the research, these differences in terms of impacts are linked to i) the relevance of the inclusion project, the leadership team, and the cohesion of the school staff, and ii) the school performance ranking in the context of a high-stakes accountability system.

First, the schools of this study did not introduce exclusionary practices due to the SIMCE test that led to discrimination against students, which seemed to be connected to the inclusive ethos of the establishments. This inclusive ethos was reflected in the openness of the schools to receive students with special needs, non-native Spanish speakers, and those with delayed school trajectories or who had been expelled from other schools, and to seek strategies to serve them (see section 6.1), even though this openness could represent a risk in terms of school performance on standardised external tests. These findings contrast with the national evidence (Carrasco & Fromm, 2016; Carrasco et al., 2017; Madero Cabib & Madero Cabib, 2012; Weinstein et al., 2016) and international evidence (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012; Polesel et al., 2012; Stobart & Eggen, 2012), which shows that in contexts of high-stakes testing it is common to observe practices that affect

disadvantaged students (poor students, immigrants, students with special needs, racial minorities). Among these practices, the literature reports the selection of students with higher expectations of academic performance, the expulsion of students with low performance, less attention on pupils who are less likely to achieve good results, and encouraging these pupils not to attend school on the day of the test (see section 2.3 & 4.5). The absence of these practices in the schools included in this research suggests that their inclusive projects could be acting as an impediment for exclusionary actions linked to SIMCE results. This could be connected to the fact that, according to the findings, certain internal factors seem to act as mediating/protective factors against the impacts of SIMCE, not in the sense of preventing them, but in terms of reducing their effects or enabling the schools to be more selective about the SIMCE influence.

Second, the results showed an impact from SIMCE on the schools in the study, but there were some differences in terms of intensity linked to the schools' histories and contextual conditions, as outlined below. In the schools with better student enrolment, where the school performance and leadership team were focused on inclusivity, the actions orientated towards SIMCE were less intensive and mostly concentrated among certain teachers at the first cycle (from Year 1 to Year 4). Meanwhile, at the school with the most unfavourable conditions, with numbers of students who have delayed school trajectories, reduced enrolment, and a history of low results on standardised tests, the staff were more willing to introduce actions linked to SIMCE. This confirms the local evidence that the accountability system represents a significant pressure for schools in more challenging conditions, such as those with low performance levels (Acuña et al., 2014; Falabella & Opazo, 2014; Rojas & Leyton, 2014) or those in an unfavourable position in the market with difficulties in enrolment and to obtain funding (Carrasco & Fromm, 2016; Falabella, 2019).

The findings on the different impacts of SIMCE between the schools in the research are in line with the literature, which highlights that educational policies are actively adopted by school communities, suggesting that there are different ways of appropriating centrally-mandated policies in schools depending on their conditions and possibilities (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012; Falabella, 2016). Thus, the study suggests that even though it is difficult to ignore SIMCE and escape from its influence due to the key role that this test plays in the high-stakes accountability system and the evaluation model in education, there are factors that can vary SIMCE's influence in schools. Some of these depend on the schools themselves, while others are external and not under the control of the educational establishments. These factors are outlined below.

The findings show that in the school where the leadership team was most consolidated and where all the school staff share an inclusive view of education, the influence of SIMCE was less marked. Alternatively, in the school where the leadership team was just being established and where there are different views among the teachers regarding educational approaches and teaching styles, SIMCE had a greater influence on some of the teachers. In addition, in the latter school, the leadership team was constantly solving emerging issues and, consequently, the school staff did not manage to consolidate a pedagogical approach shared by the whole team, with SIMCE influencing various different levels (see section 8.3.2).

Certainly, it is not possible to define a causal association between the degree of influence that SIMCE has and the cohesion on school projects not focused on the test and the consolidation of the leadership team, but these results suggest there is some relationship in the sense that staff cohesion on an inclusive project with a consolidated leadership team not orientated towards SIMCE seems to be connected to a greater capacity to resist the impacts of the test. The literature supports this hypothesis because local studies (Flórez & Olave, 2020; Rozas & Ruiz, 2014) suggest the importance of a strong school identity, clear school projects, cohesion among the school staff, and the leadership of school and local authorities in terms of building projects that look beyond a standardised test. For instance, Rozas & Ruiz (2014) describe the relevance of a leadership team that trusts in its teachers and has a collective culture, which, along with other factors (social reputation, good SIMCE results, high student enrolment rates), allow the schools to define broader school priorities than the standardised test. Clear educational projects with a strong commitment from the school staff and local authorities can also help build schools that work for their students' wellbeing and integral learning without training to the SIMCE test, such as the project developed in state schools in Valparaíso by municipal authorities (Flórez & Olave, 2020).

School performance classification in the context of a high accountability system

The study results show that SIMCE scores and school performance classification are a factor that can change the relationship with the test. When schools are in extreme situations, in terms of low results, or even high results after a long period with low results, this can lead them to mobilise around the SIMCE scores, introducing more actions to improve results. For instance, when the Moon school, which had historically produced low SIMCE results and had never have been ranked as a school with

"academic excellence", a category heavily influenced by the test results, suddenly produced much better SIMCE results, the school staff had a strong desire to continue achieving high scores, probably as a way to retain the recognition and benefits of improved results. As a consequence, they introduced various actions to sustain the SIMCE test scores (see section 8.3.2). In contrast, the two other schools, which had produced some good performances on SIMCE in the past, were under less pressure to improve their results and so did not introduce generalised strategies to improve SIMCE scores. These findings echo the results of national studies (Anaya & Gálvez, 2014; Contreras & Galvez, 2014; Elacqua et al., 2013) showing that schools classified as having low performance according to the central high-stakes accountability system tend to be much more concerned about SIMCE results and, consequently, introduce a range of strategies to improve their results in the short term.

The relationship with the SIMCE test based on schools' performance classifications and SIMCE scores could be explained by the high-stakes accountability system in education, where the test is the main indicator (see section 4.4.3) and for which the performance classification defines the allocation of rewards, sanctions, resources, and technical advice, and can even result in school closure (Falabella & De la Vega, 2016). So, the schools tend to vary their behaviour towards the SIMCE test depending on the performance category in which they are classified.

Conclusion

SIMCE influences different dimensions of the day-to-day running of the schools studied, including administration, classroom practices, and the experience of the school staff and students, confirming the impacts of the test on school dynamics that have been reported in the national literature. These results demonstrate that schools with inclusive orientations are not free from the influence of SIMCE, which points to the power of the high-stakes accountability system and the role that SIMCE plays within it.

One important finding is that the school staff do not see significant benefits of SIMCE for the work they do at the school or for the students. The predominant perception is that SIMCE does not contribute to the students' learning and the school's priorities, instead acting to impoverish the quality of education due to curriculum narrowing and disincentivising work with diverse students. These results question the supposed large-scale positive effects of national and international policies and reveal SIMCE's limitations regarding the social justice dimensions of distribution, recognition, and participation. In particular, the lack of contribution to quality in education for all students and equity

in the results and resources represent challenges in terms of the distributive dimension of social justice, while the failure to consider student diversity, demonstrates its shortcomings regarding the recognition dimension of social justice, and the marginalised role given to teachers in the test displays its lack of contribution to the participation dimension.

However, the study also reveals that these schools are successful at avoiding the most harmful aspects of SIMCE associated with exclusionary practices such as student selection and discrimination in order to maximise SIMCE results, differing from the schools reported in the local research, where even state educational establishments carried out selective practices to improve their SIMCE results. These results suggest there are internal school factors, such as inclusive school projects, along with the convictions of the leadership team and staff, that help protect the school from conducting exclusionary practices with students. Nevertheless, the position of the school in the performance classification does affect the relationship of the school with the test, as schools with a low ranking on performance tend to introduce more actions to improve their SIMCE results, confirming the impact of the high-stakes accountability system.

Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter discusses the main research questions: What do three Chilean state school communities with an inclusive orientation understand by social justice in schools? What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice? How does SIMCE impact school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice?

With regard to the staff's understanding of socially just schools, the research shows that the school's contribution to social justice is based on principles of compensation, equity, and inclusion, which are connected to the fact that state schools cater to students in disadvantaged conditions. These principles of social justice are in conflict with the neoliberal model that shapes the Chilean educational system according to the notions of competition and merit.

In terms of SIMCE's influence on school practices and school community experiences, the results show that the test does have impacts on the work of the educational establishments and influences the experience of both students and staff in various dimensions, demonstrating that schools with inclusive orientations are not free of the impacts of SIMCE, like other schools in the country, which confirms

the pressure exerted upon them by the high-stakes accountability system, as described in the literature revealing the structural conditions of SIMCE's influence.

The research also reveals the perception among the staff of the schools that this kind of test does not produce benefits in school communities orientated by inclusive goals. The findings suggest that high-stake tests such as SIMCE, positioned in a highly socioeconomically and academically segregated educational system, do not seem to generate the benefits claimed in the national and international agenda regarding school improvement and equity in education. However, the study also shows that some internal school factors, such as the conviction of the school team with regard to inclusion goals, can limit SIMCE's influence to some extent, preventing the schools from introducing harmful practices linked to student discrimination in order to improve SIMCE results.

With respect to conceptions of social justice and fairness in assessment, there are significant differences between the school staff's conceptions and how SIMCE met them, which seem to be based on different approaches to assessment and fairness. First, the staff holds a view that is consistent with a distributive approach to assessment, mainly based on a *Rawlsian perspective* of social justice, following principles of compensation and equity, while SIMCE follows a *utilitarian approach* to social justice based on principles of equality and competition. Second, the staff of the school consider that the purpose of assessment should be based on a *pedagogical approach*, with the main goal being to contribute to the learning and teaching process, and assigning a leading role to the school staff, while SIMCE is based on an *accountability approach*, with the focus on national standards and the main purpose being control and the comparison of results. Third, the school staff display views that are closely related to a sociocultural approach of assessment, which they think should be based on a principle of equity, should take into account the relevance of the school context, should consider the consequences of the test, should assume diversity among the schools and the students, and should take into account the different experiences of students.

The results of the study point to the need to reconsider and re-evaluate the SIMCE policy, particularly with regard to the relevance and contribution of this policy in schools where inclusion and work with diverse students with multiple academic and social challenges are a priority for educational establishments.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

Introduction

Historically, educational assessments have been connected to the promise of social justice in terms of equality of opportunities beyond school afforded by better education for all students within school systems. Large-scale assessment and high-stakes testing have been some of the strategies promoted by international organisations such as the OECD, the World Bank, and others, and they have been adopted in many countries with the aim of promoting higher standards of quality and equity in the educational system. Chile has been one such country, carrying out one of the most extensive national-scale assessments in Latin America—the SIMCE test. In that context, I have addressed three research questions:

1. What do three Chilean state school communities with an inclusive orientation understand by social justice in schools?
2. What are the school community's conceptions of social justice with regard to assessment and to what extent does SIMCE meet these principles of social justice?
3. How does SIMCE impact school practices and school community experiences and what are the implications in terms of dimensions of social justice?

The research questions were investigated using a qualitative multiple case study in three Chilean state-run primary schools with an inclusive orientation (with an emphasis on students with special needs, diverse cultural background, and delayed school trajectories), involving involved different members of the school community. The study process is outlined in Chapter 5, but what follows considers certain thoughts and reflections based on the findings and research process conducted in the study.

This chapter is organised into four sections. Section one summarises the key findings based on the research questions. In section two, I explain the contribution of this study to research in this field, and in the third section, I analyse the limitations of my research and make suggestions for future investigation in the area of assessment. Finally, I present several recommendations for assessment policies in Chile, followed by some final remarks.

10.1 Key Findings

For the schools in this study, compensation and inclusion constituted the basis of their discourse on their institutional role and contribution to social justice (see section 9.1). Their role, based on inclusion and compensation, was strongly related to their position in the Chilean hierarchical, social, and academically segregated educational system, where, as state schools, they serve the most vulnerable students in society. Considering this, the staff expect to develop certain conditions at the schools that they do not necessarily see in the students' homes: a safe place, values, and good models of behaviour in order to generate citizenship, valuing students by recognising their personalities and identities, and giving them opportunities to connect with the rest of society.

The conceptions of social justice in relation to assessment (both external and internal) on the part of the school staff who participated in this study were totally different from the way in which they perceived the SIMCE test. Firstly, the staff of the schools demonstrate a notion of social justice based on a *Rawlsian approach*, whereas SIMCE seems to be based on a *Utilitarian approach*. The staff believe that central and school policies on assessment should be adapted in order to compensate for the unequal conditions among students, due to their socioeconomic backgrounds, special needs, or academic, cultural, or personal aspects. However, what they see in the SIMCE test is a notion that could be described as a *utilitarian approach* to social justice; a rigid policy that is not sensitive to the inequality between students and schools because it uses standardised tools for all students and schools across the country regardless of their original conditions and the challenges they face, forcing them to compete as if their conditions are the same. Secondly, the school staff believe that an assessment that contributes to social justice should have a pedagogical purpose in the sense of providing information that guides teachers' practice to improve student learning (see section 7.2). So, for the staff, a fair test should not just provide information about a school's performance with respect to national standards, but genuinely demonstrate what the students have learnt in relation to what happens in their classrooms. In contrast, they see SIMCE as a policy focused on informing the central level of administration about the level of performance of schools and teachers considering national standards, comparing these levels as a way of exerting pressure on them. Thirdly, the school staff support a notion of fair assessment reflecting a *sociocultural perspective*; the principle of equity over equality, the relevance of considering the context of the school and the students in order to avoid the negative consequences of testing for both (e.g., segregation and stigmatisation), and they assume that diversity is something that should be addressed structurally and not simply as an exception. In contrast, they consider that the SIMCE policy reflects the *traditional-technical* approach to fairness in

assessment linked to principles of equality—that is, providing the same test and conditions for all—and avoiding bias in particular aspects (see section 9.2)

In relation to the influence of SIMCE, the findings show that it has a significant impact on school life and the experience of members of the school community (see section 9.3). SIMCE affected school management, classroom practices, and the perceptions of the members of the school community regarding their performance. Therefore, the findings reveal that SIMCE has an impact not only in schools that are highly focused on academic results and standardised tests, but also in those with an inclusive orientation, which confirms the influence of high-stakes testing on schools that has been reported in the national and international literature. However, the impact of SIMCE did not contribute to the schools' priorities and improving student learning. SIMCE is instead seen as a tool that tends to reduce learning opportunities due to curriculum narrowing and the lack of promotion of work with diverse students. In addition, the findings show that the staff perception is that SIMCE has significant limitations to contribute to dimensions of social justice; it fails to help improve education for disadvantaged groups (distributive dimension), it lacks consideration of student diversity (recognition dimension), and teachers only have a marginalised role in the test (participation dimension). Despite the impacts of SIMCE, the schools included in this research resisted introducing discriminatory practices towards students due to the test. This suggests that internal factors, such as having an inclusive project with a strong leadership team and school staff who are committed to that, act as a protective factor against the most detrimental effects of SIMCE. Nevertheless, the findings also show that having a disadvantaged position in school performance systems (mainly defined by SIMCE) influences the relationship with the SIMCE test and the capacity to resist its influence. That is, schools with low SIMCE results and classified in so-called low-performance categories tend to introduce strategies directly aimed at improving their SIMCE results (see section 9.4)

10.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes in various different ways to the field of assessment in education and understanding of inequality. Below, I present some arguments for its contribution in terms of the theory and assessment policies.

10.2.1 Contribution to the theory

In Chile, there are few studies that connect high-stakes testing and philosophical theories focused on social justice. This work contributes to the emerging body of research on these issues (see Flórez & Olave, 2020; Gysling & Rozas, in press; Rozas et al., 2020) and is novel in the way it applies Fraser's (1993) theoretical framework on social justice and links it to key theoretical elements from the field of assessment such as fairness, sociocultural and consequentialist approaches, and certain aspects of the sociological field linked to reproduction theories. The intersection of different theoretical sources contributed to connect the questions about fairness and social justice with other traditions beyond assessment as a technical practice. It is not a theoretical proposal in itself, but instead a framework that builds bridges between these fields to interrogate an empirical issue: educational assessment.

These theoretical fields enlighten the understanding of assessment in different ways. Firstly, by the exploration of current perspectives on the validity of assessment in the field of assessment that consider the consequences of high-stakes tests and their impact on students. Secondly, viewed with a philosophical lens, this work recognises the demands in terms of social justice, for instance, in the dimension of recognition linked to the context of school diversity, globalisation and migration, and the challenges on the participatory dimension linked to the lack of relations between policymakers and school communities. Thirdly, the inclusion of certain elements of analysis from the sociological field and the notion of assessment as a tool of social reproduction indicate the possible consequences of assessment for disadvantaged and minority groups. Analysis considering different perspectives presented helps show the complexity of assessment and demonstrates that is not merely a technical matter, where the field of assessment is predominant, but is a social issue connected with ethical and political debates to which sociological and philosophical theories have great input.

Finally, the main theoretical contribution has been to highlight the distinction between equity and equality in the discussion on fairness and social justice in assessment. Even though this distinction is addressed in the philosophical discussion on social justice and assumed by the sociocultural approach to assessment, it needs more attention and development in the field of assessment, and this thesis contributes to doing so and enriching the analysis, with the implication of this distinction in a particular context—the Chilean case. The distinction between equity and equality is important because it helps to highlight some of the current challenges regarding fairness, social justice and assessment, questioning the idea of standardisation as a way to provide more justice in assessment, and reinforcing the need to go beyond the traditional notion of fair assessment.

10.2.2 Contribution to policies

This research provides certain guidance and warnings about assessment and social justice in relation to the SIMCE test in Chile. The findings lead us to reflect and critically consider national expectations about the contribution of high-stakes testing to quality and equity in education. According to the school staff, SIMCE contributes to impoverishing the quality of education and it does not help students from minorities and other vulnerable groups. In the same vein, the findings alert us to the limitations and even detrimental effects of SIMCE in terms of the distribution, recognition, and participation dimensions of social justice, which is also of critical importance bearing in mind the historically positive international assumptions about assessment and social justice (see section 2.2 & 2.3.1).

Moreover, the results reflect the limitations of standardised high-stakes testing as a pedagogical tool. In the research, SIMCE is predominantly perceived as a tool of control and accountability, without the capacity of contributing to inform about student learning in a detailed way, in accordance with the real work done in classes, or on the progression of students, even though this is far removed from national standards. Moreover, the findings highlight the relevance of considering the participation of teachers and school staff to provide fairer experiences of assessment, which raises the issue of the need to involve the members of school communities in the different stages of external assessments, challenging certain positions where assessment is preferably free from teacher intervention and subjective judgement (Gipps, 1999).

Finally, the findings suggest that school staff's perceptions about fairness in assessment contain elements of a sociocultural and consequentialist approaches, highlighting elements that could be crucial to the current discussions of fairness in education. Holding principles of equity as core elements, addressing diversity not as an exception, but as part of the reality, avoiding negative consequences for school community members, and considering the context of the students and the school.

10.3 Limitations and Further Research

All studies in education are subject to compromise and it is a fact that there will be limitations regarding the findings due to qualitative methods that sample discrete communities. In this section, I present some of the limitations noted during the process of undertaking this work and consider

alternative ways in which things might have been done, and also propose new lines for further research.

10.3.1 The limitations

Firstly, as stated previously, the Chilean educational system is extremely segregated, generating what might be considered species of social class ghettos (see section 4.1). Private state-subsidised funded schools and private non-subsidised schools tend to serve students from higher socioeconomic levels than state-run schools. As a result, the challenges, interests, and needs of the students and families may differ from those served by state schools, which also can affect the relationship that school communities have with SIMCE and assessment. The schools selected in my study were three state-run urban primary schools, so I did not consider other kinds of schools, such as private state-subsidised and private schools, or rural and secondary schools, which may have different approaches to SIMCE depending on their particular contexts and the students and families to whom they cater. Other school profiles could be something to consider in further research.

Secondly, I focused on one specific period of the year. Due to the limited timeframe of my PhD studies and the inherent difficulty in returning to Chile at different times of the year as I was living in the United Kingdom, I made the conscious choice to focus on the first semester of the academic year. I decided to conduct my research in that period because, in my experience as a researcher, the first semester is in a period of the year where the school staff are less busy and not subject to as many external pressures, and therefore more willing to participate in research. In contrast, in the second semester, teachers are working on marking, deciding which students will pass or have to repeat the year, and can suffer from stress due to the SIMCE test, which is taken in October and November. One of the limitations of focusing on the first semester is that I did not cover the period in which SIMCE is applied, a time in which the schools tend to be more focused on the test; preparing the content assessed, talking with students and parents about the test, and, in some cases, applying SIMCE mock exams. So, carrying out the fieldwork in one or the other semester can capture different perceptions about SIMCE on the part of the school community. Therefore, if a researcher wishes to ascertain the views of the school community taking the variation between semesters into account, they should consider both periods of the year.

Thirdly, I did not have any non-Chilean parent participants. I sent a letter to parents explaining the research and use other strategies inviting them to take part in an interview, such as attending school

meeting with parents, but I was unable to convince any parents from other countries or who were non-native Spanish speakers. This was a limitation in terms of lacking the views of parents with a greater diversity of cultural experiences. It could be beneficial in future, to plan more strategies to encourage their participation, such as making contact with organisations where parents tend to be involved, like churches or sports activities.

10.3.2 Further Research

Considering the findings of the research and reflection on the limitations of my study, I propose some lines of research that could be helpful to address certain dimensions and emphases not included in my study, but which could be interesting to help enrich the field of research on assessment.

Studying other school profiles

One of the findings of this study is that the position of the schools in the educational system, in this case state-run schools that serve students from low socioeconomic levels, has a high influence on the role that the establishments assume in terms of compensation and student inclusion, and their experience regarding the SIMCE test. This research did not explore what happens with schools in other positions in the educational system. It could therefore be interesting to study conceptions of social justice regarding assessment in schools that are in the middle or at the top of the educational system, such as selective establishments that are orientated towards achieving high results on the standardised test, or private state-subsidised schools that serve students with similar profiles to those at the schools in my research.

Exploring internal assessment regarding conceptions of social justice and fairness

Studying how conceptions of social justice and notions or fairness are applied to internal assessment, and the possible tensions and dilemmas that emerge from these practical experiences, could be helpful to enrich the understanding of the relationship between assessment and social justice. My research focused on social justice and the SIMCE test, so my aim was not to provide an in-depth description of school practices regarding internal assessment. To do that it would be necessary to observe internal practices and analyse the tools and criteria used, and the ways of designing, implementing, and interpreting internal assessments.

Focusing on school assessment strategies to address student diversity

Consideration of student diversity is a relevant area to connect with the current focus of legislation on inclusive education in Chile, as well as to address the current scenario of increasing immigration from different countries including non-native Spanish speakers (see section 4.4.4). It would therefore be enriching for policymakers and researchers to investigate the strategies of teachers and integration teams in school assessment to address student diversity and connect it with the debate on fairness (Nisbet & Shaw, 2020), culturally responsive assessment (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017; Nortvedt et al., 2020), and validity (Flórez, in press; Flórez, 2015; Klenowski, 2009; Qualls, 1998).

Focusing on students' experience

This research did explore the students' experiences regarding the SIMCE test through the talks held in the workshops organised with the primary school students. In line with other research (e.g., Elwood, Hopfenbeck, & Baird, 2017), the findings show that external assessment was not something the students considered trivial. It affected their experience and they have perceptions regarding the possible consequences for them, their teachers, and the school. It could therefore be valuable to explore this in greater depth researching with students with differing school trajectories, life experiences, and performances, in order to conduct a more in-depth analysis of their points of view. In addition, exploring the experiences of students from different cultural backgrounds and with different special needs considering their own opinions could be very informative with regard to the challenges and dilemmas emerging in assessment practices and policies. The topic of student diversity and different cultural backgrounds in assessment is a multidimensional issue that is challenging to address and students' points of view could contribute to this being done in a more comprehensive way (e.g., Tefera, 2019).

10.4 Recommendations

In the context of criticism of the SIMCE test from different sectors (see section 4.6) and in such uncertain times, due to the pandemic, the discussions on the new Chilean constitution, and the election of a new president committed to introducing modifications to the school assessment system (see section 4.4.5), an opportunity has emerged to reassess national assessment policies and potentially prepare changes to make external assessment fairer. I present a series of suggestions that could contribute to this.

10.4.1 Ending the consequences of SIMCE: no more high-stakes testing

The school staff describe negative effects of SIMCE on the school communities in relation to social segregation, stigmatisation, pressure from local authorities, and negative judgements of teachers and school performance. These impacts are directly connected to the consequences defined in the SIMCE policy: the publication of SIMCE results, a school performance system that classifies schools mainly based on the results of the test, and rewards and sanctions for teachers and school communities according to SIMCE outcomes. If SIMCE policy was designed as one of multiple sources of information and did not have consequences for the schools in terms of resources and possibilities to continue operating, the negative effects would be less significant. There are examples of national large-scale assessments without consequences for school communities that could be interesting to review, such as in Uruguay, where a sample test is applied every three years with the purpose of providing information on the quality of education at national level (Campos & Fernanda, in press); the Mexican system that provides information to teachers to diagnose student learning in key areas (Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021); and the Norwegian model, which uses a national test and other sources of information with a formative purpose, where accountability procedures place the responsibility on local actors (municipalities) but without high-stakes incentives (OECD, 2020).

10.4.2 Considering the opinions and participation of the school staff

The teachers and the staff of the schools generally had little participation in decisions regarding external assessments. This study suggests that the role of teachers and internal school staff, such as inclusion teams, could have a key role in terms of offering fair assessment to students. The internal school staff could adapt the assessment process according to students' needs and conditions, for instance by introducing accommodations to the test design, or making certain changes during implementation. The knowledge of the school staff about the students' lives, personal conditions, interests, and abilities, or the student context, could contribute to the adaptations needed to achieve a fairer assessment experience. In that sense, a system is needed where trust is placed in teachers and in their ability to make evaluative judgements (see Flórez, 2018). Certainly, assessment decisions should not be left to only one educational agent, as it is necessary to include different agents to avoid potentially impartial judgements and promote collective decisions regarding assessment. I therefore recommend that the role of school communities in external assessment should be changed from their current passive participation, where the members of the community simply receive the results of the test, to make them active agents that contribute to the assessment process. There are examples around the world where school communities have been included in the process of large-scale

assessment and local accountability systems (Flórez, 2018; Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021). I describe some of the examples presented in the report prepared by the Mesa Social COVID-19 in Chile, which makes recommendations for assessment in times of crisis (Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021), in which I had the opportunity to participate. In Malta for instance, the Quality Assurance Department (QAD), combines external and internal assessments with improvement plans developed by the schools, but there are no penalties for schools for failing to achieve the national standards (Government of Malta cited in (Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021). Meanwhile, the inspection system in Scotland defines quality indicators in coordination with the school (Scotland government[55] cited in Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021). Also, in Nebraska in the United States, there is a School-based, Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS), which a system of assessment based on school reports led by teachers in coordination with the districts (Roschewski, Isernhagen, & Dappen, 2006).

10.4.3 Considering student diversity and the effects on minorities/disadvantaged groups

The evaluation of the consequences of testing on school communities is something that should be considered by policymakers and authorities with a special focus on disadvantaged groups: students with special needs, indigenous students, immigrant students, non-native Spanish speaking students, or students with various delays in their school trajectories. The literature (see section 2.3.2) and the participants from the schools in this research (see section 7.4) describe some negative risks of high-stakes testing for students in vulnerable contexts and from minority groups. The expert commission called by the government to analyse SIMCE policy underlined the need to study the effects of assessment due to testimonies about its negative consequences, particularly in poor communities (Comisión SIMCE, 2003, 2015), but no actions were taken by the central governments. Student diversity should also be considered, as one of the main concerns of the staff in the schools in this study is the lack of consideration of students attending second-chance schools, those with special needs[56], and students from other cultural backgrounds.

There are various approaches to and experiences of assessment around the world that consider student diversity, some at the local level and others in large-scale assessment (see section 3.2). For instance, *Culturally responsive assessment* (Denise Burns et al., 2019), which is based on Universal Design for Learning (see Nelson, 2013), offers specific strategies for the preparation, process, and

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[55] See https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/
[56] There are some accommodations for students with special needs, for blind, impaired or low vision, and deaf students, but only in two subjects, language and maths for two levels, the fourth and sixth years, whereas the current national assessment policy includes five subjects and five school levels (MINEDUC, 2021d).

outcomes in assessment. In New Zealand, there is assessment of reading and mathematics based on the IBRLA framework (Initiation, Benefits, Representation, Legitimacy, and Accountability) that considers the Māori approach (Gardner et al., 2009), while in Chile there are some experience that incorporate cultural and linguistic knowledge from local communities (Del Pino-Sepúlveda & Montanares-Vargas, 2019; Del Pino, Castillo, Heeren, & Tejeda, in press).

10.4.4 Focusing on specific purposes for better alignment with test validity

According to the last expert SIMCE committee (see section 4.3), this test has two main purposes; i) *Development* (e.g., providing information for school authorities and teachers to make curricular and pedagogical decisions, and ii) *Accountability and responsibility*, such as generating commitments among school staff for student learning and providing information to parents. However, this committee also recognises that what predominates in practice is the purpose of *accountability*, producing an imbalance between the two objectives. In line with that, local literature has suggested that SIMCE suffers from various difficulties to provide helpful information to teachers and schools for decision-making on student learning and teaching (Manzi et al., 2014; Ortiz, 2012). Other authors propose that SIMCE has multiple purposes, for instance suggesting that SIMCE has at least 17 objectives (Flórez, 2013). Clarifying these purposes and the responses to them is also a matter of validity. If the assessment policy promises to provide information about a certain purpose and finally generates information that serves other purposes, then there is a validity problem (Flórez, 2015; Ortiz, 2012). What I suggest is that there should be great clarity about the purpose of assessment policy, so if the state wants to have a tool to monitor the level of student learning at national level or to evaluate the success of educational policies to improve student learning, it does not need a census policy that is implemented every year, but a non-annual representative sample that provides a general picture of national education levels. Insisting on a different type of assessment, such as a national test applied in every school every year, as is the case with SIMCE at present, is because there are other purposes in mind, such as school accountability and informing the market. In contrast, if the aim is to generate an assessment policy with a pedagogical purpose that helps school communities to improve educational goals, no consequences should be defined, because there is already literature suggesting that formative and accountability purposes come into conflict regarding high-stakes testing (Cristián Bellei, 2002; Spicer et al., 2014). There are several good analyses of the purposes and validity of SIMCE, and the problems and aspects that should be considered for improvement (Flórez, in press, 2013; Flórez, 2015; Ortiz, 2012; Schiefelbein & Schiefelbein, 2008)

10.4.5 Changing to an assessment policy genuinely based on pedagogical purposes

SIMCE has occupied a central position in Chilean educational policies for the last 30 years. In the late 1980s, SIMCE was a key tool for the introduction of neoliberal policies in education, while during the 1990s, the test supported compensation policies to focus interventions and additional resources on poor schools, and in the 2000s, it emerged as one of the main tools of state educational control. Despite these different emphases, SIMCE never abandoned its market purpose and that is why, even now, the policy serves the objectives of market accountability and state accountability.

As I have stated previously, it is time to recognise that SIMCE has various limitations in terms of its pedagogical role and, because of its high-stakes characteristics and central importance to the school accountability system, is not possible to correct that in the current scenario. If there is an interest in generating information that helps to inform decision-making on teaching strategies/learning processes, the education system requires a different assessment policy to SIMCE. This new policy should be orientated towards formative and non-punitive processes and, therefore, the high stakes for school communities should be eliminated. In this vein, certain recommendations are presented in the work of Flórez (2018) and in the report of the Mesa Social COVID-19 committee (2021).

10.4.6 Considering the school context and giving Local Education Services a key role

One of the claims made by the school staff is the need to consider the school context. I argue that a way to address that context could be by implementing a policy with a territorial perspective that gives certain autonomy at the intermediate level. An educational reform is currently being implemented to reinforce public education, which has established the creation of Local Public Education Services (*Servicios Locales de Educación Pública*, in Spanish) depending on the central level of the state and replacing the previous municipal administration (MINEDUC, 2017). These local services, which have become the new intermediate level of administration, are responsible for state schools at all levels (nursery, primary, and secondary level) in a defined territory and should promote linked work between them. Based on previous proposals that highlighted the role of local territories and specific school contexts (Campaña Alto al SIMCE, 2014; Flórez et al., 2018), my suggestion is that the Local Education Services define an assessment system in collaboration with the school communities that serves as a tool to monitor student learning and other conditions in the territories to i) inform local and central authorities about the situation in schools, helping them to provide the pedagogical and material conditions for student learning, and ii) offer helpful information to school communities to

guide teacher practices. The role of this assessment should therefore be to support the school communities instead of punishing them. There have been some national and international explorations of assessment systems led by local governments in collaboration with school teams. In Chile, for instance, a project based on assessment for learning was implemented by Valparaíso municipality (Flórez & Olave, 2020), as well as another initiative based on formative assessment led by Renca municipality (Mesa Social Covid-19, 2021). International experiences include the large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning in Norway, where municipalities have played a key role (Hopfenbeck, Flórez, & Tolo, 2015), the California Performance Assessment Collaborative (CPAC) in the United States, where seven districts in the state worked together with more than 60 schools to create common principles to guide their assessment policies (Learning Policy Institute, n.d.).

Final remarks

High-stakes testing is one of the strategies promoted by international organisations and adopted in different countries to improve quality and equity in education. In that context, several decades ago, Chile introduced a national large-scale, high-stakes assessment—the SIMCE test—with consequences for teachers and school communities. However, the SIMCE test not only responded to international policy but to local policies, and it has had a central position in Chilean educational policies for more than 30 years; in the 1980s as a major tool to impose neoliberal policies in education, in the 1990s as a tool to support compensation policies to focus resources on poor schools, and in the 2000s as a core part of the Evaluative State in education.

Despite the historical links between assessment and social justice and the positive assumption that high-stake testing brings greater quality and equity to the education system, the findings suggest that SIMCE does not contribute to improving education in schools and has limitations to contribute to dimensions of social justice, even in schools with an inclusive orientation such as those included in this research. SIMCE does not provide helpful information that serves pedagogical purposes in school with inclusive orientation (limitation in the distribution dimension), does not consider school contexts and contributes to the stigmatisation of state schools (limitation in the recognition dimension), and offers little room for the participation of school staff, preventing them from making the test accessible to all (limitation in the participation dimension). Moreover, SIMCE seems to be a tool that is not sensitive to student diversity in schools, which contrasts with the demands for inclusion and the inclusive policies enacted in recent decades, linked to the increase in immigrant and non-native Spanish speaking students, the inclusion law that promoted student heterogeneity in schools, and policies that

support the inclusion of students with special needs in regular schools. The differences between the conceptions of the school staff and SIMCE policy seem to be related to different approaches to social justice and fairness in assessment. In the context of a highly segregated school system in Chile (which is one of the most segregated in the world), the staff's understanding of social justice and fairness in assessment is strongly linked to compensation and equity, echoing a Rawlsian view of social justice, whereas SIMCE is closer to a utilitarian notion, where fairness and justice are connected to equality in terms of the conditions to compete. These findings show that there is much to do regarding assessment and social justice in Chile. The challenges can sound overwhelming but, fortunately, there are both international and some national experiences that provide interesting examples of large-scale assessment and internal assessment which have introduced interesting elements that are in line with dimensions of social justice.

This thesis proposes the re-evaluation of the national policy on high-stakes testing represented by the SIMCE test. I suggest turning assessment into a policy based on pedagogical purposes to support school communities instead of punishing them. In order to achieve this, I argue that is essential to end high-stakes testing for school communities, to stop the publication of results for schools and their classification according to their performance on the test. In line with a sociocultural perspective and the participation dimension, I also suggest that the context of schools and students should be considered, for which I recommend giving a key role to the intermediate level of educational agents—*Local Public Education Services*—in collaboration with school communities. Moreover, taking into account a distributive and consequentialist perspective, I suggest constantly evaluating the contributions and effects of assessment policies among minorities and students from disadvantaged groups, but not using a perspective of exceptional or "unusual cases", but a logic of considering student diversity as part of the educational reality, thus contributing to the recognition dimension of social justice.

We are currently experiencing an unusual political time in Chile, albeit a hopeful one. There was a recent (2019) social uprising in which millions of people took to the streets demanding better living conditions, while an unprecedented constitutional convention aims to replace the constitution created by the dictatorship with a new one, and a leftist president was recently elected who has proposed putting an end to high-stakes testing and promoting formative assessment. In that context, I hope that this research contributes to building a fairer assessment system that is in line with the multiple dimensions of social justice and which serves school communities, helping to improve learning opportunities for all the students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds,

recognising student diversity in a broad sense, and considering the opinions of students and teachers and their particular school contexts. Even though is not possible to produce a perfectly fair assessment, it is possible to create a fairer one.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Compulsory education in Chile

Educational levels	Levels (*ciclos*)	School Years	Chilean system nomenclature	Student age
Primary education **(Educación básica)**	First level *Primer ciclo*	Year 1	1° básico	6-7
		Year 2	2° básico	7-8
		Year 3	3° básico	8-9
		Year 4	4° básico	9-10
	Second level *Segundo ciclo*	Year 5	5° básico	10-11
		Year 6	6° básico	11-12
		Year 7	7° básico	12-13
		Year 8	8° básico	13-14
Secondary Education **(Educación Media)**	---------------	Year 9	1° medio	14-15
		Year 10	2° medio	15-16
		Year 11	3° medio	16-17
		Year 12	4° medio	17-18

Appendix 2 Policies connected to SIMCE

Year of enactment & law	Accountability Policy	Description	Target schools	Weight of SIMCE	Consequences linked to SIMCE
1995 Law 19.410	**SNED** National Performance Evaluation System *(Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de Desempeño)*	The policy is intended to improve school performance based on economic incentives. It entails a performance-based bonus for teachers in schools with outstanding performance—schools with "academic excellence" (*excelencia académica*)	All subsidised schools	65%	- Financial rewards for schools - Financial rewards for teachers
2008 Law 20.248	**SEP** Preferential School Subsidy *Subvención escolar preferencial*	Policy to offer additional state resources to schools with poor students. Defines different levels of autonomy in the use of resources and penalties based on school performance. It classifies schools into three categories: *Autonomous, Emerging,* or *In Recovery*	Subsidised schools (voluntary)[57]	100%	- Design of an improvement plan including goals for SIMCE results - Level of autonomy in resource management linked to SIMCE results - External interventions - If the school does not reach targets within five years, it would lead to the loss of public funding and the risk of closure
2011 Law 20.529	**SAC** System of Quality Assurance *(Sistema de Aseguramiento de la Calidad)*	Policy intended to promote and guarantee quality of the school system. Defined accountability regarding all resources received from the state. Classifies school in different levels of performance: high, medium, medium-low, and insufficient performance	All schools	63%[58] (min) 73% (max)[59]	- Public classification of school performance categories (see https://localizar.agenciaeducacion.cl/) - Visits from the Education Quality Agency - Creation or redefinition of the educational improvement plan - External pedagogical interventions - Risk of school closure

Source: Prepared by the author based on Bellei & Muñoz (2021); Falabella & De la Vega (2016); MINEDUC (1995, 2008, 2011a)

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[57] Subsidised schools can decide to apply for SEP resources, but in practice most state schools do because it represents a significant source of resources for them.

[58] The Education Quality Agency defines a quality index where SIMCE has a minimum weight of 63%. The rest of the indicators are "Personal and social indicators" representing 33% of the index, while the "Personal and social indicators" are School attendance (3%), Participation and citizen education (3%), School environment (3%), Healthy habits (3%), School retention (3%), Academic self-esteem and School motivation (3%), Gender equity (3%), and Technical-vocational qualification (3%). SIMCE represents the main criteria, at 67% (min) or 73% (max) according to the school features (vocational, mixed gender school).

[59] The SAC law defined that the learning standards (based on SIMCE) should have a weight of 65%. However, in schools without data on gender equity and in technical-vocational qualifications, because they are unisex or do not offer technical education, the weight of those indicators is transferred to indicators of learning standards, rising to 73%.

Appendix 3. Evolution of SIMCE test[60]

Period of time	1988-1998	1998 -2005	2006-2012	2012-2015	2016-2020	2021-2025
Level of education	Primary	Primary & Secondary	Primary Secondary	Primary & Secondary	Primary & Secondary	Primary & Secondary
School Years	Year 4 Year 8 (since 1989)	Year 4, Year 8, **Year 10**	Year 4, Year 9, Year 10	**Year 2**, Year 4, **Year 6,** Year 8 Year 10, Year 11	Year 4, Year 6, Year 8, Year 10	Year 2, Year 4 Year 6 Year 8 Year 10
Subjects	Language, Maths	Language, Maths, **Natural Sciences, Social Sciences**	Language, Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences	Language, **Writing,** Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, *English*	Language, Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences	Language, **Writing,** Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences
Testing frequency	Every two year	Year 4: every three years Year 8: every three years **Year 10: every three years**	Year 4: **every year** Year 8: **every other year** Year 10: **every other year**	Year 2: **every year** Year 4: every year Year 8: **every year** Year 6: **every year** Year 10: **every year** Year 11: every other year	Year 4: every year Year 8: every other year Year 6: every other year Year 10: every year	**Year 2: every year** Year 4: every year Year 8: **every year** Year 6: **every year** Year 10: every year
School years considered per year (max)	1	1	3	6	3	5
Subjects per year (max)	2	4	4	6	5	5
Tests per year (max)	2	4	7	15	9	11

Source: Prepared by the author, based on Meckes & Carrasco (2010), Bravo (2011), Gysling (2015), Agencia de Calidad de la Educacion (n.d.), Mineduc (2021).
*Bold text shows the school years, subjects, and frequency changes

[60] The table considers the census-based test, that means the test nationally applied.

Appendix 4. Details on the material collected

4.1 Details of the research participants by research activity in each school

	Star school	Sun school	Moon school	Total
Interviews - school staff	Teachers: 12 (13) Leadership team: 1 (3) Integration team: 3 Total interviews: 16 Total participants: 19	Teachers: 11 Leadership team: 1 (2) Integration Team: 2 Coexistence team: 1 (2) Total interviews: 15 Total participants: 17	Teacher: 7 Leadership team: 3 Integration team: 1 Coexistence team: 1 Total interviews: 12 Total participants: 12	Total interviews:44 Total participants: 48
Interviews - parents	1 individual interview (1) 1 group interview (3) Total interviews:2 Total participants: 4	4 individual interviews Total interviews: 4 Total participants: 5	2 individual interviews 1 groups interview (parent meeting: 3 participants) Total interviews: 3 Total participants: 5	Total interviews: 9 Total participants: 14
Focus groups -students	1 focus group Year 5: 7 participants 1 focus group Year 8: 8 participants Total focus groups: 2 Total participants: 15	1 focus group Year 5: 5 participants 1 focus group Year 8: 5 participants Total focus groups: 2 Total participants: 10	1 focus group third level 3 (Year 5 and Year 6): 7 participants 1 focus group level 4 (Year 7 and Year 8): 5 participants Total focus groups: 2 Total participants:13	Total focus groups: 6 Total participants: 38
Workshops	1 workshop Participants: teachers, leadership team, integration team, coexistence team, others N= 20 The participants were divided into three groups of 5 to 8 people.	1 workshop Participants: Participants: teachers, leadership team, integration team, coexistence team, others N= 20. 9 teachers, 5 Integration team (PIE), 3 coexistence team, 3 leadership team	---------------------	Total workshops: 2 Total participants: 40
Observations	School meetings observation: 2 Classroom observations: 2. In Year 9 - one English class and one maths class	School meetings observation: 2. Classroom observations: 2. In third level (Year 4 and 5) – one Spanish class and one maths class	School meetings observation: 2 Informal observations: during breaks, musical activities	Total school meeting observations: 6 Total participants: 72 Classroom observations: 4
Surveys - school staff	17	12	5	34
Documentary analysis	2: PEI, PME *	2: PEI, PME	2:PEI, PME	6

*PEI: Institutional Educational, PME: School improvement project

4.2 Description of the sessions observed

	School staff meeting - Session 1	School staff meeting - Session 2	Contextual observations
Star school	Session to discuss SIMCE results and internal assessment results	Session about a national policy, MBA, that provided guidelines to improve the teaching practices at the schools	- Art week in which the students carried out different performances in the school courtyard based on the learning developed on the school workshop lessons -English Class in Year 8: student presentation with stands. The students prepared a stand with food, decoration, and flyers with touristic information about a country -Maths class in Year 8. The students worked in groups preparing an activity to teach students from lower years about certain maths contents at the Moon school Breaks
Sun school	School staff meeting led by the inclusion team of the school, where they presented key concepts about inclusion and strategies to work with students, addressing diverse needs	Inclusion team session, where the members of the team discussed possible tools to collect information in the school community to identify barriers for inclusive practices in the school	-Book Day -Breaks -Inclusion meetings where the team discussed the organisation of the school's intercultural week
Moon school	A session to plan activity using a pedagogical tool, APB, one of the tools mentioned by the school staff to address student diversity	A session in which the school staff addressed different conflictive situations with students	-Presentation of a band invited to the school -Breaks -Lessons at third level (Year 5 and Year 6) i) Spanish class – The teacher carried out an oral activity with students, asking questions to students. ii) Science class: The students answered a written SIMCE mock exam on the Spanish subject -Lesson at fourth level (Year 7 and Year 8). Religion class: even though the lesson was religion, the students spent the time answering a SIMCE mock exam on maths. The teacher gave instructions on how the students should answer the written mock exam. The SIMCE mocks were sent by the local government to the school

Appendix 5. Schedules for qualitative tools

(Translated from Spanish)

5.1 Interview schedules for the school leadership (headteacher, deputy headteacher, person responsible for curriculum[61], inspector)

Interview schedule
School leadership

Warm-up questions
Before we start, could you please tell me:
- How long have you been at the school?
- Have you always had the same role at this school?

Role of SIMCE in the school
- How important is SIMCE for this school? In what sense? Has it always been like that?
- Have you received external pressure because of SIMCE?
- Last year, the school had an average score of XX on SIMCE. How did the school react to this score? What kind of decisions or measures did the school take after finding out the scores?
- Personal approach to SIMCE: What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you hear the word SIMCE? What are your personal feelings about this test?

School goals/social justice meaning
- Which are the main goals or the heart of the project of this school?
- What differentiates this school from other schools?
- In a couple of words, what does <u>social justice</u> mean to you? Do you think this school is contributing to social justice? In what ways? Do you think SIMCE is contributing or limiting this in any respect?

Work with diversity and socioeconomically vulnerable students [distributive, recognition, participative dimension of social justice]
- What is the <u>student profile</u> of this school? Has it always been like that?
- What does the school do to <u>address the different needs of students</u>? What kind of support does the school give to students when they are struggling academically/personally?
- Several years ago, the school started working with <u>immigrant students</u>. How has this experience been? What kind of opportunities or **challenges** do you see?
- Do you see any barriers to working properly with the diverse student population? (immigrants, SEN students, those of different ethnic backgrounds, other characteristics)?
- In what sense does the SIMCE test contribute to the work with diversity?

Proposals:
- Thinking about this school's project, how should a national assessment be respectful to this project and the profile and diversity of students you have?
- Nowadays the SIMCE policy involves nine tests per year in four grades (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th), covering four subjects. Do you think these elements or others should be maintained or should some of them be changed?

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[61] In Chile some schools have a person responsible for the implementation of the curriculum – *curriculista*. This person usually belongs to the leadership team.

School policies:
Let's talk a little about school policies
- Admission process: how is the admission process?
- Repetition policy: What is the policy of student repetition in this school? Why did you decide this?
- Expulsion: In what cases do you suggest students should leave this school?
- Some schools organise classes based on academic performance, for instance in different classes or different groups within the class? Do you do this at the school? Why did you decide to do/not do that?
- Student participation: Have you had the opportunity to consider students' opinions in some school decisions?

Many thanks for your time.

Interview schedule
Teachers & integration team

Warm-up questions/Context.
- Before we start, could you please tell me:
- How long have you been here at the school? When did you arrive at the school?
- What is your role at the school? Have you always had the same role at this school?
- [Special needs professional]: Can you explain to me a little how the work is done with special needs students at this school and your work specifically? (classes you support, amount of children you attend, the kind of special needs, work with teachers)

Role of SIMCE in the school
- How important is SIMCE for this school? In what sense?
- Last year, when the school received the results, how was it? What happened at the school? What was the feeling, the mood of the school concerning this? What kind of decisions or measures did the school take after finding out the scores? And, in your case, did you do anything special?

Personal approach to SIMCE
- What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you hear the word SIMCE? What are your feelings about the test?

SIMCE influence in the work with students
- Last year, were you working with students that took the SIMCE test?
- How was the experience of working with students measured by SIMCE? Did you feel the need to work differently that year because of the SIMCE test?
- As a teacher/professional of the special needs team, does SIMCE impact your work?

School goals/ social justice meaning
- What are the main goals or the heart of the project of this school?
- What differentiates this school from other schools?
- In few words, what does social justice mean to you? Do you think this school is contributing to social justice? In what ways? Do you think SIMCE is contributing or limiting this in any respect?

Diversity
- Can you describe the students in your classes/the classes you work with. Are they diverse? Homogenous? In what respect?
- How does the school and you as a teacher/special needs teacher work with this diversity? What kind of support does the school offer to those students?
- Do you work with students with different needs? All these students have to take SIMCE, do you agree with that? Why? Do you have to change your work with them in any way?
- Student experience: How did you see the students with regard to the SIMCE test? What was their mood? How did you manage this topic with them?
- Immigrant students. For some years, this school has worked with immigrant students. How was this experience? What kind of opportunities or challenges do you see? Does the school give them support? How was the SIMCE experience for them?

Student participation:
- Have you had the opportunity to consider student opinion in some school decisions?

Proposals:
- Nowadays, the SIMCE policy involves nine tests per year in four grades covering four subjects Do you think these elements should be maintained?
- Thinking about this school project, how should a national assessment be respectful of this project and the profile and diversity of students you have?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?
Many thanks for your time.

Interview schedule
Coexistence team

Warm-up questions/Context.
Before we start, could you please tell me:
- How long have you been at the school? When did you arrive at the school?
- What is your role/have you always had the same role at this school?
- Can you explain to me a little about the work of your team at the school? (activities, relationship with students/teachers)

Role of SIMCE in the school
- How important is SIMCE for this school? In what sense?
- Last year, when the school received the SIMCE results, how was it? What happened at the school? What was the feeling, the mood of the school concerning this? What kind of decisions or measures did the school take after finding out the scores? And, in your case, did you do anything special?

Personal approach to SIMCE
- What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you hear the word SIMCE? What are your feelings about the test?

School goals/ social justice meaning
- What are the main goals or the heart of the project of this school?
- What differentiates this school from other schools?
- In few words, what does social justice mean to you? Do you think this school is contributing to social justice? In what ways? Do you think SIMCE is contributing to or limiting this in any respect?

Diversity
- Can you describe the students at this school? Are they diverse? Homogenous? In what sense?
- How does the school/your team work with this diversity? What kind of support does the school offer to those students?

School policies:
Let's talk a little bit about school policies.
- How is the admission process at the school?
- What is the policy of student repetition in this school? Why did you decide this?
- Expulsion: In what cases do you suggest students should leave this school?
- Student participation: Have you had the opportunity to consider students' opinions in some school decisions?

Proposals:
- Nowadays the SIMCE policy involves nine tests per year in four grades covering four subjects. Do you think these elements should be maintained?
- Thinking about this school project, how should national assessment be respectful of this project and the profile and diversity of students you have?

Is there anything else that you would like to add? - Many thanks for your time.

Interview Schedule
Parents/Guardians

Warm-up questions: If you could tell me:
- What is the name of your child?
- Have long has your son/daughter been at this school?
- Do you have any other children at this school?

SIMCE: School activities related to SIMCE:
- Do you remember when your child/the class of your child took the SIMCE test?
- Did someone from the school staff talk to you about this test? What did they say?
- Do you remember any activities that the school organised in relation to SIMCE? (test preparation, a workshop for SIMCE, etc).
- Do you think the SIMCE test is important at this school? Did the teachers and leadership care about the test? Do you agree with that?
- Did you have any idea about the SIMCE score of the school? Is that important to you?
- Did the school share the result with you?

Student experience:
- Do you remember if your child said anything about the test?
- How did your son/daughter feel about the test? Why do you think he/she feels like that?
- Do you think this kind of test is beneficial for your son/daughter? Why? What kind of tests do you think are useful for your son/daughter?
- Do you think there are any problems because of the test?

Social justice: Let's talk a little bit more about the school.
- When you have a concern, how does the school help?
- If someone has academic difficulties, such as bad marks or does not have a good performance, do the teachers help those students? How?
- What happens if a student consistently has bad marks and finally repeats a class?
- Do you think there are unfair practices at the school? Is there anything that causes you to say: "This is not fair"?
- Diversity: This school has children from different countries. How are are the relationships with students and families from different countries?

Parent experience - school role
- What do you think the main values of this school are? Are you happy with them? Would you like to add more values?
- How did you feel when your child entered the school? Did you feel integrated into the school? How can the school improve that process?
- When you put your child into this school, what did you expect of the school? Do you think the school was successful with that?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?
Many thanks for your time.

Schedule
Student focus group

Warm-up questions
- When did you arrive at this school?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters at this school?

General questions about the school
- What do you like most about this school? What do you not like?
- If you could choose to change from this school or leave, what would you choose? Why?
- Compared with other schools, what do you think of this school?

Experiences about SIMCE
- What do you remember about the SIMCE test?
- What do you remember about the day of the test? Was that day special compared with other days? Did your teachers or leadership team tell you anything particular that day?
- Some of your classmates did not come to school that school? Why?
- Do you like the test? Why?
- What do you think the test is for?
- Who needs to know the results and why?

School actions regarding SIMCE
- Do you think your teachers were concerned about the SIMCE test? What did your teachers say about SIMCE?
- What kind of activities does the school do in relation to SIMCE? (e.g., workshops to prepare for SIMCE, SIMCE mock exams). Did you like those activities?
- Are your classroom assessments similar to or different from the SIMCE test? (e.g., in terms of the format, alternative questions).

General opinion about SIMCE and assessment
- Do you think the SIMCE test is useful for you as a student? Why?
- Do you think these tests are useful for your teachers or the school?
- In general, what kind of test do you prefer? With what kind of assessment do you feel more comfortable? Why?
- When do you think a test is not fair?

Social Justice/ Diversity
- Do you think it is important to come to school and study? Why?
- What do you expect the school to do for you? Is the school working to achieve that?
- If someone has academic difficulties, such as bad marks or does not have good performance, do the teachers help those students? How?
- What do you do when you are struggling academically (or personally)?
- In the school are <u>some students suffering discrimination</u>? What does the school do about that?
- In this school there are people with different nationalities and with different abilities and needs, do you think there are good relationships between students? Does the school do anything to promote these relationships?
- Is anything in the school about which you would say: "this is not fair"?

Is there anything else that you would like to add? /Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts and experiences.

[translated from spanish]

5.6.1 Sun school[62]

WORKSHOP

Roles:
- Maria: Opening
- Activity times: Tamara.
- Moderators per group: Paco (Group 1: "Fair School"), teacher Pablo (Group 2: "Fair assessment"), Teacher. Samuel (Group 3: "Inclusive School"). The moderator should present the questions to the group, stimulate discussion, encourage everyone to speak. In other words, facilitate the discussion.
- Recorders: Soledad, Maria, Amanda (one per group).
- Rest of the inclusion team: joins the groups.
- Full group, information sharing: Tamara leads
- Close: Maria leads

PROGRAMA

I.   **Introduction of activity: 5-10 mins**
   - Maria and Tamara
   - Hand out consent

II.   **Formation of groups. Tamara, 5 mins**
   - Tamara numbers individuals from 1 to 3.
   - Individuals go to station 1, 2, or 3 depending on number assigned
   - Station 1: "Fair School" (Paco); Station 2: "Fair Assessment" (Pablo), Station 3: "Inclusive School" (Samuel).

III.   **Instructions: Tamara, 5 mins**
   - o Groups rotate
   - o In each station a group of questions is discussed
   - o Each group: moderator, recorded, definition of representative
   - o 1 shared initial question

IV.   **Discussion of questions: 35 mins (14.30 – 15.05)**
   - o **Shared initial question:** What do we understand by a fair school? 2 mins
   - 1st round of discussion: 10 mins / Change of station
   - 2nd round of discussion: 10 mins / Change of station
   - 3rd round of discussion: 10 mins

V.   **Plenary: 25 mins (15.05 – 15.30)**
   Each representative: choose 1 or 2 core ideas to share
   Other people who wish to speak are given the floor.

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[62] Real names were change to protect the identity of the participants

VI.   Close:
- **Tamara: gives thanks for participation**
- **Maria: (suggestion):** gives thanks for participation of inclusion team, announces other activities that are being organised by the inclusion team, announces that work is being done on analysing the surveys and the results will soon be made known.

Annex 1: Questions by station :
Shared question (in all stations): What do we understand by a "Fair School"?

- **Station 1 (Paco): "Fair school"**
1. In what sense is this school a "*Fair School*"?
- At the general school level
- At the level of work in the classroom (in subjects, workshops, etc.)
2. What can be done to create a "fairer school"?

- **Station 2 (pablo): "Fair Assessment"**
- How should "Fair Assessment" be?
- How close is SIMCE to this idea of "*Fair Assessment*"?
- How closely do the assessments conducted at the school come to their definition of *"Fair Assessment"?*

- **Station 3 (Samuel): "Inclusive School"**
To what extent we are an inclusive school?
- What progress has been made towards becoming an inclusive school (at the general school level/at the level of classroom work)?
- What aspects are more/less pending or developed to be an inclusive school (at the general school level/at the level of classroom work)?

Annex 2: Before and after the meeting
Before the activity: 13.40
- Meeting to "review" activity: Tamara + inclusion team members (those who can). Review of roles during the activity, answer questions.
- Take large tables out of meeting room.
- Set up table with coffee and snacks. Tamara buys things. Kettle + thermos: Soledad
- Set up chairs in meeting room in crescent shape. 3 chairs with seasonal signs (Tamara takes signs).
After the activity:
- Mini assessment meeting with those who are able from the inclusion team + Tamara. Discussion of feelings about the activity.

WORKSHOP

Introduction: a general description of the research is given, explaining the purpose and nature of the activity. It is stated that the activity is voluntary and that the confidentiality of the information and anonymity of the participants will be protected. The consent form for the activity is handed out. It is stated that at the side of the room there is coffee, tea and food that can be taken during the activity.

Formation of groups: I ask them to form three groups at different work tables; one group formed by the management and the other two groups with teachers and professionals from other teams (coexistence team, integration team, etc.).

Provision of material: flipcharts, markers, post-its, Sellotape, pencils, glue, and a sheet with questions to be answered by each group are handed out.

Work in each group: Each group discusses the questions given to them and writes down the most important ideas on the flipcharts. A secretary is defined. I walk around from group to group listening, answering and asking questions to clarify the discussion.

Sharing of information: Each group presents the main ideas discussed. I write down the ideas on a flipchart in front of the room on the blackboard.

Close: Thanks and close of the activity

Annex:
Questions given to each group:

1. **How would you define "a fair school"?**
   - At the general level of the school
   - At the level of classroom work (in subjects or workshops, etc.)
   - In what sense is this a fair school? What could be done to make it a "fairer school"?

2. **What do you consider to be a "fair assessment"?**
   - What principles should it follow or what characteristics should it have?
   - How close is SIMCE to this idea of fair assessment?
   - How close are the assessments conducted at the school to your definition of "fair assessment"?

Appendix 6. School staff survey

(Translated from Spanish)

SURVEY

Dear leadership team, teachers, and members of the professional and technical teams at the school,

You are invited to answer this questionnaire as part of the research *"SIMCE and social justice: experiences and challenges from the perspective of educational communities"*. This study is conducted in the context of doctoral research at the Institute of Education, University College London.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out your opinion of the SIMCE test and your view of its impact at the school. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous. No one at the school will see your responses, only the person responsible for the research and their supervisors at University College London.

For more information, please read the information sheet about the research that was delivered to you in the envelope along with the questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮@ucl.ac.uk, or at [phone number].

After completing the questionnaire, please return it to me or to the school in the envelope provided.

Many thanks for your collaboration.

Tamara Rozas
Person responsible for the research

GENERAL DATA

1. **Your main role at the school is to be:**
    a. A member of the leadership team
    b. A classroom teacher (go to question 2)
    c. A teaching assistant (go to question 2)
    d. A member of the special needs team
    e. A member of the psychosocial team
    f. Other _____

2. Teachers and teaching assistants: Please indicate the level/s at which you work at this school

    _____

3. Teachers: Please indicate the subject/s in which you teach at this school
    _____

4. **Did you work with any classes assessed by SIMCE during the last year?** (either teaching or doing other tasks)
    a. Yes
    b. No

I.   CONTRIBUTION OF SIMCE

What is your opinion about these statements? *Mark your answer with one X for each question in the table*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
1. SIMCE provides useful information to improve teaching-learning processes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. SIMCE encourages the school to achieve academic learning with all the students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. SIMCE contributes to achieving the educational project of this school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. SIMCE makes us neglect our school's priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. SIMCE encourages work with diverse students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. SIMCE contributes to improving the work we do with our students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

II.   EFFECTS OF SIMCE

In your view, what are the main effects of SIMCE at the school? Please choose the three effects that you consider most important and write them below. Indicate for each effect whether you consider it to be positive or negative.

1.   _____   Positive __   Negative__

2.   _____   Positive __   Negative__

3.   _____   Positive __   Negative__

III.   ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES LINKED TO SIMCE

The following is a series of activities/actions that the schools may do because of SIMCE. Firstly, for each activity/action, mark with an X indicating whether or not this is done at your school. Secondly, indicate your degree of agreement with each of these actions (even for the actions not done by the school).

	Does this school do these actions/activities because of SIMCE?			Do you agree with those actions?		
	Yes	No	I don't know	Agree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree
1. Allocating more hours to the subjects assessed by SIMCE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Workshops to reinforce the contents assessed by SIMCE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Tests to prepare for SIMCE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Adapting school assessments to make them similar to SIMCE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Organising students in different courses based on their performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Activities to familiarise students with the SIMCE test	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Reallocating teachers in order to obtain better SIMCE results	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Hiring professionals/support staff to support work on the courses assessed by SIMCE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

IV. YOUR OVERALL VIEW OF SIMCE

1. A series of opposing statements referring to SIMCE are presented below. Mark the position with which you feel most identified with an X, considering a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" is the extreme of one opinion and "5" is the opinion at the other extreme.

SIMCE…

1	2	3	4	5
Empoverishes the quality of education				Improves the quality of education

1	2	3	4	5
Benefits school work				Undermines school work

1	2	3	4	5
Encourages work with the full diversity of students				Discourages work with the full diversity of students

2. In your opinion, SIMCE should:

    a)   Be kept like this
    b)   Be improved
    c)   Be removed
    d)   I don't know

If you would like to make any other comments about your opinion/experience about SIMCE, please note them in the following box.

Many thanks for your participation

Appendix 7. Information Sheets and Consent Forms

(Translated from Spanish)

7.1 Information sheet for school staff

SIMCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:
EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE VOICE OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Information for School Staff

My name is **Tamara Rozas**. This letter is to invite you to participate in the research study *"The Chilean system for measuring the quality of education - SIMCE - and social justice: Experiences and challenges from the voice of educational communities".* This research is part of my dissertation as a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Education, University College London. This study is supported by the Chilean government through its graduate scholarship programme 'Becas Chile'. This information sheet is intended to explain the research, but please don't hesitate to ask me if there is anything else you wish to know.

Why is this research being conducted?

Some current educational policies in Chile promote increased diversity in schools and inclusive school projects and, at the same time, schools exist in a period of competition between schools and high academic pressure, particularly in relation to SIMCE. As researchers, we know little about the experiences of school communities regarding SIMCE and social justice. Researching this could help to identify challenges facing school communities and contribute to improving their experiences and educational policies related to assessment and inclusion. For that reason, this research aims to explore the experience and challenges regarding the national SIMCE test, and its relationship with the conceptions of social justice from the perspective of different school community members (school staff, students, parents) in a national context of high pressure for academic results.

Why are you being invited to take part?

I have decided to invite your educational institution to take part in my research study because of its strong social commitment and its work with a diverse student population (e.g., students from different countries, ethnic backgrounds, with different educational needs). Other public and subsidised schools with similar characteristics in the Metropolitan Region will also be participating. I am also inviting you to take part in the study because, due to your role at the school, you have in-depth knowledge about the children studying here and relevant experience about the different challenges faced by the school. Therefore, your perceptions about the challenges and opportunities associated with the SIMCE test in the context of this school are particularly important to this study.

In which activities are you and the school invited to take part?

I will invite different members of the school community (leadership team, teachers, professionals on the school staff, parents, students) to take part in some of these activities: interviews, focus groups, observations, questionnaires. With this letter, I invite you to take part in an interview conducted in person at the school or some other place which you might prefer, at a time suitable for you. It is expected to take 45 minutes. The questions which I would like to ask you include: How important is the SIMCE test for this school? To what extent is SIMCE an opportunity or limitation for initiatives oriented towards social justice?

- **Will your answers be confidential?**

All of the information that you and the other participants in the research provide will be confidential and used only for this study. I plan to make audio recordings of the interviews, but only for the

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purposes of analysis. The information will not be disclosed to other members of the school; only I and the university staff supervising my research will have access to the original data. Any information that might identify you—such as your name, the school, and the specific location—will be anonymised using pseudonyms when communicating the findings of this study.

- **Can I stop participating in the study?**

Yes, you and the other participants are entitled to stop your participation at any time without giving a reason, and you have the right to skip any question that you do not wish to answer.

- **What will happen to the results of the research?**

All of the material produced in the research will be stored in password-secured computers to protect the participants' confidentiality. The results of the research will be disseminated in academic spaces (e.g., scientific reviews and conferences) where your details will be anonymised using pseudonyms. I also plan to share the general findings with the leadership team because it will help to identify challenges, opportunities, and concerns about SIMCE from the perspective of different members of the school communities and which may be useful for the analysis and decisions taken as school community regarding how to address educational policies related to assessment and inclusion.

I also plan to share the general findings of the final research with the school staff because it will help to identify challenges, opportunities, and concerns about SIMCE from the perspective of different members of the school communities and which may be useful for your analysis and decisions as school communities in relation to this national policy considering the specific context of the school.

- **Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part in the study. If you choose not to take part, there will be no negative consequences for you or the school. I hope that if you do choose to be involved, you will find it a valuable experience.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research is being carried out, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Mary Richardson at XXXXX@ucl.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form.

*This project has been approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee

Tamara Rozas
XXXXX@ucl.ac.uk
[phone number]

SIMCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:
EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE VOICE OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Information for Parents/Guardians

My name is Tamara Rozas. This letter is to invite you to participate in the research study *"The Chilean system for measuring the quality of education - SIMCE - and social justice: Experiences and challenges from the voice of educational communities"*, and to ask for your consent for you and your son/daughter to participate. This research is part of my dissertation as a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Education, University College London. This study is supported by the Chilean government through its graduate scholarship programme 'Becas Chile'.

I hope to explore the experiences and challenges regarding the national SIMCE test, and its relationship with the conceptions of social justice from the perspective of different school community members. For instance, to find out the opinions of the school staff, parents, and students about the benefits of this test for children and how fair they feel it is to apply it to all students.

This information sheet is intended to explain the research, but please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you wish to know.

- **In relation to your son/daughter**

Why is your son/daughter being invited to take part?

Because as a student he/she will be able to provide a particular point of view of SIMCE, emphasising thoughts and situations related to SIMCE that adults might not perceive in the same way. His/her view as a student may be important to understand the challenges that school communities face with respect to this test.

In which activities will your son/daughter be involved if he/she takes part?

He/she will participate in a group interview with other classmates. I will ask them what they think about the SIMCE test and the activities that the school carried out in relation to the test. I will also ask them about their own conceptions of social justice. The interview will last 45 minutes and will be conducted during class time at the school. There will not be any academic or personal penalties/rewards for their answers in the interview. I will only include your son/daughter in the interview if both you and your son/daughter give your consent.

- **In relation to you as a parent/guardian**

Why do I need your participation as a parent/guardian?

Because of your in-depth knowledge about your son/daughter and your role as a parent, may have a particular opinion that is different from the other members of the school community. For instance, I will ask about your opinion of the benefits/consequences of this kind of test that you can see in your son/daughter.

In what activities will you be involved if you take part?

1) **A questionnaire:** The questions will be about your opinion of the SIMCE test and your view of your child's school. It will take you around 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

2) **An interview:** An interview with parents of other children in the same class. The idea is to have a conversation about your opinion of SIMCE, your impressions of your son/daughter's

experience in relation to the test, and your view of the school. The interview will last one hour. It will be conducted at the school facilities at a time suitable for you.

- **Will our answers be confidential?**

All the information you and your son/daughter provide will be confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. I will record the interview but only for the purpose of the analysis. The information will not be disclosed to other members of the school; only I and the university staff supervising my research will access the original data. Any information that might identify you or your child—such as your name, the school, and the specific location—will be anonymised using pseudonyms when communicating the findings of this study.

- **Can I stop participating in the study?**

Yes, you are entitled to stop your participation at any time without giving a reason and you have the right to skip any question if you do not wish to answer.

- **What will happen to the results of the research?**

All of the material produced in the research will be stored in password-secured computers to protect the participants' confidentiality. The results of the research will be disseminated in academic spaces (e.g., scientific reviews and conferences) where your details will be anonymised using pseudonyms. I also plan to share the general findings of the final research with the school staff because this information could be useful to improve the experiences of students in relation to this kind of test.

- **Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part in the study. If you choose not to take part, there will be no negative consequences for you or the school. I hope that if you do choose to be involved you will find it a valuable experience.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research is being carried out, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Mary Richardson at XXXXX@ucl.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form.

<div align="center">

Tamara Rozas
XXXXX@ucl.ac.uk
[phone number]

</div>

(Translated from Spanish)

SIMCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:

EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE VOICE OFEDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Consent for school staff interviews

If you are happy to participate in this study, please complete this consent form and return it to Tamara Rozas.

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet about the research	☐	☐
I agree to be interviewed	☐	☐
I am happy for my interview to be audio recorded	☐	☐
I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations they will be anonymised and will not be attributed to me	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, and that if I choose to do this, any data I have contributed will not be used	☐	☐
I understand that I can contact Tamara Rozas at any time	☐	☐
I understand that the results will be shared with University College London – Institute of Education and in research publications and/or presentations, always ensuring the confidentiality of the information	☐	☐

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Tamara Rozas
█████@ucl.ac.uk
[phone number]

7.4 Consent form for school staff workshops

(Translated from Spanish)

SIMCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:

EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE VOICE OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Consent workshop

If you are happy to participate in this study, please complete this consent form and return it to Tamara Rozas.

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet about the research	☐	☐
I agree to participate in the workshop	☐	☐
I am happy to be audio recorded during the workshop	☐	☐
I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations they will be anonymised and will not be attributed to me	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, and that if I choose to do this, any data I have contributed will not be used	☐	☐
I understand that I can contact Tamara Rozas at any time	☐	☐
I understand that the results will be shared with University College London – Institute of Education and in research publications and/or presentations, always ensuring the confidentiality of the information	☐	☐

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Tamara Rozas
█████@ucl.ac.uk
[phone number]

SIMCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:

EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE VOICE OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Consent observations

If you are happy to participate in this study, please complete this consent form and return it to Tamara Rozas.

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet about the research	☐	☐
I agree to participate in the observation	☐	☐
I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations they will be anonymised and will not attributed to me	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, and that if I choose to do this, any data I have contributed will not be used	☐	☐
I understand that I can contact Tamara Rozas at any time	☐	☐
I understand that the results will be shared with University College London – Institute of Education and in research publications and/or presentations, always ensuring the confidentiality of the information	☐	☐

Name _____

Signature _____   Date _____

Tamara Rozas
███████s@ucl.ac.uk
[phone number]

YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE SIMCE TEST

Hi, my name is Tamara Rozas and I am studying at university. I am doing research about what teachers, parents, and students think about the SIMCE test.

I am inviting you to participate in an interview with you and other classmates in a group conversation. It will take no more than 45 minutes. For example, we will talk about whether you like the SIMCE test and what kind of tests you would prefer.

You can stop participating or not answer a question at any time and it will be fine.

It is important for you to know that:

Your parent/s have been informed about this research and are happy for you to be involved.

The meeting will be recorded

Your name will be removed from anything you say after we talk
(but I cannot keep secrets that might harm you or others)

You can ask me more about the project before or after the interview, and also ask your teacher.

I would really like you to take part in my study, but you do not have to if you do not want to. You are free to decide.

If you are happy to participate, please write your name here:

_____

If you have any questions, just ask me!

Appendix 8. Letter for schools

[Translated from Spanish]

8.1 Letter of invitation to participate in the research

Santiago, January 2017

Dear Headteacher [name],

I am writing to you in order to invite your school to participate in a research study entitled: *"SIMCE and social justice: experiences and challenges from the voice of educational communities".* This study is part of the research for my doctoral dissertation, which is being conducted at the Institute of Education, University College London (IOE-UCL), in the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment under the supervision of Professor Dr. Mary Richardson.

The purpose of this research is to learn about the experience of school communities that have opted for a project committed to social reality with a strong focus on working with socioeconomically vulnerable students. Specifically, it is of interest to address the experiences, challenges, and tensions of educational communities with a high social commitment regarding the SIMCE test in a national context of high pressure to achieve academic results.

The research consists of a qualitative study, which includes interviews with different members of the educational community, focus groups, qualitative observations, a questionnaire, as well as interviews with local authorities. The information collected will be confidential, safeguarding the anonymity of the participants, and it will not be used for any other purpose outside the scope of this research.

In this context, I would like to ask you whether it would be possible to meet in order to provide you with more details of the study and discuss the possibility of your school participating in this research.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Many thanks in advance,
Yours sincerely,

Tamara Rozas Assael
XXXXX@ucl.ac.uk

Santiago, July, 2018

[name of headteacher]
[name of school],

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms. [name]

I am writing to you to thank you for the participation of your school in the research study *"SIMCE and social justice: experiences and challenges from the voice of educational communities"* carried out in the first semester of this year. This study is part of the research for my doctoral dissertation, which is being conducted at the Institute of Education, University College London (IOE-UCL), in the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment under the supervision of Professor Dr. Mary Richardson.

The purpose of this research is to learn about the experience of school communities in adverse socioeconomic settings that have opted for educational projects that are intended to offer inclusive education to serve their community. Specifically, it is of interest to address the experiences, challenges, and tensions of educational communities regarding the SIMCE test in a national context of high pressure to achieve academic results. In this context, a group of schools in the Metropolitan Region were invited to participate in the study.

The research at the school consisted of a study with a qualitative approach, which included interviews with different members of the educational community, focus groups, the application of questionnaires, and qualitative observation of activities carried out at the school. The information collected will be treated confidentially and the anonymity of the participants will be protected.

I would like to thank the management team for allowing me to conduct the research at the school and for facilitating the spaces and channels of communication to carry out the activities required in the study. I would also like to thank the entire educational community, and particularly the teaching staff, for their welcoming attitude, collaboration and commitment to the research. I hope that the participation in the study has been pleasant for the school team and that the results can help generate knowledge that contributes to the development of more inclusive schools in pursuit of a fairer society.

Yours sincerely,

Tamara Rozas Assael
XXXXX@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 9. Transcription protocol and letter commitment

(Translated from Spanish)

9.1 Transcription protocol

TRANSCRIPTION PROTOCOL

General principles:
- Absolute confidentiality of data
- Keep audios and transcripts in a safe place [details in a letter of commitment].
- Verbatim transcription

General format:
- Font Calibri 11
- Single space
- Tamara's questions and comments in bold
- Normal margin
- Number pages

General instructions:

- **Verbatim transcription:** The audio recordings must be transcribed verbatim, as they were said. No interpretation or summary should be made of what was said.

- **Transcribe everything, including informal conversation:** All parts of the recordings should be transcribed, even those that include informal conversations, omitting the transcription of comments about the personal life of the interviewer/interviewee that are not related in any way to the school or the interviewee's role at the school. If you have any doubts as to whether a segment should be transcribed or not, please ask.

- **Punctuation:** use punctuation in such a way that it is as close as possible to what the person is saying, but ensuring that what is being communicated is understood.

- **Mark times**: Indicate the times in the audio recording every 3 minutes.

- **Dates are key:** Dates are of key importance, so pay special attention when they are mentioned. If you have doubts about the dates, please mention them.

Symbols to use

Symbol	Meaning	Explanation
T:	Tamara speaking	Tamara is the interviewer.
J: (if the name is Juan)	Interviewee speaking. Use the initial of the interviewee. If their name is not known, use "I" (for interviewee)	
- - -	Interviewees speaking. In the case of more than 2 interviewees use dashes.	Indicate the intervention of each interviewee with a dash (-). It is not necessary to differentiate who is speaking at each moment with different initials (but differentiate Tamara's intervention with a "T")
D: UTP	In the case of 2 easily identifiable interviewees (female and male), differentiate their intervention with different initials. D=director, UTP=head of technical pedagogical unit	In the case of 2 easily identifiable interviewees (male and female) use the initials of their positions. If their positions are not known, use their names, if their names are not known either, use E1 and E2
…	Short pause (3-5 secs)	
[long pause t1-t2] E.g., [long pause 35:05 - 35:15]	Long pause of more than 5 seconds	Long pause of the interviewee or interviewer. If it is longer than 1 minute, use the symbology in this table
1 word [incomprehensible t]: E.g., [incomprehensible 35:05] More than one word [incomprehensible t1-t2]	Cannot be understood	What has been said cannot be understood at all When it is something longer than one word, indicate the start and end time of what is not understood
[word?] E.g., [SEP law?]	Doubt in transcription	Put the word you can identify in square parenthesis and use question marks
#personal name# E.g., she, #Camila# told me that E.g., The school #Montegrande#	Names of individuals or places	Information to be anonymised in the future: names of places or persons to be replaced with pseudonyms
[event that occurs during the interview] E.g., [someone enters] [the bell rings] [someone knocks on the door]	Event that occurs during the interview	Events that interrupt the conversation, or occur during the interview
E.g., [ironic tone] [laughs]	Emotions	Indicate emotions, attitude [ironic tone], [concerned tone]
[other]		Other observation considered necessary by the transcriptionist

List of key words:

Note: Below is a list of acronyms that you are likely to hear during the interviews. If the person uses the full name (even if it is somewhat incorrect), transcribe it as said.

- SEP
- PIE
- SEN
- PEI
- SIMCE
- UTP
- PME

ANNEX: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTION PAGE

Transcription School 1 – Teacher Manuel

Category	To be noted down
School	Escuela 1
Interviewee (first name)	Teacher Manuel
Transcriber	[name of transcriptionist]
Duration of audio recording	1.10 mins
Observations of transcriptionist	Noisy interview space, with multiple people entering and exiting
Location of interview	[Tamara will complete this]
Role, subject and course of interviewee	[Tamara will complete this]

T: Well, we're here with Teacher Manuel. Teacher Manuel [a pseudonym], tell me, at what levels do you work? When do you work here? What kind of work do you do?

J: Well, I've been working here for 5 years, from Year 6 to 9, in mathematics

T: And always doing this job?

J: Yes, although I now also work on the team [¿intercultural?]

T: [someone knocks on the door]. Could you tell me a little bit about that work on the team (…)?

J: Of course, what happens is that with the teacher #Jose# for some years we've been working on the idea of creating an intercultural group among the teachers and in those years (…) [incomprehensible] [horn sound]

T: Could you repeat that last part, teacher?

J: Of course, I was telling you that for some years [someone knocks on the door]. Sorry, I have to go

[no dialogue, 2 mins 05 secs – 2 mins, 50 secs]

T: [teacher returns]. You were telling me about how the intercultural group emerged

J: Of course, what happened is that a few years ago, some of the school's teachers became concerned about trying to revive the Mapuche culture here at the school.

[3 mins, 05 secs]

T: Ah, how interesting (…)

AGREEMENT OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST/RESEARCHER

The following document is intended to create an agreement to safeguard the conditions of confidentiality, material security, and quality during the transcription process.

I, _____, in my role as transcriptionist of audio recording in the research, undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the information I transcribe, which means, for example, not commenting on or disseminating the information in the transcriptions to other people or media of any kind, and not passing on the transcription work to third parties.

I also agree to safeguard the audio recordings and transcripts in the safest possible way, for example, by storing the material on password-protected devices, avoiding leaving the audio recordings and transcripts on public computers, avoiding recording the information on devices (pendrive, hard disk) that are used by other people, avoiding placing the audio recordings and/or transcripts on online platforms where it is possible for other people to access or download the material, and deleting the audio recordings when they have been transcribed.

I also agree to consult/inform Tamara Rozas about any procedure or decision during the transcription process, such as the use of any program to facilitate transcription, or the need to include any additional symbology in the transcription process. Likewise, I agree to contact Tamara Rozas in case of any doubt or difficulty during the transcription process.

I also undertake to make a literal transcription, giving an accurate account of what was said by the participants of the activity being transcribed.

Finally, I agree to work with the highest possible quality, in a serious and professional manner, understanding that the transcription process is of vital importance to the research work being done.

Signature_____
Date_____

I, **Tamara Rozas Assael**, **i**n my capacity as the researcher responsible for the research, agree to support the transcription process in a serious and responsible manner, answering all questions and concerns raised by the person who is doing the transcription work, providing the material in an appropriate manner and giving precise instructions for the transcription process. At the same time, I agree to ensure the confidentiality of the material collected and to deliver it in a secure way to the transcriptionist, providing the utmost conditions of security to protect the material. Finally, I agree to comply with the agreed times, payments, procedures for delivery and reception of the material, and with all the processes agreed upon with the transcriptionist.
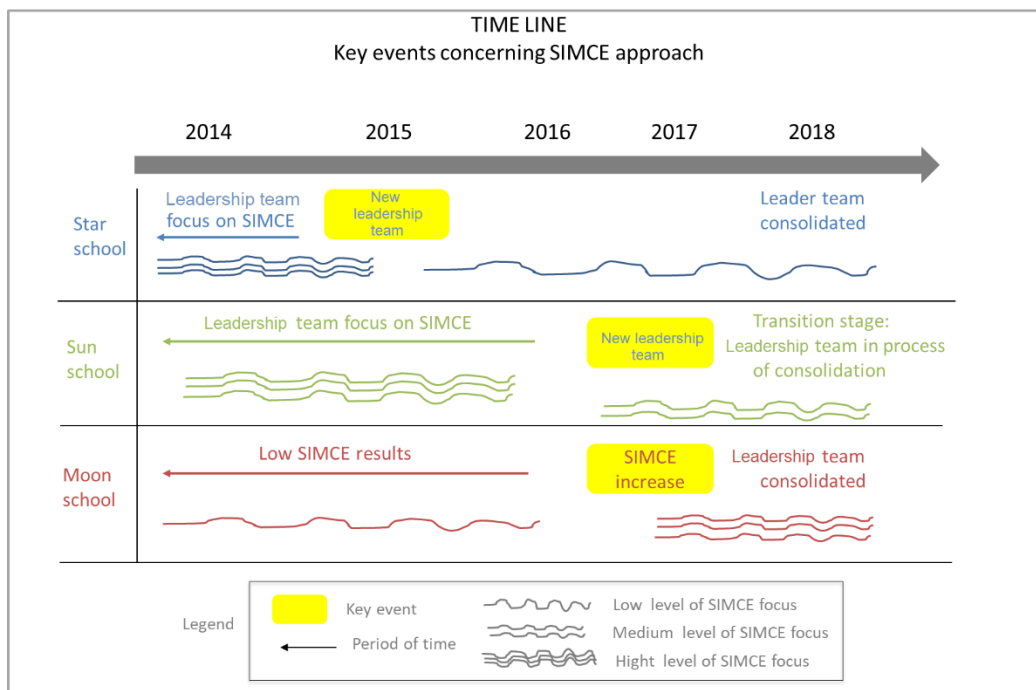
Signature_____
Signature_____

Appendix 10. Display tools

10.1 The Moon school role regarding social justice
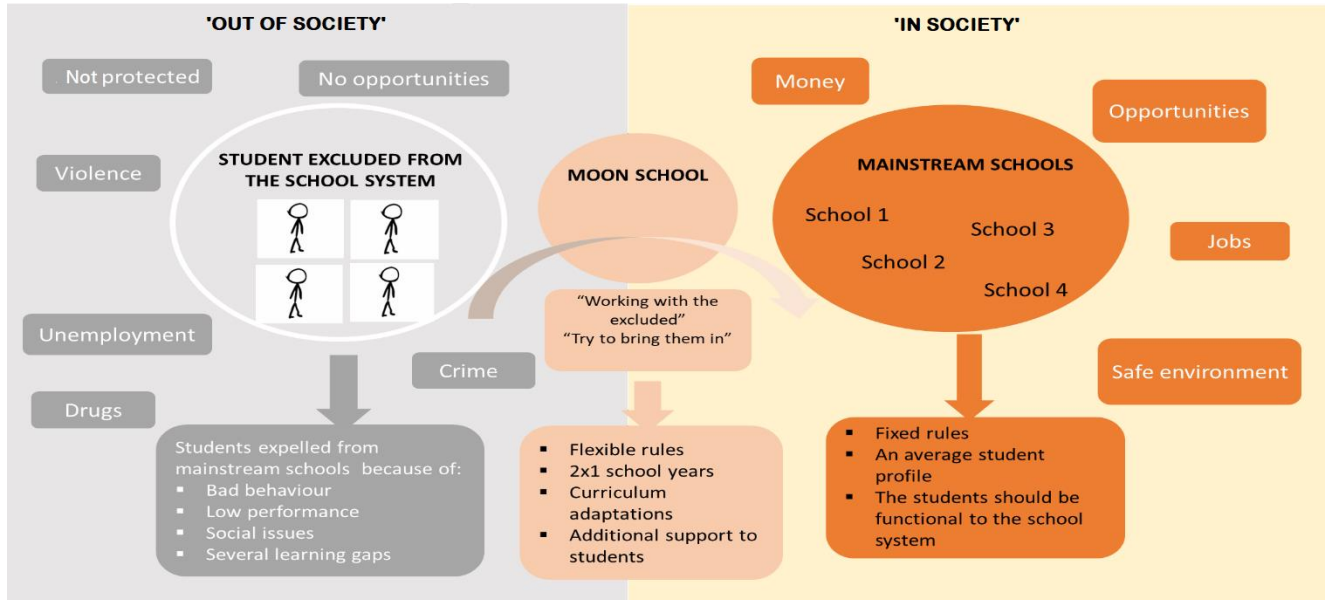
10.2 History of the schools of the research regarding SIMCE and internal events

Appendix 11. Photos of the schools

12.1 Moon school

Picture 1: School surroundings

Picture 2: School yard and external view of the classrooms

Picture 3: Students and school staff in the yard watching a musical band

Picture 1: Students, school staff and parents at the school yard watching students Performance

Picture 2: External view of a classroom. On the door there is a sign indicating Year 1 – in Spanish and Mapudungun (Mapuche indigenous language)

Picture 3: Book stand in the school yard. Behind, flags from different countries in the Americas

Picture 1: Students and teachers in the school yard. Behind, the classrooms.

Picture 2: students from Year 7, teaching students from Year 4 as part of a maths lesson.

Picture 3: students from year 8 with their teacher showing their stand on Italy in an English lesson