Parents’ and Teachers’ Dispositions Towards Social Class
Difference and Mix

A qualitative case study in two socioeconomically diverse Chilean schools

Manuela Ji Mendoza Horvitz

Supervised by:
Prof. Carol Vincent
Dr. Stuart Tannock

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

Department of Education, Practice and Society
Institute of Education, University College London, UK
Declaration

I, Manuela Ji Mendoza Horvitz 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.

Word count (exclusive of references and appendices): 97,201 words

Manuela Ji Mendoza Horvitz

Funding

This thesis was funded by CONICYT - BECAS CHILE (72160369)
Abstract

The educational system in Chile is highly segregated in socioeconomic terms. This means that there is strong socioeconomic and academic heterogeneity across schools and a strong internal homogeneity within each of them. However, the country’s education system is undergoing an unusual process, resulting from the implementation of the 2015 educational reforms. Specifically, the so-called ‘Inclusion Law’ is an attempt to change this pattern through desegregation and the promotion of diverse school populations (school mix) in order to promote equity of opportunities and democratic learning amongst the students. However, no study has hitherto explored either the potential or the limitations for families and teachers of such diversity in Chilean schools. Studies addressing the possible effects of school mix on democratic learning argue that both inclusive and exclusionary dispositions may emerge depending on the form heterogeneity takes, particularly depending on the degree to which practices of mixing take place within a diverse school population. Complementing Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts (e.g. habitus, field, and capitals) with additional theoretical resources discussing disruption of the habitus and reflexivity, I draw on rich interviews with parents and school staff in order to understand their dispositions to social class difference. For this, I conducted a qualitative case study in two Chilean schools that had above-average levels of socioeconomic diversity prior to the implementation of the Inclusion Law, as a way to understand existing processes of school mix/mixing and the potentialities of the law. While both schools have a majority of middle-class students, I outline different discourses about diversity and inclusion across the two sites. The schools are located in different areas of Santiago, the capital of Chile: Rodriguez School (RS) in an established affluent locality and Inti School (IS) in a disadvantaged locality near a gentrified area. Based on the analysis, I argue that social class mix at RS and IS cannot be assumed to be a straightforward phenomenon, but one that entails ambivalent dispositions towards social class differences, suggesting that openness to such differences rests on the assumption that a baseline of sociocultural similarity is necessary. This is visible, with regard to the schools, through the teachers celebrating the existence of those differences and, at the same time, manifesting an assimilationist approach that fosters the inculcation of middle-class ways of behaving amongst working-class students and parents. With regard to the parents, the parent respondents express openness to engaging with difference, whilst at the same time defining boundaries to doing so. Also, such openness entails both collective and private principles. In the conclusions, I discuss the potentialities of these ambivalent dispositions towards social class difference for challenging or, on the other hand, reproducing social class segregation in Chile.
Impact statement

In terms of its applied impact, this thesis is expected to be beneficial for the development of local and national educational policy in Chile. For this, I provide evidence on two schools that had exceptional levels of socioeconomic diversity prior to the implementation of the Inclusion Law, an educational reform that attempts to generate significant changes by raising the levels of inclusion and diversity in establishments receiving public funding. Findings in my case study schools suggest that school mix and policies aimed at promoting it are necessary, since – in the context of Chile's highly segregated society - such socially heterogeneous educational spaces offer remarkable possibilities for encountering a diversity of people and developing an awareness of how they live. Ultimately, such awareness may contribute to problematising social inequalities and to developing egalitarian dispositions amongst members of the school community (i.e. attitudes based on the commitment to equality). Such problematisation might then open up the possibilities to eventually undertake actions oriented towards redistribution (e.g., political participation to push for decent salaries for all). However, my findings also warn of the importance of avoiding a simplistic appreciation of school mix, given that school mix alone is insufficient to guarantee mutual recognition amongst families from different backgrounds (i.e., a scenario in which both socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged parents/children can learn from each other). Thus, I argue that reforms aimed at stimulating socioeconomic diversity in schools, such as the Inclusion Law—which is still in a trial process—should also safeguard certain minimum conditions for the schools to promote mixing (i.e., actual interactions) and conviviality, as I discuss in the final chapter.

In terms of its academic impact, my thesis contributes to the field of sociology of education by shedding light on the teachers’ and parents’ dispositions to social class differences and the ways in which these relate to their expectations for the children. More broadly, my study provides data and analytical distinctions for a research agenda on the cultural aspects of the social and the subjective experience of social class (Bottero, 2004; Espinoza & Barozet, 2009; Mendez & Gayo, 2018; Sayer, 2005). In particular, by focusing on the school context, I have added to the macro sociological discussion on the reproduction of the social structure and possibilities for change through addressing micro-processes (i.e., the dynamics within a community and the individuals’ subjectivity) shaping social distance and proximity in socioeconomically diverse schools. Conceptually, I add to the literature discussing Pierre Bourdieu’s arguments by shedding light on the reflexive aspects of the habitus, an area overlooked in the author’s writings (e.g., Bottero, 2009; Decoteau, 2016; Ingram & Abrahams, 2018; Reay, 2015). For this, I propose the concept of ‘versatile habitus’ (i.e., a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions) and expand the understanding of the
individuals’ ethical dispositions, particularly, their egalitarian dispositions towards social class difference and mixing (i.e., values and attitudes based on the commitment to equality of respect across human beings).
Acknowledgements

First of all, I thank the participants of my study, specially the headteachers, who trusted me and kindly opened the doors of their schools. Also, the teachers and deputy headteachers who allowed themselves to make a break in their routines, despite their heavy workloads. Thank you to the parents who shared their most intimate experiences, views and concerns with this stranger. This research would have not been possible without you.

My research would have not been possible without the support of my supervisors and mentors either. I would like to specially thank Professor Carol Vincent for her constant dedication, illuminating advice, and rigorous guidance throughout these years. Thank you, Carol, for believing in my work and for always encouraging me to continue in this research journey, particularly when it was most uphill. My gratitude also goes to Doctor Stuart Tannock, whose very sharp and committed to social justice feedback was crucial to keep my thesis grounded and anchored to concerns in the Chilean context. I would like to also thank Doctor Alejandro Carrasco and Doctor Maria Teresa Rojas for our amusing and enriching research experiences and conversations. These were crucial to shape my interest for conducting this thesis and for keeping it connected to the academic discussions taking place in Chile. Thank you also to Doctor Annette Braun for her support and intellectual inspiration while teaching in her module, as well as to Doctor Spela Godec for reading the first draft of this thesis and giving me a detailed and really valuable feedback.

I am particularly grateful to my friends from Chile for continuing our bond despite the distance and to my new friends in London for making me feel at home and showing me that we can build bridges across difference. Thanks, my friends, for your love, generosity, and all our joyful moments under a usually grey sky. Special thanks go to Armando, Coca, Dani, Luis, and Pauli for being my London family; Felipe, for his support in the beginnings of this endeavour; Gabriel, for his generous help with statistics; Luis, for his caring assistance to improve my English; and Sara, my Bourdieusian intellectual partner.

Finally, I need to say thank you to my most important network of support: my family. To my grandparents, for their inspiring legacy and because I am here because of them. To my parents, Ximena and Marcelo, for building a warm nest of unconditional love that I bring with me wherever I go. To my elder sister, Manuela, for her friendship and gentle guidance throughout this path. To my sister Vicenta and my brother Benjamin, for always being emotionally close and cheering me up. To Hector, my companion, for his everyday complicity and care, both in the happy and difficult moments of this adventure. Thank you all. I love you!
Para mi Ita y mi abuelo Gustavo
CONTENTS

Declaration ............................................................................................................. 3
Abstract ................................................................................................................... 5
Impact statement ................................................................................................... 7
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................. 9

PART I: RATIONALE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH DESIGN ......................... 22

Chapter I. Social context of the study .................................................................. 23
  1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 23
  2. Neoliberalism and segregation in Chile .............................................................. 23
  3. Understanding stratification and social class ...................................................... 28
  4. Pro-inclusion public policy efforts .................................................................... 38
  5. Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 45

Chapter II. Literature review ............................................................................... 47
  1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 47
  2. From mixed settings to mixing practices .......................................................... 47
  3. Living school mix: family negotiations of social differences ............................ 52
     3.1. The prevalence of homophily .................................................................... 52
     3.2. Ambivalent mixophilous attitudes ............................................................ 54
     3.3. Friendship in socially diverse settings: 'Together but not scrambled'.......... 56
  4. Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 61

Chapter III. Theoretical resources: A Bourdieusian Approach to Social Class and the
             Dispositions Towards Social Class Difference ............................................. 63
  1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 63
  2. Main concepts .................................................................................................. 63
  3. Exploring reflexivity in the habitus .................................................................... 71
  4. Operationalisation of the concepts .................................................................. 77
  5. Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 81

Chapter IV. Methodological approach .................................................................. 83
  1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 83
  2. A qualitative case study ................................................................................. 83
  3. Sample of schools ............................................................................................ 86
  4. Research tools and participants ....................................................................... 89
  5. Ethical framework and positionality ............................................................... 104
  6. Data analysis ................................................................................................... 107
  7. Conclusions ..................................................................................................... 111

PART II: ANALYSIS ............................................................................................... 113

Introduction .......................................................................................................... 114

Chapter V. The schools’ celebration of social class differences ............................ 115
  1. Introduction ...................................................................................................... 115
  2. Two different institutional habituses that celebrate diversity ......................... 115
     2.1. Rodriguez School: Catholicism and inclusion .......................................... 116
     2.2. Inti School: holistic education and inclusion ........................................... 121
  3. Perceived benefits of social class diversity ...................................................... 129
     3.1. Rodriguez School ..................................................................................... 129
     3.2. Inti School ................................................................................................ 140
Chapter VI. An Ontology of Social Class Sameness in the Schools

1. Introduction

2. “Here they are all the same”: The schools as a space that eliminates the students’ socioeconomic differences

2.1. Rodriguez School

2.2. Inti School

3. Moulding homogeneity: School mix/mixing strategies to create social class sameness

3.1. Rodriguez School

3.2. Inti School

4. Problematic claims of sameness

5. Conclusions

Chapter VII. The parents’ mixophilia: negotiating dispositions towards social class difference and mixing

1. Introduction

2. Rodriguez School

2.1. Perceived benefits for the working classes: mixing to build respectability

2.2. Perceived benefits for all: Mixing to expand the students’ horizons

3. Inti School

3.1. Perceived benefits for the working classes?

3.2. Perceived benefits for all: Mixing to expand the students’ horizons

4. Ambivalent mixophilia

5. Conclusions

Chapter VIII. The parents’ boundaries for social class difference and mixing

1. Introduction

2. Rodriguez School

3. Inti School

4. Conclusion

PART III: FINAL DISCUSSION

Chapter IX. Conclusions

1. Introduction

2. Addressing the research questions

2.1. Research question 1

2.2. Research question 2

2.3. General concluding remarks

3. Contributions and implications

3.1. Applied contributions

3.2. Analytical contributions

4. Limitations of my study and future lines of enquiry

References

Appendix 1. Glossary (in alphabetical order)

Appendix 2. Interview Schedules (translated from Spanish)

Appendix 3. Information Sheets and Consent Forms (translated from Spanish)

Appendix 4. Links to Dissemination Resources

Table 1: ENES social class structure (2009)

Table 2: Key features of the schools
Table 3: Number of interviews by participant and school .............................. 94
Table 4: Main characteristics of the staff participants in Rodriguez School ............. 94
Table 5: Main characteristics of the staff participants in Inti School ...................... 95
Table 6: Main characteristics of the parent participants in Rodriguez School .......... 95
Table 7: Main characteristics of the parent participants in Inti School .................. 97
Table 8: Structure of codes – Interviews with members of staff in Inti School ............ 109

Graph 1: Distribution of 6-12-year-old students enrolled in schools, according to their income quintile (V = the highest) and the kind of school, 2013 ................................................. 27
Graph 2: Household income (%) ........................................................................ 89
Graph 3: Mother’s educational level (%) ............................................................... 89
INTRODUCTION

Chile is a particularly unequal society, currently being the third most unequal amongst the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)\(^1\) countries. To a large extent, socioeconomic segregation in Chile has its roots in the radical implementation of neoliberal reforms during the military dictatorship (1973-1990) and continued by democratic governments until the present day. The ‘Chilean neoliberal experiment’ (Ffrench-Davis, 2005) resulted in a massive marketization and privatisation of hitherto public services such as education, with the state having a subsidiary role and enabling liberalisation and deregulation of supply and demand (Brunner & Uribe, 2007). This economic model has proved to be increasingly effective in the country, particularly during democracy due to the implementation of a social protection network for ameliorating poverty and attracting entrepreneurs to undertake large-scale investments (Espinoza, Barozet, & Méndez, 2013): economic growth has expanded and poverty has been significantly reduced. However, inequality has remained largely unaffected.

Concurrently, along with expanded privatisation, the enactment of educational reforms such as nationwide school-choice policies and a funding scheme based on vouchers (where the public funding received by schools depends on the number of pupils they have in attendance) are argued to have contributed to a highly segregated school system (Bellei, 2015; Hsieh & Urquiola, 2006). In fact, by 2011, Chilean education was the most segregated amongst the OECD countries (OECD, 2011). This means that there is a strong socioeconomic heterogeneity across schools, which are very homogeneous in terms of their internal student composition: broadly speaking, while lower income students tend to attend state schools, the most advantaged ones tend to be concentrated in private schools.

Acknowledging this issue, in 2016 the so-called Inclusion Law started being gradually implemented, with the aim of ensuring that school choice was not constrained by potentially discriminatory factors, such as the students’ achievement and their families’ ability to pay. Through three main reforms to be applied in schools receiving public funding\(^2\), the law bans the use of economic, social, and academic criteria for admissions; eliminates shared funding (financiamiento compartido in Spanish, i.e. tuition fees paid by families to ‘top up’ state funding); and forbids publicly subsidised schools from making a profit. The ultimate goal of the law is to promote social desegregation between schools, as well as inclusion and diversity.

\(^1\) [https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm](https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm)

\(^2\) These account for the majority of the students.
within schools, which is thought to contribute to social equity and cohesion through the development of inclusive attitudes in the students.

However, the way in which social-class diversity in schools is experienced by the students and their parents, as well as its relationship with the potential development of such inclusive attitudes has been studied little in Chile (Bellei, 2015). Studies in other countries addressing the possible effects of school mix (the school’s social diversity) have contended that schools are an important potential site for promoting encounters between people from different backgrounds and for contributing to the development of attitudes to promote conviviality (as I discuss further in Chapter II). Nevertheless, these studies have also argued that this is not an inevitable outcome, since exclusionary dispositions may also emerge amongst students and parents depending on the form heterogeneity takes and the degree to which there is school mixing (actual exchanges or interactions between students/parents from different backgrounds) (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a; Wilson, 2012). Thus, there is a need to study the lived experiences of social class mix in the schools rather than taking outcomes for granted. In dialogue with this body of research, my study explores how these logics of practice (i.e. being convivial/being exclusionary) are played out in Chilean schools that already had exceptional levels of social class diversity (compared to the Chilean average) before the implementation of the Inclusion Law, as a way of understanding existing processes of school mix/mixing and the potentialities of the law.

Sociological research on the links between education and families has shown that teachers (e.g. McDonough, 1996; Reay, David & Ball, 2001), and parents (e.g. Lareau, 2002) are key actors in structuring the students’ disposition towards education and the social dynamics taking place at the school, which has an effect on the production and reproduction of inequalities. Therefore, I focused on the views of staff members and parents regarding school mix and mixing, and how these relate to their expectations and aspirations for the children (e.g. perceived benefits/risks of interacting with certain ‘class others’) (see chapters II and III for further discussion). More specifically, my research questions (RQs) are the following:

RQ1: How do the staff of two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing at their school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of the children?

RQ2: How do parents of children at two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing at their children’s school? What do they see as the
possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of their children?

To address these questions, I carried out a qualitative case study in two Chilean schools with distinctive characteristics, both with exceptional levels of social class diversity compared with the average in the country. The two schools are located in the capital city (Santiago) and have an unusual combination of working-class and middle-class students, the latter being the majority. Whereas one school is in an affluent area and has a traditional and Catholic emphasis, the other is in a disadvantaged locality near a gentrified area and has an alternative and personalised educational approach. The former school also has significantly more students than the latter since it offers primary and secondary education, although in both cases my focus was on students in primary education (aged 10-11). In each school I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers, headteachers, and deputy headteachers (to address RQ1), and parents (to address RQ2). In total, I interviewed 35 participants, including 15 parents.

I interpreted this material using a theoretical framework based on Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts (e.g. habitus, field, capitals, etc.), particularly habitus, which I complement with additional theoretical resources discussing habitus disruption and reflexivity (e.g. Bottero, 2010; Decoteau, 2016; Lahire, 2003; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009; Sweetman, 2003; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a). In particular, I address what I understand as one component of the habitus, that is, the dispositions towards social class difference.

The findings reveal that social class mix at Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS) cannot be assumed as a straightforward phenomenon, but rather entail ambivalent dispositions towards social class differences. This suggests that openness to such differences is conditioned by the perceived need for a baseline of sociocultural similarity. This is visible through the schools celebrating the existence of those differences and at the same time manifesting an assimilationist approach that fosters the inculcation of middle-class ways of behaving amongst working-class students and parents. Similarly, the parent respondents express openness to engaging with difference, whilst at the same time defining boundaries to doing so. Also, such openness entails both collective and private principles. In the conclusions, I discuss the potentialities of these ambivalent dispositions towards social class difference for challenging or, conversely, reproducing social class segregation in Chile.
This thesis is organised in three main parts: the first includes the rationale of the study and research design (Part I - chapters I to IV); the second entails the analysis (Part II - chapters V to VIII); and the third and final part focuses on discussion (Part III – Chapter IX).

In Part I, the first chapter (I) describes the social context of the study by exploring the mechanisms through which neoliberalism has contributed to consolidating a highly segregated social structure and educational system in Chile (Section 2). Then, I explore theoretical and empirical resources that have been used to understand Chilean social structure and its segregation, with a particular emphasis on ways to define the concept of social class (Section 3). I finish by describing the policy efforts to reduce segregation and promote inclusion in education, with special attention to the Inclusion Law, currently being implemented with the aim of enforcing social diversity in schools (Section 4).

Chapter II presents the literature review by first discussing research studies on the social dynamics taking place in schools with socially diverse student populations (school mix and mixing) and their possible effects on the development of convivial learning amongst the students (Section 2). Then I discuss the literature addressing the parents’ preferences regarding the social composition of schools and their negotiations when establishing social relationships with ‘others’, that is, people from a different background, for example, in terms of ethnicity or social class (Section 3).

Chapter III discusses the theoretical framework of this thesis, which is based on the concepts developed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. First, in Section 2, I present the concepts relevant for the study, for example, field, habitus, and capitals. Next, in Section 3, I analyse further literature using Bourdieu’s concepts to address the more reflexive aspects of the habitus entailed in the study of the dispositions towards social class difference. Finally, I operationalise these concepts to address the analysis of the schools’ and the parents’ dispositions to social class difference (Section 4).

Chapter IV describes the methodological approach by first presenting the research questions guiding the study (Section 1). In Section 2, I outline the characteristics of the qualitative case studies I conducted in two socioeconomically diverse schools in Chile, which is followed by the sample criteria guiding the inclusion of these schools (Section 3). Section 4 presents the research tools I applied and the participants I included at each school, while Section 5 outlines my positionality in relation to the topic of study and the ethical considerations I have kept in mind throughout. Finally, the analysis procedures I undertook are explained in Section 6.
Part II is composed of four chapters of analysis, organised according to the research question they address. Chapters V and VI present the analysis regarding RQ1, which focuses on the staff’s dispositions towards social class difference.

In Chapter V, I first describe the main characteristics of Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS), which I argue constitute what I understand as their institutional habitus, paying particular attention to the role played by social class difference (Section 2). Then, in Section 3, I analyse the staff’s celebratory views on socioeconomic mix and describe the benefits that they believe this mix could bring to the students.

Chapter VI includes an analysis of an apparently oppositional logic: the articulation of the schools’ celebration of social class differences alongside the disregard of such differences in the daily school dynamics, which I call ‘an ontology of social class sameness’ (Section 2). In Section 3, I explore the mechanisms for creating such an ontology, through an analysis of the schools’ institutional strategies for managing social class diversity (VI).

Chapters VII and VIII present the analysis in relation to RQ2, which addresses the parent respondents’ dispositions towards social class difference.

In Chapter VII, I explore my respondents’ tendency to celebrate the schools’ socioeconomic diversity (mixophilia) by analysing the benefits they believe this brings to the children. I also analyse the negotiations that parents identify as being involved in school mix, as well as the tensions that these entail for some. I first present findings for RS (Section 2) and then for IS (Section 3), by emphasising differences between middle-class and working-class parent respondents.

Chapter VIII analyses the boundaries to social class difference mediating the parents’ mixophilia presented in Chapter VII, that is, their fears towards certain ‘others’ and the criteria they use to define what sort of social class difference is valuable or not. I first present findings for RS (Section 2) and then for IS (Section 3), by emphasising particularities amongst middle-class and working-class parents.

I finish this thesis with Part III, where I present the conclusions of the research. Section 2 addresses the research questions and summarises the analysis. Next, in Section 3, I discuss the implications and contributions of my findings. Finally, in Section 4 I describe certain limitations of my study and future lines of enquiry.
PART I: RATIONALE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH DESIGN
Chapter I. Social context of the study

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the social context of the study: Chile. First, in Section 2, I draw on relevant historical context and argue that the highly segregated social structure and educational system in the country is strongly shaped by the neoliberal policies being implemented since the eighties.

In Section 3, I discuss literature conceptualising stratification and social class with a special focus on their usage in the Chilean context. I highlight how, in Chile, definitions of social class have been controversial and still pose several challenges. I argue that an understanding of social class as multidimensional is useful for this thesis. In particular, I analyse the intersections between the subjective and structural dimension of social stratification.

In the last section (4), I address the responses of public policy for addressing educational segregation in Chile and promote inclusion. I pay special attention to the Inclusion Law, a set of reforms currently being implemented with the aim of enforcing social diversity in schools. I argue that by studying schools that already had above-average levels of socioeconomic diversity, my study provides evidence useful for implementers of this law to consider.

2. Neoliberalism and segregation in Chile

During the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), Chile implemented a radical neoliberal system that continues to the present day (Espinoza, Barozet, & Mendez, 2013). From the thirties until 1973, the Chilean economy was characterised by an Imports Substitution Model through industrialisation, particularly during the Popular Unity political coalition government ('Unidad Popular') (1970-1973), when elected socialist president Salvador Allende undertook the nationalisation of large-scale industries (e.g. copper mining) and strengthened the role of the state in administrating the health and educational system, amongst other services.

With the military coup d'état in 1973, this process was dramatically interrupted by the authoritarian non-democratic government of Pinochet and its links with the so-called ‘Chicago Boys’, i.e. a group of Chilean economists who were trained with monetarist Milton Friedman at Chicago University, this as part of the ‘Chile Project’, organised in the 1950s by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1969, the Chicago Boys had already
written a ‘Program for Economic Development’ called ‘El Ladrillo’ (‘The Brick’), advocating widespread free market policies such as deregulation and privatisation, but it was not until the dictatorship that this Program gained influence over the ruling government. As a result, several Chicago Boys occupied key positions in the dictatorship, many of them as ministers, and undertook - even before the USA and the UK - a series of economic reforms that pushed for opening the country to the international market and developing the financial and commercial sector. This corresponds to what economist Ffrench-Davis has defined as ‘the Chilean neoliberal experiment’, “an outstanding example of the contemporary application of monetarist orthodoxy because of its ‘purity’, depth, and extensive coverage” (2005: 29). Consequently, there was a massive privatisation of public services – particularly education, health and public companies -, with the state having a subsidiary role and enabling the demand and supply liberalization and deregulation (Brunner & Uribe, 2007).

During the dictatorship, the implementation of the neoliberal model in Chile brought poverty and inequality to the country, marked by high levels of unemployment (around 15%) and lower salaries, situation that became particularly serious during the economic depressions of 1975-1976 and 1982-1984 (Espinoza, Barozet, & Mendez, 2013). The consequence was a rise in the number of unemployed and those in economically precarious positions, as well as the decline of the living conditions of the ‘old’ middle-class. From 1990 onwards, the following democratic governments (1990-2010) did not radically alter the free-market economy installed by Pinochet but implemented a series of initiatives to counteract the costs of the model by both deploying a social protection network for overcoming poverty and attracting entrepreneurs to undertake large-scale investments (Espinoza, Barozet, & Mendez, 2013). These proved to be increasingly effective: if at the end of the eighties the model was paradoxically showing an increase both, on the one hand, in poverty and inequality, and, on the other, in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the democratic governments managed to both expand economic growth (5% a year on average) and to significantly reduce poverty (from 40% of the population in 1990 to 8.6% in 2017); at the same time, however, inequality

---

3 There are some exceptions amongst Chilean economists who studied at Chicago in this period though. For example, economist Ricardo Ffrench-Davis is one main critic of neoliberalism developed during the dictatorship.

4 1990-2010: four centre-left governments: Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet.

2010-2014: first right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera.


2018-: second right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera.

has remained mostly unaffected (from a Gini Index of 57.2% in 1990 to one of 46.6% in 2017⁶), argued to be associated with an increase of the whole population’s incomes (Joignant & Güell, 2009). Currently, Chile is the third most unequal OECD country after South Africa (62% in 2015) and Costa Rica (48% in 2017⁷). According to Torche and Wormald (2004), such inequality is a result of the income concentration in the richest 2% of the population, who possesses 20% of the total national income; below this level, there is a much lower degree of income inequality⁸.

In line with the economic changes in Chile, the settlement of the neoliberal system as a whole came hand to hand with the strengthening of a functionalist view of education as directly linked to economic development. In this framework, occupational positions are stratified according to their functional importance for the whole economic system and the consequent rewards for it (Davis & Moore, 1945). In particular, sustained by Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), formal education is conceived as a kind of capital, that is, skills and knowledge that are integrated into the individuals and allow them to perform productively at work, in an equation where a higher educational level entails higher productivity (Schultz, 1960, 1961). Based on this assumption, the educational policies since 1980 applied a series of reforms oriented at de-regulating and privatising the provision of education at different levels, as a mechanism to expand its access and guarantee an increase in the number of highly educated individuals that could positively affect the country’s productivity and economic growth (Brunner y Uribe 2007; o, 2000; Dridriksson, 2008; Franco, 2002; Franco, Hopenhayn, & León, 2010; Franco, Leon, & Atria, 2007; Marginson, 2008; Patrón, 2008).

In turn, the Human Capital approach, focused on the societal, macro benefits of accessing education, is grounded on a meritocratic discourse, according to which success in the education and labour markets would be based on individual merits, as opposed to an aristocratic system where such success is based on inherited or a priori adscription to certain social positions (Mendoza, 2014a). More specifically, in a scenario where society provides equal social opportunities for all (e.g. to access education), social inequalities are justified as a result of differences in terms of talents—a mix between the individuals inherent capacities and their stimulation (Davis & Moore, 1945)—and effort—a voluntary disposition to achieve

---

⁶ Gini Index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) amongst individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini Index of zero represents perfect equality and 100, perfect inequality. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/si.pov.gini?name_desc=false
⁷ https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm
⁸ Unprecedented levels of inequality and accumulation of wealth by the top 1% are accounted in Thomas Piketty’s analysis of capitalism worldwide (2014).
something even under adverse conditions (Hayek, 1982). In this regard, the meritocratic discourse emphasises the benefits that accessing formal education and having success in the system has for individuals: since a higher educational level indicates a higher productivity, it also indicates better rewarded job positions – e.g. better salaries. This way, the social structure is regarded as permeable and offering chances for social mobility, that is, a society in which free individuals can reach any position with relative independence from their social origin (Parsons, 1971). Hence, formal education is defined as an individual and rational investment – rather than a social right – and as a legitimate mechanism to distribute social positions in the society (Destinobles, 2006).

By adhering to these principles, the Chilean education system has consolidated into a highly marketized, privatized and segregated one (Bellei, 2015). State schools were decentralized from the Ministry of Education to municipalities; concurrently, the entry of private providers was stimulated, leading to the division of the school system into three types: state, private-subsidised (privately provided but funded, in part, by the state) and private, non-subsidised schools; additionally, for-profit schools were allowed, as were co-payment charges to families (a ‘top-up’ fee) in private-subsidised schools. Likewise, a funding system based on vouchers was introduced, which consisted of a coupon for each child at the public or subsidized school of their choice (Friedman & Friedman, 1980). As a result, the funding received by these schools depends on the number of pupils in attendance. This policy claims to provide families with more freedom regarding where they choose to enrol their children, as well as to promote competition between schools, in order to improve the quality of education for the poorest students and guarantee equal opportunities (Aedo & Sapelli, 2001; Carnoy, 1998; Carrasco, 2013; Elacqua, Schneider, & Jack, 2006; Friedman & Friedman, 1980; Levin, 2002; Raczynski, Salinas, de la Fuente, Hernández, & Lattz, 2010).

Nevertheless, the evidence from Chile has questioned the achievement of the meritocratic promise and the neoliberal reforms’ principles, amongst them, the voucher system (Aedo & Sapelli, 2001; Bellei, 2007; Contreras, Sepúlveda, & Bustos, 2010; Corvalán & Román, 2012; Gallego, 2002; Gallego & Hernando, 2010; Hernández & Raczynski, 2015; Hsieh & Urquiola, 2006; Raczynski & Hernández, 2011). Moreover, these reforms have resulted in a reinforcement of schools’ socioeconomic segregation (Bellei, Valenzuela, & Ríos, 2010;)

---

9 Currently, they are "municipal schools"; in this document, I call them "state schools" to emphasise their non-private nature and facilitate understanding of them amongst non-Chilean readers.

10 Currently, most of the students attend private-subsidised schools (55%), followed by state schools (40%) and, lastly, private, non-subsidised schools (5%). Private-subsidised schools, in turn, are divided into those that charge a co-payment to families (up to approximately £100 a month) and those that do not.
Valenzuela, Bellei, & Ríos, 2014). In fact, the current Chilean schooling scenario is dramatically segregated by socioeconomic level (OECD, 2011), with a strong socioeconomic heterogeneity across schools, which are individually homogeneous internally: lower income students tend to attend state schools, while higher income students tend to attend private subsidised and non-subsidised schools (Elacqua, 2012; Valenzuela, 2008) (see Graph 1).

**Graph 1: Distribution of 6-12-year-old students enrolled in schools, according to their income quintile (V = the highest) and the kind of school, 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quintile</th>
<th>State schools</th>
<th>Private subsidised schools</th>
<th>Private non-subsidised schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Source: CASEN11 survey (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2013)

Furthermore, those who have warned about the problem of socioeconomic segregation in schools have also highlighted its correlation with the students’ academic attainment in the national standardised test (SIMCE, see Glossary), which is what has mostly captured the concern in the public debate around educational segregation: for example, in 2013 state schools’ average score in Language was 259, while the private subsidised’s was 267 and the private non-subsidised’s was 299 (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, Gobierno de Chile, 2015). This means that the poorest students have the worst results in this test.

Similarly, privatization policies in the Chilean higher education (HE) system have derived in its expansion and fragmentation (Iglesias, Mendoza, & del Río; Kremerman, 2007; Ruiz y Boccardo, 2011). Currently, it is divided into a) traditional public universities, b) traditional private universities, c) non-traditional private universities, d) professional institutes and e) technical schooling centres – the last two being privately owned. 39 universities, including all

---

11 See Glossary
public universities and an increasing number of private ones, use PSU (Prueba de Selección Universitaria, "University Admission Test") as a single admission system (INDICES, 2018). a) and b) ask for the highest PSU scores and are the most prestigious ones. All of them charge high enrolment and tuition fees, which, on average, are approximately £3,800 in universities - a), b) and c) - and £1,900 in professional institutes and technical schooling centres, per year. The main mechanism for low-income families to cover these fees is to demonstrate their children’s high academic performance and apply for the "Crédito con Aval del Estado" (CAE), a private bank loan with the state acting as the guarantor. Even though the state subsidise the banks so their interest rates are lower than in common loans (now 2%, 6% until 2012), this system has rebounded on a high proportion of families who are in debt and are not able to pay the banks back: in 2018, there were 151,000 loan defaulters, that is, 40% of graduates already expected to return their loans (477,000, out of a total of 874,000 beneficiaries). As such, these people risk having their property seized and their civic rights restricted (e.g. no access to housing allowance).

Therefore, I have argued that the highly segregated social structure and educational system in Chile is strongly shaped by the neoliberal policies being implemented since the eighties. In the next section, I discuss literature conceptualising stratification and social class with a special focus on their usage in the Chilean context.

3. Understanding stratification and social class

Providing an uncontested definition of social class is not an easy task since social classifications “are not given by nature but are a social construction, being the product of actors or institutions with specific interests […] Even ‘objective’ statistical classifications […] depend on arbitrary criteria” (Joignant and Güell, 2009: 11, my translation). In this regard, social categorisations might vary across societies and even within the same society they can be challenged and transmuted. At the same time, such categorisations may change given social transformations, for example, in the economic structures, and organisation of labour and distribution of incomes. Despite these difficulties, certain approaches have proved more influential and seem to be ‘more real’ than others.

During the 20th century and until around the 1970s-1980s, sociological analysis on social class tended to be based on the classical theories of nineteenth century German thinkers Karl

12 www.portal.ingresa.cl/el-credito/caracteristicas-del-credito/
13 www.fundacionsol.cl/2018/06/deuda-universitaria-chile-asfixia-a-estudiantes-y-beneficia-a-bancos/
Marx or Max Weber, in a context dominated by economic approaches to the topic (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, ... Miles, 2013). From a materialist viewpoint, Marx defined two main social classes in relation to shared production relations and economic interests: the bourgeoisie - the factory owners -, and the proletariat - “the great mass or ordinary wage labourers”, exploited by the bourgeoisie; and “because the economic system is based on exploitation, the members of different classes have opposed economic interests and an antagonistic relationship” (Bottero, 2005: 34-35). Weber (1922), in turn, understood classes as economic and status categories involving different ‘life chances’ (i.e. opportunities and lifestyles), this from a multidimensional approach based not only on property ownership but also on labour market and its occupational skill divisions. This allowed him to identify four social classes: a) classes privileged through property and education; b) technicians, specialists and lower-level management; c) the petty bourgeoisie (small shopkeepers, self-employed artisans, etc.); and d) the working class.

From the 1970s, the sociological lens used to interpret social class gained predominance through neo-Marxist (Wright, 1985) and neo-Weberian (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; Goldthorpe and Marshall, 1992; Goldthorpe, Llewellyn, & Payne, 1980) ‘employment’ aggregate’ frameworks, i.e. grouping together occupations with similar labour-market and employment relations (Crompton, 1993; Bottero, 2005). Within the first, American sociologist Erik Olin Wright defines three main social positions based on differing relations of exploitation: a) the bourgeoisie, which owns economic property and has control over means of production and workforce; b) the proletariat, which lacks property and control; and c) the petty bourgeoisie, which owns and controls its means of production but has no control over workforce. From a neo-Weberian perspective, in turn, British sociologist John Goldthorpe and colleagues’ model - Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarrero (EGP) – has been particularly influential, especially in the UK, where it has been used as the official class schema, and also in other parts of Europe and Latin America. The EGP or Nuffield (also CASMIN) scheme defines seven social classes according to employment status relations, distinguishing employees, self-employed and employees and, within the latter, between different kinds of contract:

“A ‘labour’ contract of employment (which might apply to a factory worker or a shop assistant) involves the straightforward exchange of labour for money, under direct supervision, with wages calculated on a piece or time basis. By contrast, some workers (such as professionals or managers) have a ‘service’ relationship with their employer, and are rewarded not only for the work done, but also have additional perks such as employment security, pension rights, and career opportunities” (Bottero, 2005: 78)
Despite its popularity, this deductive class schema has been criticised for - amongst other elements - using as starting point theoretical divisions that do not fully explain cultural consumption and identities (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, … Miles, 2013). Additionally it has been argued – particularly amongst feminist researchers (e.g. as Crompton, 1993; Skeggs, 1997, 2004a) – that occupations should not be the sole measure of social class since this “occludes the more complex ways that class operates symbolically and culturally, through forms of stigmatisation and marking of personhood and value” (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, … Miles, 2013: 222). Aligned with this, there is a critique of the insufficiency of this approach to take into account horizontal distinctions, namely, differences within occupations (e.g. a too homogenous description of the salaried middle class), as well as variations across different countries’ occupational realities.

In this context, French intellectual Pierre Bourdieu’s theory has been used to deploy more multidimensional models (see Bennett, Savage, Silva, Warde, Gayo-Cal, & Wright, 2008; Crompton, 1993; Savage, 2010; Savage Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005; Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, … Miles, 2013) to conduct ‘cultural class analysis’ (Atkinson, 2010), i.e. analysis that goes beyond employment inequalities and a definition of social class as a merely economic phenomenon, considering the interplay between economic, social and cultural resources or capitals to understand forms of social reproduction and cultural distinction (see chapter III for an analysis of the Bourdieusian approach). A recent example of such models is the New Model of Social Class based on findings from the BBC's 2011 Great British Class Survey Experiment (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, … Miles, 2013), which proposes a seven-class model in the British society based on measures of social, cultural and economic capitals.

My thesis agrees with this Bourdieusian multidimensional approach to social class. In addition, I understand that, rather than as an abstract construct, the concept of social class has to be addressed from a historically and geographically situated perspective, that is, in relation to the specificities of the context of analysis (Bourdieu, 1990a; Adamovsky, 2014), that is, the Latin American and, specifically, the Chilean one.

In this regard, it is fundamental to acknowledge the critical role played by the civic-military dictatorship (1973-1990) in shaping the Chilean social structure and its study. In fact, during that period, the study of stratification and social class in Chile was almost non-existent as “the term ‘social class’ had to be avoided as it symbolised an association with Marxism. At the same time, databases were restricted to employment surveys and the census, both aggregated into categories not always useful for sociologic interpretation” (Espinoza, Barozet,
& Mendez, 2013: 172, my translation). Since democracy was re-established in 1990, there has been a renewed interest in the topic due to a greater availability of data and the explosive proliferation of different kinds of classifications made by public agencies and market agents, in a context of crucial social, cultural and economic changes (Joignant & Güell, 2009). In particular, with the reduction of poverty (see previous section), public policy and the academic world changed the focus of attention from a targeted approach ('the poor') to one oriented at understanding the whole stratification structure and its tendency to concentrate affluence on the top of the social pyramid, as a way of explaining the persistence of socioeconomic inequality. In that context, though, the most influential social stratification classification has been the consumption categories already in use in the eighties. This was developed by the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR) and adapted to the Chilean context by the Association of Market Researchers ('Asociacion de Investigadores de Mercado'), namely, percentiles constructed based on the possession of certain goods and educational level, i.e. A, B, C1, C2, D and E. This classification has been used both by market research, the academic world and the governmental agents, and it is widely spread amongst the population, for whom “terms such as ABC1, D or E evoke an image [...] even when they do not understand the procedures to create these classifications” (Rasse, Salcedo, & Pardo, 2009: 20, my translation). However, this taxonomy has been object of increasing criticism since the percentiles arbitrarily divide the population in rigid proportions: 10% as ABC1 (upper middle-class and elite), 20% as C2 (middle middle-class), 25% as C3 (lower middle-class), 35% as D (poverty) and 10% as E (extreme poverty). As a consequence, the classification is unable to take into account structural social changes such as “social mobility, periods of economic wealth or crisis, transformation in the productive structures, changes in unemployment rates, etc.” (Rasse, Salcedo, & Pardo, 2009: 21, my translation), which have an impact not only on people’s material conditions but also on their tastes, values and worldviews. In particular, it is necessary to consider that the Chilean stratification structure has been radically changed by the relative higher economic wealth linked to factors such as the massification of education and increase in the overall educational level, and the spread of owner-occupation (even if it is due to subsidies).

In this scenario, Rasse and her colleagues (2009) even speak of the death of the current social stratification, and authors such as Torche and Wormald (2004), and Espinoza, Barozet and Mendez (2013) identify new patterns of stratification and social mobility. Therefore, stratification markers seem to be less informative than they were in most part of the twentieth century. For example, in Joignant and Güell’s words, the distinction between poor and non-poor “is being challenged by the fact that an important number of Chileans are experiencing permanent fluxes between one and another side throughout their lives”; the concept of middle-
class, in turn, “is being challenged by its strong internal heterogeneity and porosity of its boundaries” (2009: 13, my translation). In fact, the definition of the current Chilean middle class(es) poses particular challenges. Until the 1980s, the middle class was understood in relation to those who experience increased salaried employment, urbanisation and schooling, and, as such, as supporting modernisation theories in Latin America – i.e. analysing the development of traditional societies into industrialised ones. As the century passed, however, this ‘modern middle-class’ has expanded precariously. Espinoza and Barozet argue that:

“[…] they do not have the stability given by receiving incomes over the average or by possessing capitals, but they neither are the public policy focus, primordially oriented to the poor […], [particularly with] the expulsion of this sector from the state’s wing in the neoliberal wave of the 1970s and 1980s” (2009: 109, my translation).

In this sense, the middle classes avoid the daily difficulties experienced by less advantaged sectors but do not manage to reach a secure social position. Given these complexities, current definitions of this social class have tended to be of a residual kind, that is, in relation to what it is not (not part of the elite nor of the poor) and based on arbitrary cuts (e.g. in the middle of the incomes’ distribution, which would agglutinate around 70% of Chile’s population) (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009). According to Espinoza and Barozet, it is this ambiguity in the definition of the middle-class which partly explains the Chileans tendency to define themselves as middle class.

In line with international evidence, research in Chile points out that there are distortions between the populations’ objective and subjective status, that is, between their technical position in the stratified social structure according to markers such as occupation, incomes and educational levels, and their perceptions about such a structure and their position on it (Castillo, Miranda, & Cabib, 2013). As Castillo and colleagues (2013) indicate, in a scale of social self-positioning, a third of the Chileans tend to perceive themselves as being in the middle of the continuum, particularly because the groups at the top of the social structure tend to underestimate their status (compared to the overestimation of status done by the groups at the bottom). Previously, Torche and Wormald (2004) had suggested an even more remarkable tendency, arguing that between 60% and 80% of the population perceives itself as belonging to the middle-class. This is especially interesting due to Chile’s high levels of inequality – Gini Index of 46.6 in 2017, according to the World Bank - in which context a wider range of self-perceptions of status would be expected (Castillo, Miranda, & Cabib, 2013). Consequently, the category almost becomes so broad as to be meaningless, “without a clear identity and
without clearly knowing why they are similar to or different from other social groups” (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009: 1, my translation).

Adding more complexity to a potential definition of the middle classes, Espinoza and Barozet also emphasise that they are not far away from the groups down below in terms of their income – “the distance from the most advantaged groups being the real impassable barrier” (2009: 17, my translation). In fact, as mentioned in Section 2, inequality of incomes significantly decreases after excluding the richest 2% of the population. This is argued as possibly explaining the apparent social class homogeneity perceived by the parents.

Important advances regarding the study of the middle classes, the stratification structure and social mobility have been made since mid-2000s, when social sciences’ researchers started to study these topics from a more systematic perspective and produced primary data. In general, they agree on the direct relation between the effects of neoliberal policies causing diversification of the productive structures and, through this, the diversification of the social structure, particularly relating to the middle class: “The appearance of a new segment of companies related to emergent economic activities in commerce, finances or even in exporting agricultural sector; along with health, education and social security services under private administration, constituted the basis for a new middle class” (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009: 172, my translation). In this sense, it is acknowledged that there is not a synthetic socioeconomic measure to characterise social classes, particularly the middle class, whose analyses in terms of incomes, occupation and education demonstrate the existence of different, non-convergent strata (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009). This means that there is an important variability of incomes, educational levels, occupations and consumption capacity within each social class, particularly in the middle class, which suggests that it is more precise to refer to them in plural (e.g. middle classes).

Analyses based on Goldthorpe and colleagues’ occupational categories, though, have tended to dominate the discussion within the academic field, since they are also indicative of educational level and incomes.

In 2001, the team led by Florencia Torche and Guillermo Wormald applied, at a national level, the Social Mobility Survey ('Encuesta de Movilidad Social'), using the Erickson, Goldthorpe and Portocarrero (EGP) social class schema, with some adaptations to the Chilean reality. In 2009, the team led by Vicente Espinoza, Emmanuelle Barozet and María Luisa Méndez conducted the Social Stratification National Survey (ENES, 'Encuesta Nacional de Estratificación Social'), also following the EGP schema. In dialogue with the former as well as
with international categorisations, the ENES supports the existence, in 2009, of the following seven social classes, which are in turn collapsed into a three-class scheme:

### Table 1: ENES social class structure (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social classes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Collapsed three-class scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affluent or service social class (also ‘upper middle-class’): large and medium proprietors, companies’ managers, and professionals, amongst others. Social class in expansion.</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>Upper middle class (25.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine non-manual workers: sales personnel and other rank-and-file service workers in administration and commerce. Social class in expansion.</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>Middle and lower middle class (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small proprietors: independent workers and proprietors of non-agricultural companies with less than 10 employees.</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>Working class (‘sectores populares’) (46.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small agricultural proprietors: of agricultural companies with less than 10 employees.</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>Working class (‘sectores populares’) (46.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual workers: lower-grade technicians, supervisors of manual workers, and skilled manual workers.</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>Working class (‘sectores populares’) (46.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>Working class (‘sectores populares’) (46.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural workers: in primary production</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Working class (‘sectores populares’) (46.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Espinoza, Barozet, & Mendez, 2013

In this regard, the stratification structure resembles a pyramid, with a working-class majority, a narrow middle-class and an even more reduced elite, with working conditions being a key difference between the first two: both may be salaried employees but the first tend to work sporadically and/or without a contract, without employment stability nor social protection (‘labour contract’); the second, in contrast, tend to have a contract that ensures them a

---

14 One of the acknowledged limitations of these data is that it is difficult to estimate the proportion of this group belonging to the upper class (the wealthiest) (Espinoza, Barozet, & Mendez, 2013).
15 In Torche’s (2005) and Torche and Wormald’s (2004) scheme, lower technicians and supervisors of manual workers are located within the middle-class, at the top of the manual sector and “distinguished from the working class by their specialized skills and authority in the workplace” (Torche, 2004: 16). https://search.proquest.com/docview/304560789?pq-origsite=primo
permanent income over time (‘service relation’). Regarding social mobility patterns, ENES suggests a relatively mobile and permeable class structure in its middle part, but with very rigid and closed extremes, i.e. it is difficult to move from the working-class to the middle class, and from the middle class to the upper class (Espinoza, Barozet, & Mendez, 2013). In addition, it is argued it is difficult to speak of a stable middle class amongst those with incomes close to the median line, since their position’s precariousness makes them vulnerable to the effects of unemployment, illness and ageing (Espinoza, 2011; OECD, 2011).

In addition, authors from both sociology and urban studies have emphasised the key role of a geographic approach in relation to the analysis of social class, given several Chilean cities’ high residential segregation (e.g. Mendez & Gayo, 2018; Ruiz-Tagle, 2016; Rasse, 2015; Sabatini, Rasse, Mora, & Brain, 2012; Mendez, 2008). Residential segregation is “the degree of spatial proximity or geographic concentration of families belonging to the same social group, either in ethnic, age, religion or socioeconomic terms” (Sabatini, Rasse, Mora, & Brain, 2012: 161, my translation). As Rasse explains:

“The land allocation through market mechanisms, along with permissive planning strategies and a housing policy based on demand subsidies, have led to the development of wide areas in the cities that concentrate high income households and, as a counterpart, the development of neighbourhoods with a homogeneous poverty, located in the periphery and deficiently integrated to the city” (Rasse, 2015: 122, my translation)

Residential segregation does not imply though that one social class is homogenously concentrated in one locality. For example, Mendez (2008) associates three middle-class fractions (see Chapter III for a definition of the concept of class fraction) with different areas within the capital, Santiago:

“a gentrified area (the city centre area) [such as Soles, near The Heath16, where one of my case studies is (Inti School)], a more established upper middle class area is called Barrio Alto [such as The Hills, where Rodriguez School is] and a traditionally middle-middle class area of professionals of medium range (Nunoa and Providencia) […] These areas are different not only in economic terms but also, and sometimes more importantly, in social and cultural terms. For example, in the so-called Barrio Alto right-

---

16 The names of the schools, participants and localities directly involved in the study have been anonymised using pseudonyms.
wing voters have been a majority for decades; Catholic schools and conservative groups are also more common than in other areas of the city, and the population is visibly white and of European origin. In Nunoa and Providencia – although local authorities are also dominated by representatives of right-wing parties, alternative voices are also likely to be found as people in these areas are more progressive in their views in public and private life. On the other hand, the gentrified area of the city centre represents an interesting mixture of several groups, some of who choose to live and belong there as a rejection of the Barrio Alto values, some who are interested in preserving and regenerating tangible and intangible urban heritage, and some who are just trendy, alternative and bohemian” (Mendez, 2008: 225-226).

There has also been an attempt to not only analyse the individuals’ shared structural features (i.e. socioeconomic indicators) but also their subjective characteristics (e.g. class identity, judgements about their living conditions, relationships with other groups, etc.), in order to identify collective subjects or classes (e.g. Bottero, 2004; Espinoza & Barozet, 2009; Mendez & Gayo, 2018; Sayer, 2005). In this regard, in a current social context shaped by a general increase in the quality of life and by the diversification of lifestyles, a definition of the social strata merely based on socioeconomic dimensions is argued to be insufficient: “it can be hypothesised that an axis of horizontal differentiation appears in the Chilean society [besides the vertical differentiation axis], which renders relevant a line of analysis such as the one undertaken by Bourdieu” (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009: 117, my translation). This multidimensional, more cultural approach to social class has been particularly productive in relation to the study of the middle classes (e.g. Mendez & Gayo, 2018).

Along the same lines, there has been an increasing emphasis on the insufficiency of social class alone to explain the social stratification and on the importance of studying its links with ethnicity (e.g. Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, & Ball, 2015; Sepúlveda, 2010). In Chile and Latin America more broadly, those links find their roots on the colonial past (XV-XVIII centuries). As Cerda argues, when Latin-American societies were formed, “each race occupied a specific place in the social structure [...]: the Spanish were in the highest strata, the indigenous and black people were in the lowest strata, and mestizos [mixed-heritage people] and migrants were in the middle” (2004: 31, my translation). This is what Rex (1978) has denominated a ‘colonial stratification system’, which, as posed by Gissi (1987), persists after processes of ‘mestizaje’ (mix mostly between Spanish and indigenous people) and even the independence. Despite in Chile most of the population being mestizo17, including the dominant classes, these

---

17 According to the Census (2017), 12.8% of the population declared themselves as indigenous.
tend to perceive themselves as white and European descent, and legitimate their dominance based on their alleged racial and moral superiority (Cerda, 2004). This pattern of subjective association between ethnicity/nationality and social class can also be identified in relation to recent migration waves in Chile (4.35% of the total population living in Chile – Census, 2017), mostly shaped by the arrival of people from other Latin American countries (89%, according to INE & DEM, 2019): despite having, in average, a higher educational level than the Chilean population (Joiko, 2019), these immigrants tend to be perceived by Chileans as poor and unwanted because of “their colour, their condition, their nationality” (Tijoux, 2016: 5, my translation), while those coming from the Global North are more welcome. As noted by Joiko (2019), these different valuations of migrants have consequences in their positioning and social class classification in the host country.

One of the most recent studies identifying social class fractions according to both structural and cultural/subjective dimensions is the one led by Mendez & Gayo (2018). This study distinguishes between three fractions within the upper middle class, according to their school choice and residential strategies to reproduce their social position: a) at the top, the Inheritors, who were born in the same upper class where they presently are; b) in the middle, the Achievers, who usually come from intermediate strata and have experienced upward mobility through education and professional achievement; and, c) in the bottom, they identify two subgroups: the Incomers, who come from intermediate positions but have very few chances to ‘win the game’ within the upper middle-class; and the Settlers, who have a long lasting relation with this social class but have lost status and are less well equipped than their parents were in the past.

My thesis attempts to contribute to the current debate on social class by adopting a multidimensional approach aimed at analysing the intersections between the subjective and structural dimension of social stratification. In this sense, this thesis engages with the need within social sciences to develop more specific social class classifications. As opposed to other terms such as ‘socioeconomic level’ or ‘socioeconomic status’, the term ‘social class’ seems to be more compatible with this multidimensional perspective. In operational terms, this entails considering, on the one hand, the agents’ positional characteristics through socioeconomic indicators such as their incomes, consumption capacity, occupation and educational level, which are the most used indicators both nationally and internationally (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009). A fifth dimension has to be added: living location, given the strong residential segregation in Santiago, the capital of Chile (Mendez & Gayo, 2018). Including these structural indicators in class analysis, however, is limited by the factual possibilities of accessing relevant data. As I describe in the methods chapter, the available databases
allowed me to characterise the schools’ social class diversity according to their parents’ incomes and educational level, which – as I develop in the theoretical framework – I respectively interpret in terms of economic and formal cultural capitals, using Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts (1986). Based on these indicators, along with the qualitative enquiry (‘word of mouth’), I identified, in both schools, a middle-class majority and a minority of working-class families. In turn, I identified the potential working- and middle-class parent participants based on the school staff’s daily, ‘hot knowledge’ (Ball & Vincent, 2006) regarding their occupations, economic situation and, in broad terms, their educational levels (i.e. professionals or not).

On the other hand, paying attention to the subjective dimensions of social class refers to posing questions around the ways social classes self-reproduce through, for example, specific discursive definitions about themselves and ‘the others’, as well as specific legitimization/vindicaiton practices. The findings of this thesis aim to shed light on this symbolic dimension by contributing to understanding the specificities of the middle- and working-class parents’ subjectivities, in terms of their habitus (Bourdieu, 1990b) and, specifically, their ‘dispositions to social class difference’ in socioeconomically diverse schools.

Next, I analyse the public policy attempts for tackling educational segregation and promoting inclusion in schools.

4. Pro-inclusion public policy efforts

The gradual implementation of the so-called Inclusion Law (‘Ley de Inclusion Escolar’ - Nº 20.845) (Mineduc, 2015a) since 2016 is probably the most radical attempt to counteract the educational segregation produced in the last decades and to promote inclusion within schools.

Since the beginning of the 2000s and specially in 2011, Chile has witnessed a series of protests, first amongst secondary students and then spread to graduate students. The main critique the so-called Student Revolution18 has focused on inequality and the introduction of market logics in education; their main claim is the demand for an education system understood as a social right: “Free, public and good quality education for all”. Acknowledging these student demands, one of the declared aims of the second government of socialist Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018) was to remove the market from education, thereby defining education as a social right, and reducing segregation. In this context, the Inclusion Law was enacted in May 2015,

---

18 If you wanted to know more about this movement, I recommend to watch the film La Isla de los Pinguinos, “Penguin Island” – www.vimeo.com/235275285
modifying the General Law of Education (‘Ley General de Educación’) (2009) and other acts so they “guarantee everybody’s right to access a good quality education” (Art. 2) and consider, amongst other elements, the pursuit of social integration and inclusion19:

“The system will tend to eliminate all forms of arbitrary discrimination acting as a barrier for the students’ learning and participation. Likewise, the system will promote schools to be a place for the encounter amongst students from different socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, gender, nationality and religion conditions” (Art. 1, my translation).

In fact, as declared in the Ministry of Education’s webpage, the Inclusion Law is expected to contribute to reduce the segregation between schools, and to increase inclusion and diversity, which in turn are envisaged as contributing to a series of social learning outcomes related to the development of inclusive attitudes, i.e. pluralism and tolerance: “holistic education must seek the conviviality ['convivencia'] of students with different cultural, economic and social capital, so they can learn from each other. Learning in heterogeneous spaces promotes the development of democratic values, generosity, respect, equity and valuing others” (Biblioteca del Consejo Nacional de Chile, 2015: 7, my translation)20.

Three main reforms constitute this law (MINEDUC, 2015a, 2015b): a) prohibition of for-profit schools; b) regulation of the students’ admission to eradicate arbitrary discrimination; and c) elimination of co-payment charges to families. All of this in establishments that receive funding from the state, either state or private-subsidised schools, affecting around 95% of the students in the country. The first reform refers to the fact that “all administrators ['sostenedores'] receiving subsidies or regular funding from the state cannot pursue profit and must invest all this funding to educational ends” (MINEDUC, 2015a: Art. 2, my translation). To achieve this, the Law stipulates a series of regulations defining what an educational goal is; it also stipulates regulations for buying buildings. Hence, administrators are expected to have freedom regarding the ways they use such funding, but they have to be publicly accountable about its usage to demonstrate they are meeting the requirements of the law.

---

19 Another important reform implemented by this government is the Reform to Higher Education (Ley 21.091). As a result, 46 public and private universities are now free of charge for students belonging to the poorest 50% of the population (339.928 students, corresponding to 53.5% of the total number of students enrolled in HE institutions (Consejo Nacional de Educacion, 2018).

20 I am translating ‘convivencia’ (noun, in Spanish) as ‘conviviality’, although they do not mean exactly the same. ‘Convivencia’ “refers to the experiences of living together and learning to live together” (Perales, 2018: 3) (see also discussion on conviviality in Chapter II).

21 Message from the then President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, to the House of Deputies (19th May 2014).
The following two reforms are the ones that relate to the topic of this thesis most directly, as they aim to affect the schools’ composition by making it more diverse. The elimination of co-payment charges to families in private-subsidised schools seeks that all schools receiving public funding are free. As a consequence, if schools choose to continue charging fees to families, they are required to become private (non-subsidised) schools and not receive any state funds.

In turn, the regulation of the admission processes establishes that these processes must be “objective and transparent […] [and that] they cannot produce arbitrary discrimination, in order to guarantee respect to the students’ and families’ dignity” (Art. 2) and their right to choose the school of their preference. With this aim, the Law forbids schools requiring interviews, charges, tests or other records related to the students’/families’ academic performance or socioeconomic situation, as part of the application process. In addition, the Law establishes that “all the students who apply to a school must be accepted when the available quotas are enough in relation to the number of applications” (Art. 2); when these quotas are not sufficient, the schools must apply a random selection of the applicants through the unified School Admission System (‘Sistema de Admision Escolar’ or SAE), provided by the Ministry of Education, which gives successive priority to the following criteria: a) having siblings already enrolled or applying to the school; b) incorporation of 15% of students with low socioeconomic situation ['estudiantes prioritarios']; c) having a parent who is part of the school’s permanent staff; d) having studied at the school previously, unless the student had been expelled from it.

At the same time, this reform regulates expulsion and suspension, forbidding them when they are “due to academic, political, ideological or […] socioeconomic reasons […], or due to reasons associated with the presence of SEN” (Art. 2). Any kinds of pressure from the school to the students and/or their families to move to another school are prohibited as well. In this context, expulsion or suspension of a student are only allowed when he/she is proved to be “severely affecting school conviviality ['convivencia']” (Art. 2), and only after the school has warned the parents and applied strategies of pedagogic/psychosocial support. Also, a student cannot be expelled at a time of the year that does not enable him/her to enrol in another school.

The Inclusion Law has been applied gradually both temporally and spatially. Since March 2016, co-payment charges to families have decreased by the same amount that has been

---

22 These are allowed to take place only with informative goals, when asked by the parents.
23 All applicants are required to apply through its digital platform: www.sistemadeadmisionescolar.cl
covered by the state. Also, the School Admission System started being first applied in one region of the country with less than 300,000 inhabitants (Magallanes, in the extreme south) and only in the lowest educational level at the schools in that region; in 2017, the System was extended to four regions with less than 1 million inhabitants (Tarapacá, Coquimbo, O’Higgins and Los Lagos); in 2018, nine regions were included (Arica y Parinacota, Antofagasta, Atacama, Valparaíso, Maule, Biobío, Araucanía, Los Ríos and Aysén) and then, in 2019, it was finally extended to the Región Metropolitana, where Santiago, the capital, is. Additionally, the System has been progressively implemented according to educational year group, being first applied in the lowest educational year group at the schools and, since the second year, to the rest of the grades.

Since its proposition in 2014, the Inclusion Law has produced resistance amongst many actors: right-wing (Alianza) and centre-wing (Democracia Cristiana, despite forming part of the Nueva Mayoría government of left-wing president Michelle Bachelet) political parties, educational researchers, and private subsidised schools’ administrators and parents. Some of the criticisms have been that the Law is a populist regulation that would cause a deterioration in school quality by restricting parents’ freedom to choose school, as well as the private administrators’ freedom to rule their schools and obtain profit from it.24 One of the most problematic elements for parents grouped in the Confederation of Private Subsidised Schools’ Parents (CONFEPA – ‘Confederación de Padres y Apoderados de Colegios Particulares Subvencionados’)25 was the fact of being forced to mix with people they would not otherwise, as rendering private subsidised schools less selective and free for the families would increase their internal social diversity. The protest group even organised a march in October 2014, where they defended their right to choose schools and pay for them, as well as the schools’ right to choose the students they prefer to admit.26 As stated by some critical, left-wing, mass media,27 these parents were also wrongly defending the schools’ right to make a profit because they thought it means the staff receiving a salary for their work. As a response to the parents’ resistance to mix, advocates of the Inclusion Law have started to problematize the

24 See, for example: http://www.emol.com/noticias/Nacional/2016/03/02/791004/Sostenedores-y-apoderados-lanzan-campana-contra-Ley-de-Inclusion-a-dias-de-su-inicio.html
http://www.estrellaarica.cl/impresa/2017/10/22/full/cuerpo-principal/17/texto/

25 It is not clear how many schools adhere to this organisation, as many have explicitly declared not to participate in it. Until 2014, 50 schools appeared in the CONFEPA’s webpage as participating, but after a polemic discussion with a university student leader it was specified that parents of these schools have adhered (more details in: http://elmostrador2015.mzzo.com/sin-editar/2014/10/29/la-voltereta-de-la-confepa-en-el-listado-de-colegios-que-adhieren-a-la-organizacion/)

26 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hnRXiyh1Fw

27 See, for example: http://www.eldesconcierto.cl/2014/10/28/los-5-mitos-impulsados-por-la-confepa-sobre-la-reforma-educacional/
value of inclusion and diversity in schools, calling for families to mix. These tensions and discussions are still present in the public debate, evincing the strong counter-cultural novelty produced by the Inclusion Law. In fact, with the advent of the new, right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera in March 2018, the Law has become a focus of even stronger criticism, particularly regarding the regulation of students’ selection based on academic criteria. In January 2019 the Ministry of Education proposed a new law – Law for a Fair Admission - to make changes to the Inclusion Law, such as allowing ‘emblematic schools’ to select 100% of their quotas according to the applicants’ academic performance (MINEDUC, 2019).

The government’s argument was supported by a meritocratic discourse combined with a defence of school choice, arguing that “we think it’s fair that quotas are defined by effort and merit, rather than randomly” [...] so “we can give our parents back their right to choose which education they want for their children”. This was articulated with a criticism of the end of co-payment charges to families, since this would be restricting their right “to freely and voluntarily contribute to improving their children’s education” 30. Despite the Law for a Fair Admission being rejected, it is interesting to note that its core arguments were the same as the ones at the basis of the Inclusion Law but articulated to build opposing arguments defending meritocracy and school choice, which in the latter’s case would be promoted by regulating the school market and discrimination from schools.

But the Inclusion Law is not the only policy attempt to reduce school segregation. Some historical contextualisation is necessary here to understand the discontinuities and continuities of the Law in relation to previous policies aiming to promote school inclusion. Since the nineties, the concept of inclusion has been mostly defined in relation to the participation of students diagnosed with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream education, making reference to students with some cognitive or physical disability (Rojas, Falabella & Alarcon, 2016). The use of the term SEN was expected to contribute at overcoming these students’ stigmatization as impaired and their segregation in special schools, to promote a view according to which any student can be educated if the schools are equipped to face their learning barriers (López, 2008). As argued by Infante, Matus and Vizcarra (2011), the General Law of Education, enacted in 2009, was the first General Law ruling education that has made explicit reference to concepts of diversity, integration and inclusion. The Law states that “it is

28 There is a video made by a prestigious education charity, Education 2020 (‘Educacion 2020’) to promote their campaign called “Let’s mix” (‘A mezclarse’): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWiv802GhV4
29 https://www.emol.com/noticias/Nacional/2019/01/07/933385/Los-cambios-que-pretende-introducir-el-Gobierno-al-sistema-de-admision-escolar-que-impulso-Bachelet.html
30 https://www.emol.com/noticias/Nacional/2019/01/14/934256/Pinera-profundiza-en-cambios-a-Ley-de-Inclusion-Va-a-dar-mas-voluntad-y-flexibilidad-para-los-que-estan-en-la-industria-de-la-educacion.html
the state duty to watch for equal educational opportunities and educational inclusion, promoting the reduction of the inequities derived from socioeconomic, ethnic, genre and territory circumstances, amongst others” (Art., 4, my translation). Previously, only specific programmes had been applied. For instance, the Law of School Integration (‘Ley de Integración Escolar’) was enacted in 1994 and highlighted the importance of attending to diversity in schools by defining it in relation to SEN: students with disabilities or language disorder have the right to not be discriminated against, and receive the required support from the school system, meaning adjustments to the regular curriculum. This Law was reinforced in 1999 with the implementation of the School Integration Programme (‘Programa de Integración Escolar’, which I will hereafter call the SEN Programme), focused on providing additional economic subsidies to schools according to their number of students diagnosed with SEN, so that they could offer pertinent human and material resources (e.g. educational psychopedagogy experts) (MINEDUC, 2005). Later, more policies and laws were enacted to reinforce the schools’ duty of incorporating curricular innovations and adjustments in order to work with students diagnosed with SEN (Fundacion Chile, 2013).

Research on the social consequences of these regulations, particularly of the SEN Programme, has warned that, despite their original aim of overcoming disabled students’ stigmatization, they are built on a definition of diversity anchored in bio-medical models and the imaginary of the deficit, producing and reproducing meanings of inclusion restricted to the incorporation to school of those ‘impaired’ students diagnosed with ‘special physical and/or cognitive needs’. As argued by Infante and colleagues (2011), these policies and programmes constitute systems for reasoning about diversity, difference and inclusion in certain ways (and not others), which are aligned with a certain social and economic model, namely, neoliberalism and the market school system established in Chile since the eighties. This system, rooted in a utilitarian definition of education, is highly oriented towards supporting the economic system by providing the students with the skills to then productively participate in the labour market (Infante, Matus, & Vizcarra, 2011). Accordingly, policies of school inclusion, far from being neutral, act as a normative framework that delimitates the meanings with which it is possible to think and speak about inclusion. By doing so, these laws and regulations also produce and reproduce subjectivity markers, assuming certain values as desirable and constructing the subjectivities based on these values as the norm. As a consequence, subjects who do not fit with the hegemonic standards are defined as minorities, as marginal; they are the ones who have been conceived through a deficit paradigm and the ones who, as disabled and deviating

from the *normal*, are supposed to be included into the school system, which continues with only minor alterations.

In this regard, under the appearance of neutrality and commitment to inclusion, equity and democracy, the Chilean policies of inclusion have contributed to the naturalization and legitimation of essentialised and static meanings of diversity, drawing clear limits presented as truths between who the *normal* students (“the capable”) and the others (“the disabled”) are (Infante, Matus, & Vizcarra, 2011). In Infante and Matus’ words, this “create[s] dichotomies around the normalization and abnormalization of the body in schools” (2009: 438), which is problematic because the students signified as disabled learn to live in a position of disadvantage while those students signified as normal learn to live in a position of privilege, thus reinforcing “a critical superiority of the normal body” (Infante & Matus, 2009: 439). In other words, the policies of school inclusion have constructed a certain definition of difference and otherness, thought as troubling, which allows the affirmation of a certain ideal of the student subject (Matus & Rojas, 2015). By doing so, schools may be thought as supporting a project of social homogenization (Matus, 2005).

Another problem of the revised conceptualization of inclusion in the Chilean educational policy is the limitation of inclusion to students with disabilities, disregarding other dimensions such as gender, race, sexuality and class (Infante, Matus, & Vizcarra, 2011; Infante & Matus, 2009; Matus, 2005). In addition, I argue, inclusion policies focused on SEN have constructed a meaning of *difference* as limited to stereotypical subjects affected by specific psychologic/physical barriers, instead of assuming difference as a common characteristic of human groups and individuals. Diversity is then discursively anchored at the individual level, neutralizing its social condition and consequently restricting the significance of inclusion to the benevolent integration of those particular individuals categorised by the policy discourse in disadvantage to learn. In this framework, recognising those students with SEN so the school can be better able to educate them - and help them with compensatory mechanisms to learn what the *normal* students can more easily learn - could be seen as a strategy to make the *other* visible so that she/he can be normalized and integrated into the dominant values of the school (Infante, Matus, & Vizcarra, 2011; Infante & Matus, 2009). Therefore, student diversity does not appear to be valued by the described policies. As such, they might rather be

---

*An example of this comes from my experience as an ethnographer. During fieldwork in schools, I have been able to witness how the school community tends to call those students diagnosed with SEN participating in the SEN Programme as “the integrated students”, evincing their stigmatization as the different ones, compared to their “normal” peers who did not participate of the Programme. Maria Teresa Rojas (2016) also makes reference to this finding.*
contributing to the reproduction of practices of exclusion by reinforcing the distinction between the normal and the non-normal students, rather than contributing to building a more inclusive school system.

In this context, the uniqueness of the Inclusion Law lies in its focus on social inclusion (Rojas, Falabella & Alarcon, 2016) by regulating the conditions for students from different social backgrounds to enter schools (not only for students categorised as with SEN). However, as with policies focused on SEN, the definition of inclusion in this Law appears to also be based on the deficit paradigm: the different, those who are to be included, are conceived as lacking something, maybe not necessarily physical or cognitive abilities, but the right ethnicity, the right social class or the right gender to guarantee success in the educational system. They are the indigenous, the poor, the woman and the homosexual, amongst other subjectivities defined as marginal. Thus, it is worth wondering whether the Inclusion Law may also -as argued above in relation to other inclusion policies - potentially contribute to a project of social homogenization in schools.

While this is not a study of the Inclusion Law itself and its impacts, this policy context is relevant as it reveals a particular view of the society Chile is expected to become through interventions in the school system: a multicultural society in which diverse social groups can live together democratically. In such a context, my study explores a research area that has been poorly studied in Chile despite its topicality (Bellei, 2015): how social-class diversity is experienced in Chilean schools by parents and staff. As school segregation in Chile is highly shaped by socioeconomic characteristics, I address such diversity mainly in terms of the schools’ social class composition by exploring the dispositions to social class difference that parents and members of staff express themselves as having.

In the next chapter (II), I present relevant literature discussing the relationship between social diversity or mix in educational institutions and the learning of democratic values, and how this relationship is mediated by concrete interactions or mixing practices. Then I analyse empirical evidence around concrete micro-processes shaping the ways social diversity is experienced in schools, specifically family practices and perceptions regarding school mix and mixing.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed the social context in which my thesis is situated. In Section 2, I analysed the implementation of neoliberal reforms during the military dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990), which were then continued and strengthened by democratic governments. I
argue that these reforms have contributed to socioeconomic segregation, with Chile being one of the most unequal OECD countries. This situation is reflected in the education system, which is also highly segregated in socioeconomic terms: disadvantaged students tend to concentrate in state schools or private subsidised schools, while affluent students tend to attend private (non-subsidised) schools.

To understand Chile’s segregation from a theoretical perspective, in Section 3 I discussed literature conceptualising stratification and social class with a special focus on their usage in the Chilean context. I highlight how, in Chile, definitions of social class have been controversial and still pose several challenges. I argue that an understanding of social class as multidimensional is useful for this thesis. In particular, I analyse the intersections between the subjective and structural dimension of social stratification.

Finally, Section 4 shows that recent reforms attempt to revert segregation across schools through the implementation of the Inclusion Law. Being still gradually implemented, this Law forbids discriminatory mechanisms within schools receiving public funding, such as admission processes based on social and academic criteria. The Law is expected to contribute to increasing social diversity within schools and, as such, promote encounters amongst students from different backgrounds and the development of democratic attitudes (e.g. respect to difference).

However, I argue that such positive outcomes cannot be assumed since the Law extends a deficiency-based definition of inclusion - also present in previous policies focused on students with SEN -, based on the deficiency of those who are included (i.e. disadvantaged students). Moreover, there is no evidence on potential mechanisms for developing democratic attitudes in socioeconomically diverse schools in Chile, due to the lack of research on the dynamics and lived experiences of those involved in such diversity. My study seeks to reduce this research gap and to envisage potential challenges for the Inclusion Law to address by analysing how social-class diversity is experienced in Chilean schools that already had above-average levels of socioeconomic diversity before the implementation of the Law. Specifically, I explore the staff’s and parents’ dispositions towards social class difference in these contexts, dispositions which I argue constitute a basic element with which to think of the possible dynamics originating from socially diverse schools.

The next chapter approaches the latter issue by analysing literature on the parents’ school choice and student composition preferences, as well as on the dynamics taking place in socially diverse schools.
Chapter II. Literature review

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse research studies addressing the social dynamics taking place in socially diverse settings, especially schools but also urban spaces. Most of these studies focus on ethnic differences and, in some cases, on their intersections with social class. I argue that their findings are useful for this thesis, which focuses on socioeconomic differences.

According to the literature, in Section 2 I argue that school mix may have positive consequences by promoting the development of democratic learning amongst students (e.g. values such as respect and empathy); however, this is not a necessary condition, especially when there is not school mixing (actual interactions between people from different backgrounds).

In Section 3, I analyse empirical evidence on school choice and the social dynamics taking place in socially diverse settings. First, I show that social diversity within schools (school mix) is an unusual phenomenon, since parents tend to choose socially homogenous schools for their children (3.1.). However, studies also provide evidence on parents who explicitly declare their celebration of social diversity, despite their concern about guaranteeing ‘the right mix’ (3.2.). Finally (3.3), I review evidence on parents who chose socially diverse schools and argue that, despite this, there is a tendency for segregation to be internally reproduced, since people tend to associate and make friends with those with a similar social background to theirs. However, studies also provide nuances to this by revealing subtle engagements and negotiations across social difference (3.3.).

2. From mixed settings to mixing practices

There has been significant research on the consequences of students’ diversity, either emphasising the possible positive or negative effects in terms of democratic learning for students, their families and –ultimately- the society. This topic has become an important focus of attention in societies currently experiencing a growing social and cultural diversity, for example, as a result of global migration waves, currently a major concern in the case of Europe. However, this is not a new topic of interest. At the beginning of the 20th century, the

---

33 There is also plenty of research on other kinds of consequences of social diversity in schools, such as studies about the effects on academic learning, which have produced a variety of non-conclusive findings (Bellei, 2015; Thrupp, 1995; Thrupp, Lauder, & Robinson, 2002).
US philosopher and educator John Dewey (1916) already recognized challenges associated with increasingly heterogeneous societies and argued that socially diverse schools could contribute to strengthening democracy in societies with great diversity of populations.

For Dewey, public spaces like schools are key social environments which provide broader social relationships compared to the intimate social context of families, and would be essential for offering the individuals the “opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which [they were] born” (1916: 24). This would benefit individuals cognitively as "diversity of stimulation means novelty, and novelty means challenge to thought" (Dewey, 1916: 98); also, more diverse social relationships could enable them to learn skills for social exchange, which in turn could contribute to the fostering of democracy and social equity: when the members of a society have the “opportunity to receive and to take from others” (1916: 97), their interactions will promote particular changes in their habits, developing more democratic outlook and practices. That is, habits based on sharing a large variety of experiences and values, as well as the recognition of mutual interests. On the contrary, the isolation of a group and the consequent closure of their interactions would develop an antisocial and selfish spirit, namely the sole prosecution of the group’s interests and “their domestic concerns as if they had no connection with a larger life” (p. 99): “one group has interests "of its own" which shuts it out from full interaction with other groups, so that its prevailing purpose is the protection of what it has got" (p. 99). Therefore, the dispositions of a group would tend to become more rigid and static, fostering social divisions and promoting the naturalization of segregation and social positions both for the socially disadvantaged and advantaged.

This philosophical approach finds support from recent empirical research on social diversity arguing for its benefits in developing more democratic subjectivities and preparing citizens to democratically participate in societies that are becoming more and more heterogeneous. For instance, Hurtado argues for the US context that “diversity in the student body provides the kind of experience base and discontinuity needed to evince more active thinking processes amongst students, moving from their own embedded worldviews to consider those of another (of their diverse peers)” (2005: 598). Similarly, Wilson (2012, 2013), in the UK, argues that the cultural shock due to heterogeneous relationships may be productive for social dialogue (also Bottero, 2009). Thus, in line with Gordon Allport’s ‘contact hypothesis’ (1979), establishing socially diverse relationships is thought to contribute to reducing prejudices, learning to coexist with others and developing tolerance and inclusive attitudes34 (Allport, 1979; Amin, 2002;

34 It has to be noted that there is not necessarily a shared definition amongst authors of inclusive attitudes. The distinction between inclusive and tolerant attitudes made by Janmaat (2014) is useful to

However, it has been argued that mere social heterogeneity (structural diversity as Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002, call it) does not guarantee the emergence of these values and attitudes (Janmaat, 2014; Neal & Vincent, 2013; Reay, 2007; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vincent & Ball, 2006). Heterogeneity may, on the contrary, induce negative and counterproductive effects: for example, racial tensions and micro-aggressions (Garces & Jayakumar, 2014), the isolation of particular groups and the consolidation of prejudices and antagonisms, reinforcing segregation (Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, & Cucchiara, 2014; Wilson, 2012). According to the so-called ‘conflict theory’ (e.g. Blalock, 1967), ethnic mix may foster intolerance and exclusionary practices towards immigrants: “the larger the proportion of the out-group in a given population is, the more the dominant group will feel threatened in this privileged position, culturally and economically, and consequently the more exclusionary and hostile it will become towards the out-group” (Janmaat, 2014: 812). For example, in focus groups with White British parents in one state school in Birmingham, Wilson (2012) reveals that, despite celebrating the existence of a multicultural society, the participants perceived the erosion of the ‘English’ culture and felt anxious about losing their own identity.

Research has identified some important elements shaping the possibilities for cultural change and development of democratic values and attitudes from a socially diverse setting. Particularly, it has been argued that it is necessary to pay attention to the conditions in which school mix takes place and how certain social interactions are shaped, this is, the way school mix (social diversity) is followed (or not) by school mixing (i.e. more intimate interactions rather than superficial encounters). In her quantitative analysis on the development of democratic skills and dispositions in nine public universities in the United States, Hurtado (2005) found that substantial and positive informal interactions with diverse students increased the probabilities to develop democratic skills and conflict resolution. Also in the USA, Garces and Jayakumar contend that:

---

the purpose of clarifying a possible definition: whilst the first makes reference to accepting the other as equal, this is not a necessary element of the second.  
35 For example, Janmaat’s (2014) quantitative analysis of the attitudes amongst 14-year-old native students in 14 Western countries indicates that the proportion of immigrants (‘out-group’ size) is positively related to inclusive views on immigrants in classrooms and countries where second-generation outnumber first-generation migrant children (i.e. the old immigration states); on the contrary, there is no significant link in countries and classrooms with more first than second generation students. Therefore, this study shows that the emergence of democratic learning is conditional upon the proportion of first and second generation immigrant students.
“Rare or superficial interracial interactions are also not conducive to prejudice reduction because many people have biased judgements that result in a) perceiving that their observations support and justify pre-existing stereotypes […], b) attributing counter-stereotypical behavior to situational or circumstantial factors as opposed to personal characteristics […] and c) rationalizing that an individual who strongly contradicts prevailing stereotypes is merely an ‘exception to the rule’” (2014: 120).

Hence, it is necessary to pay attention to the conditions (e.g. institutional strategies) in which school mix takes place to produce segregation or mixing, and how certain social interactions are shaped.

Following literature on multiculturalism and social encounters (e.g. Amin, 2002; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a, 2018b; Wilson, 2012), I argue that not only are schools potentially a key social space to provide broader social relationships compared to the intimate social context of families and personal networks (Dewey, 1916), but also a potential critical threshold space of interdependence and habitual engagement, which makes meaningful interactions more likely. As British geographer Ash Amin argues, “[t]he ideal sites for coming to terms with ethnic difference are where ‘prosaic negotiations’ are compulsory, in ‘micropublics’ such as the workplace, schools, colleges, youth centres, [and] sports clubs” (Amin, 2002: 969). In the next quote it can be seen that the mandatory component of interactions in schools is at the basis of daily local negotiations of difference and intercultural understanding, which are key elements for cultural displacement and change:

“Habitual contact itself is no guarantor of cultural exchange. It can entrench group animosities and identities, through repetitions of gender, class, race, and ethnic practices. Cultural change in these circumstances is likely if people are encouraged to step out of their routine environment, into other everyday spaces that function as sites of unnoticeable cultural questioning or transgression. Here too, interaction is of a prosaic nature, but these sites work as spaces of cultural displacement. Their effectiveness lies in placing people from different backgrounds in new settings where engagement with strangers in a common activity disrupts easy labelling of the stranger as enemy and initiates new attachments. They are moments of cultural destabilisation, offering individuals the chance to break out of fixed relations and fixed notions, and through this, to learn to become different through new patterns of social interaction […], potentially more receptive to new influences and friendships” (Amin, 2002: 970).
Similarly, Wilson argues that the diverse schools facilitate cultural interchange by encouraging the effort it involves. In this sense, “the school is a space of potential transformation and one where many established assumptions are drawn into question precisely because of the sustained contact that they demand over a number of years” (2012: 265). In this sense, as argued by Vincent and colleagues (2018) in relation to primary schools, even though

“ethnic and social difference can be held at a distance […] there is also a high likelihood that this distancing will not always be possible and such strategies (conscious or otherwise) will be disrupted at some points. The nature of the primary school world and the population using it, as well as the intergenerational dynamics of the social relationships within it, can demand that difference has to be negotiated often through an uneven mix of recognition, interaction or reflexivity” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 223)

Thus, this literature argues that the development of the willingness to engage with others who are socially different require explicit efforts from the school staff, parents and students, in order to transform a mixed school into one where mixing practices take place.

The potential of schools for promoting dialogue across social differences could be studied from different levels: the macro (e.g. global and national policy context), the meso (e.g. the role of municipal administrators of state schools, in the case of Chile) and the micro (e.g. schools and their internal dynamics). From my experience as a social anthropologist, and agreeing with Wilson (2012) and Amin (2002), I have decided to focus on the last one, that is, the potential of the local level of the school, to illustrate the more general Chilean context (characterized by a huge school segregation and a strong set of policies attempting to reduce it) through in-depth understanding of situated everyday micro processes which shape mixing in socially mixed settings. The literature has explored at least two foci of attention regarding this topic. One of them has been on specific institutional strategies that might contribute to promote interaction and mutual understanding in socially diverse settings such as schools (e.g. Neal & Vincent, 2013), universities (Garces & Jayakumar, 2014; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado, 2005, 2012) and neighbourhoods (e.g. August, 2014). A second focus has been on families’ practices and perceptions, paying particular attention to their everyday interactions and difference negotiations, as well as the ways this process moulds their subjectivities (e.g. Amin, 2002; Neal & Vincent, 2013; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2016a; Vowden, 2012; Wilson, 2012). The aim of this study is to explore these two aspects, involving both families’ and institutions’ practices and narratives regarding school mix and mixing as means to understand the ways social class diversity is encountered and perceived. Next, I consider what the literature tells
us about the micro-processes shaping mixing, specifically, the family practices and narratives regarding school mix and mixing.

3. Living school mix: family negotiations of social differences

In this section, I explore the empirical evidence regarding the micro-processes shaping mixing, specifically the parents’ preferences and relationship patterns (parents and students) in socially diverse educational and urban settings. Although many of the analysed studies focus on contexts characterized by ethnic diversity and immigration, I analyse them considering their contributions to understanding contexts characterized by other kinds of social diversity, particularly social class.

In line with sociological studies on the links between education and families, parents need to be understood as a crucial actor in shaping the children’s subjectivity as well as their attitudes towards education and educational paths (Ball, 2003; Lareau, 2002; Crozier, 2000; Vincent, 2000). Moreover, this corpus of research has sustained that parents, through their parenting styles and educational beliefs, expectations and choices, have an important role in producing social differentiation (e.g. the middle-class from the working-class) and reproducing social inequalities. This is particularly clear in the case of the middle-classes, who have the necessary resources or capitals to transmit their social advantage to their children (Vincent and Maxwell, 2016; Vincent Rollock, Ball, & Gillborn, 2012a, 2012b; Reay, Rozier, & James, 2011; Ball, 2003; Lareau, 2002; Savage, 2000) and whose “actions produce or contribute to the perpetuation, inscription and reinvention of social inequalities both old and new” (Ball, 2003: 5). Thus, the need to analyse the parents’ dispositions to social class mix and mixing at the school. In the next sub-section, I analyse literature on parents’ preferences regarding the schools’ social composition.

3.1. The prevalence of homophily

The importance that families give to peer group when choosing a school has been documented by several studies in different countries such as the UK (e.g. Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Papapolydorou, 2014; Vowden, 2012), the Netherlands (e.g. Boterman, 2013), France (e.g. van Zanten, 2003), the USA (e.g. Schneider and Buckley, 2002; Jencks, Smith, Ackland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, … Michelson, 1972), New Zealand (e.g. Ladd & Fiske, 2001), Finland (e.g. Kosunen, 2016), and Chile (e.g. Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza., 2015; Carrasco, Donoso, & Mendoza, 2016; Flores & Carrasco, 2013; Leyton & Rojas, 2017; Mendoza, 2014b; Rojas, 2009). This body of research has analysed
families’ attitudes towards degrees of diversity of school populations – generally in terms of social class and ethnic background – mostly focused on the middle classes, who are found to often seek a critical mass of others like them (e.g. Ball, 2003; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011). These studies stress the key place that non-academic aspects such the schools’ population have for families choosing a school. For example, there is evidence suggesting that families tend to emphasise information about school composition in terms of race and social class of the other pupils (Ladd & Fiske, 2001; Schneider & Buckley, 2002). Additionally, the literature illustrates that families define a ‘good’ school partly because they have ‘good’ students, demonstrating that the perception about school’s quality depends to some extent on its intake (Jencks, Smith, Ackland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, … Michelson, 1972). This body of research has analysed the type of school populations that families prefer and the degree of diversity of these populations, generally focusing on social class and ethnic background (Boterman, 2013; Vowden, 2012). Additionally, these studies appear to be mostly focused on ethnicity, race or religious difference (Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012), and on secondary school (Vowden, 2012).

In general, research predominantly supports the prevalence of homophily, “a pattern of differential association in which agents are more likely to associate with those who are socially similar to themselves” (Bottero, 2009: 400). In McPherson and colleagues’ words, “the result is that people’s personal networks are homogeneous with regard to many sociodemographic, behavioral, and intrapersonal characteristics” (2001: 415), limiting their social worlds. In practice, this means that parents tend to choose schools where their populations have similar backgrounds to theirs, for example in socioeconomic or ethnic terms (e.g. Flores & Carrasco, 2013; Papapolypodrou, 2014; van Zanten, 2003). Homophily apparently operates differentially depending on the possible mix. Families appear to be more prone to mix with people from more socioeconomically advantaged classes (Hastings, Weelden, Weinstein, Chevalier, Gerber, Green, … Washington, 2007). Consequently, the poorest and most excluded students are often concentrated not only in the same schools but also in those with the worst achievement and reputation (Ball, 1993; Jellison, 2002; Ladd & Fiske, 2001; Lankford & Wyckoff, 2015; Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). In Chile, quantitative evidence supports these findings. As Elacqua and Fabrega (2004) point out, the schools considered by parents from different social classes tend to be socioeconomically homogeneous rather than academically homogeneous, and only a quarter of the parents choose schools considering the latter element as the most important one. Accordingly, Gallego and Hernando (2010), and Chumacero, Gómez, and Paredes (2011), claim that families with higher incomes tend to appreciate more homogeneity in schools. Flores and Carrasco (2013)
introduced some complexities to this idea arguing that middle-class and poor families liked schools that were somewhat socioeconomically advantaged.

A sense of anxiety has been identified amongst White middle-class parents, who appear to feel distaste for certain ethnic and socioeconomic ‘others’, especially working-class people. Some of the identified fears at the basis of this anxiety are: a) the fear of their children losing their manners and values (Boterman, 2013; Rojas, 2009; Vowden, 2012); b) the fear of their children being hindered by lower achieving students and of not fitting in (Boterman, 2013; Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2015; Vowden, 2012); c) the fear of being physically and/or psychologically damaged by ‘dangerous others’ (Vowden, 2012); and d) the fear of being ‘derailed’ from the ‘right track’ (Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2015). Furthermore, families express uncertainties around whether a mixed environment is able to offer ease and comfort: a diverse school is often perceived as a potentially more uncomfortable space in which parents and students may not fit, especially when they are a minority (Boterman, 2013; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a; Vowden, 2012). The main concern here is “that their children might feel isolated and that they might find it harder to make friends” (Vowden, 2012: 739), demonstrating that parents tend to think that friendship across difference is much harder than making friends within a homogeneous social environment, both for themselves and their children. These arguments add evidence regarding the barriers for school mix.

3.2. Ambivalent mixophilous attitudes

Notwithstanding the prevalence of homophily, studies reveal the existence of heterophily or mixophilia among students and parents (e.g. Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a). As early defined in communication research, “heterophily is the degree to which pairs of individuals who interact are different with respect to certain attributes” (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970: 526). Aligned with this, in the field of education heterophily has often been understood based on Bottero’s usage of the term (2005, 2010) and as a synonym of social mixing in schools, since homophily cannot be assumed because “the agent [also] encounters others with different dispositions and characteristics” (Bottero, 2010: 18).

The concept of heterophily resonates with what Vincent, Neal and Iqbal (2018), following Bauman’s (2003) arguments on the perceptions of difference in urban environments, understand as mixophilia, namely positive views of difference and diversity among parents/students. As Bianchi (2018) explains, Bauman defines mixophilia as “a relation of friendship with Difference, proximity and confrontation of life policies that undermine the bonding to the Other” (Bianchi, 2018: 123). Following Arruda (2008: 474), Bianchi explains
that mixophilia “is marked by the ‘[…] strong attraction for difference, a desire to merge with the diverse because it is interesting or fascinating’” (Bianchi, 2018: 123). Thus, whereas heterophily opposes to homophily, mixophilia opposes to mixophobia, that is, a view of ‘the other’ as a danger and, consequently, the (homophilous) search for homogeneous social environments and the removal of the difference. In this thesis, I prefer the term mixophilia, given my focus on the participants’ views towards difference and social mixing (which may potentially lead to social mixing), rather than on actual processes of mixing that the term heterophily emphasises.

Empirically, it is argued that certain urban middle-class parents (Boterman, 2013; Neal & Vincent, 2013; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Reay, 2007; Rojas, 2009; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a; Vowden, 2012) are particularly prone to ‘consuming other cultures’ and value their children experiencing social difference. In this sense, they make ‘against the grain’ school choices (James, Reay, Crozier, Jamieson, Beedell, Hollingworth, & Williams, 2009; James & Beedell, 2009). Some studies also suggest that there is a cross-class and cross-ethnic will to mix across different social classes and ethnic groups (e.g. Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012).

In a dilemmatic and often anxious way (as the qualitative research shows), these mixophilous parents appear to value socially mixed schools but at the same time recognize risks and adopt strategies to guarantee the ‘right’ mix (Ball, 2003). ‘Love’ of social mix is not automatic and unrestricted but depends on the form and degree mix takes. According to the literature, some of the elements defining the ‘right’ mix are:

a) The proportion of students from different backgrounds, with a tendency to prefer a higher proportion of families from their own social class and/or ethnic group (e.g. Boterman, 2013; Raveaud & Zanten, 2007). This is what Vowden (2012) refers to as ‘safety in numbers’.

b) The particular socioeconomic and ethnic groups co-existing in the school. For example, families from various backgrounds appear to be more prone to mix with people more socioeconomically advantaged (Ball, 1993; Chumacero, Gomez, & Paredes, 2011; Elacqua & Fabrega, 2004; Flores & Carrasco, 2013; Gallego and Hernando, 2010; Hastings, Weelden, Weinstein, Chevalier, Gerber, Green, … Washington, 2007; Jellison, 2002; Ladd & Fiske, 2001; Lankford & Wyckoff, 2006; Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). Also, Asian minorities appear to be highly valued by White middle classes in Vowden’s study in London (2012) while negative attitudes towards Turkish and Moroccan immigrants prevailed amongst White Dutch
respondents of Boterman’s (2013). Vowden also found a relationship between perceived social class and ethnicity: his participants “were more than happy for their children to have peers from all ethnic minorities if those peers were middle class, but less comfortable if they were not” (2012: 735).

c) The perceived cultural dispositions of the different families, families that share similar daily habits, moral values, routines and, particularly, expectations about education and future life conditions (Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2015; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vowden, 2012). These concerns regarding subjectivity and behaviour emerge with even more strength and transparency than the worry about social class and ethnicity, possibly as a more socially acceptable strategy for talking about those structural aspects without actually mentioning them and appearing prejudiced. In fact, manners and habits are seen by families not only as significant markers with which to classify people but also as legitimate reasons to choose both school and friends; meanwhile, making judgements about ‘others’ based on their social class and ethnicity tends to be felt as a more sensitive issue and likely to raise the spectre of appearing snobbish or racist, so consequently, avoided by parents (e.g. Vowden, 2012) and students (e.g. Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012).

d) The setting where mix is experienced, as a result of parents’ strategies to limit the interaction with different others to certain spaces (e.g. the school) to keep other ‘safe’ spaces (i.e. the home) in which to interact with people who are similar to them (Boterman, 2013; Jackson & Butler, 2014; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2015). For instance, the evidence shows that the relationships that white middle classes establish with ‘different others’ are often restricted to the school (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2016b, 2018a) or the neighbourhood (Boterman, 2013; Jackson & Butler, 2014).

In short, mixophilia appears to be constrained by certain minimum conditions of homophily, on a basis of similarity either regarding positional (e.g. different ethnicity but the same social class) or dispositional aspects (e.g. different ethnicity but the same educational expectations).

3.3. Friendship in socially diverse settings: ‘Together but not scrambled’

---

36 In Spanish, ‘Juntos pero no revueltos’: this expression is used when people are sharing the same space but clearly delimiting each one’s privacy. There is not a clearly similar English phrase.
Studies on interactions and friendship in socially diverse spaces have highlighted processes of *mixing* between parents and students from different backgrounds. These mixing processes have usually been understood under the term ‘conviviality’, that is, “the coming together of previously unconnected cultures, a bridging of social and cultural distances” (Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012: 2, citing Gilroy, 2004). In Amin’s words, “conviviality is not the product of civic virtue or interpersonal recognition, but a habit of negotiating multiplicity and the company of unknown others as a kind of bodily training” (2003: 4). In this regard, conviviality is an embodied capacity to live together that is not assumed to be unproblematic (i.e. a romanticised celebration of diversity as ‘happy togetherness’) but a result of negotiation, effort and even conflict within a community (Wise & Noble, 2016).

Most of the studies on conviviality I reviewed show that cross-background friendship formation is unusual, revealing more nuanced processes of negotiation, interaction and even subtle segregation mechanisms in apparently non-segregated spaces.

For example, in their pilot study on children’s and adults’ friendships across social class and ethnic difference in London, Neal and Vincent (2013) illustrate such processes of negotiation with the intermittent but friendly social relationship between two mothers with primary school children (8/9-year-old): a Mixed English-Ghanaian middle-class mother and a Somali, less affluent one. The authors highlight the role of material spaces for enabling or restricting these mothers’ possibilities for mixing and crossing differences. In fact, despite “each offer[ing] the other significant mutual support during periods of intense emotional stress” (p. 918) and the middle-class mother stating that “we could rely on each other in crisis” (p. 919), they do not enter each other’s homes. “I have never been in her flat so we’ll stand for an hour on the street corner”, the middle-class mother states, and she adds that when the Somali mother “came to her house ‘she didn’t ever seem at ease’ [which she] felt might be because the house presented a very obvious middle-class material environment” (p. 918). Nevertheless, these relationships appear to be meaningful for these mothers since they involve “their personal worlds and their children’s lives’ and they ‘are intensely felt (…) and are day-to-day and ongoing” (p. 926).

In a later publication, Vincent, Neal and Iqbal (2018a) discuss the extent to which the experience of living with diversity could lead to generating ‘convivial dispositions’, that is, an attitude of openness and convivial intention; a willingness to bridge difference and develop relationships with others. Thus, echoing Wise’s definition of a convivial sensibility, such dispositions are “not so much about ‘loving of difference’, but open to difference, […] alive to the possibilities of newness” (Wise, 2016: 2291), involving practical skills of recognition. The
authors found that whereas convivial dispositions were clearly visible in the friendship practices of the children, the parents showed more varied dispositions towards social class and ethnic difference. Convivial dispositions were found in the so-called ‘enablers’, a very small proportion of parents “willing to engage in sustained, intentional and purposive behaviours to bridge difference” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 219), and undertaking the necessary emotional labour to achieve this. The authors also signal the value of some parents’ dispositions to reflect on living with difference, that is, individuals’ internal dialogues and conscious reflexivity regarding their negotiations with difference (e.g. the recognised tension between their mixophilous discourse and their homophilous practices), although this reflexivity does not necessarily directly express itself convivial practices:

“[O]ur data reflects the ‘mundane everyday reflexivity’ (Reay 2004 p.435) of the adult respondents’ inner conversations, which in interviews with the majority of parents reveal a desire to present themselves as open to and appreciative of diversity, unsurprised by difference. This attitude might not translate into significant relationships with the neighbouring ‘other’ but is, we argue, valid in itself” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 220)

The most common response to social difference found is what Vincent and colleagues call ‘civil attention’, for example, “a minimum threshold of civility - greetings and gestures (smiles and nods) that enable people to signal recognition and awareness of the other’s legitimate presence and their shared belonging in and of the school site” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 218). Although this form of urban etiquette denotes superficial relationships and has a limited transformational impact on people’s attitudes towards diversity, the authors interpret it with a degree of optimism. Civil attention, they argue, “brings a focus on and recognition of diverse others and a mutualism in the process of sharing the same social resources” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 218), which may develop into a range of pro-diversity competencies and attitudes, and eventually into convivial dispositions. Thus “the potential of school sites to generate even ‘light’ interactions across difference […] is significant" (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 222).

Reay, Crozier and James’s study on ‘alternative’ White middle-class parents who enrol their children in urban comprehensives in the UK is also crucial to understanding the links between school mix/mixing and processes of subjectivity construction (Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011). These parents present themselves as committed to community as well as actively embracing class and ethnic diversity and mixing. However, the study reveals limitations to the actions of these seemingly socially inclusive middle-class parents, given their ambivalences and struggles to
convert their inclinations into equitable ways of interacting with class and ethnic others. Moreover, the schools’ social mix was appreciated by these parents in an instrumental way to develop in their children “key citizenship skills of tolerance and understanding difference that they perceive to be increasingly vital in a global society” (Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008: 243-244). These competences to live in the ‘real world’ are what the authors interpret as ‘multicultural capital’, that is, the ability to engage with people from different cultures. This way, even though these middle-class parents “are choosing not to use their privilege as much as they might […] there was more self-interest than altruism and a superficial endorsement of social mix rather than any actual commitment to social mixing. […] although this is far removed from the elitist and narrow version of citizenship of the socially isolationist, exclusive and excluding white middle classes […] it is also miles away from egalitarian notions of democratic citizenry” (Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008: 252-253).

Studies have also highlighted that parents and students are inclined to establish homophilous differential associations (Bottero, 2007), that is, association with people of a similar social position, reproducing patterns of segregation within socially diverse spaces (Asante & Nooral-Deen, 1984; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu, 2005; Schrieff, Tredoux, Finchilescu, & Dixon, 2010; Smith & Moore, 2000; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2015, 2018a). This entails that “disadvantaged people tend to associate with people who are similarly disadvantaged, while the privileged likewise draw more of their contacts from the privileged” (Bottero, 2007: 814).

For example, in a secondary school in the UK, Hollingworth and Mansaray (2012) identified a racialized use of the spaces during break and lunch time, each ethnic group having its territory: as a student described, “the cafeteria was all Black people and [in] the outside all the White people would be on the veranda trying to sunbathe and stuff […] Inside the lunch hall there’s generally the majority White people like having packed lunches or whatever” (p. 7). Although the students attributed these divisions to the ‘normal’ clustering of students with different interests, the authors highlight them as a result of lifestyles structured according to social position, shaping –as a consequence- homophilous differential associations deeply rooted in social class and race distinctions. Thus, conviviality in this mixed school seems to rely on the management of social distance and, through it, to reinforce the social reproduction of intra-school differences between groups (‘us’ and ‘them’) rather than mixing and cohesion.
In their study with white British middle-class parents in three London socially diverse primary schools, Vincent, Neal and Iqbal (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a) also identify the perceived ‘naturalness’ of homogeneous clustering amongst different groups. Rather than a conscious and articulated stratagem of exclusiveness, homophily here appears as forming strong social networks of ‘people like me’. Similar parents are perceived as ‘natural’ friends in a context of ‘normal’ horizontal diversity, overlooking a vertically stratified school dynamic in which “different parents bring different forms and volumes of social, economic and cultural capital, and some resources are more valuable than others in negotiating parents’ relationships with the school as an institution” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2015: 18). In such scenario, middle-class networks may bring parents advantaged social positions such as allowing them to play a key role in school decision-making, as well as to have closer relationships with the teachers and greater knowledge of school activities.

Outside the educational field and drawing on local processes of spatial urban segregation, research in Chile has revealed that social inclusion and cohesion in socioeconomically mixed neighbourhoods – such as lower stigmatisation and better access to services (e.g., Sabatini & Salcedo, 2007) – are usually accompanied by patterns of social fragmentation and segregation (Rasse, 2015; Ruiz-Tagle, 2016; Sabatini, Rasse, Mora, & Brain, 2012). Social fragmentation is noticeable, for example, in the different spaces used by the different families and “the symbolic violence of walls” (Ruiz-Tagle, 2016: 83), exerted by most advantaged families. The latter seems to be particularly clear in areas with high rates of crime and violence (Rasse, 2015).

In the UK, Butler and Robson (2003) created the concept of ‘social tectonics’, later revised as ‘elective belonging’ (Jackson and Butler, 2014), to explain the restricted contact between white middle classes and black and working-class people in two localities in London. ‘Elective belonging’ is a term inspired by Bourdieu’s class analysis and initially developed by Savage and colleagues (2005) to describe the reflexive ways in which middle-class individuals prioritize inhabiting places their habitus is adapted to. This often entails the presence of people of a similar background.

First, in Brixton, Butler and Robson (2003) found that even though the middle classes declared they valued living in a mixed neighbourhood, each group moved past each other in social space, living parallel lives, like tectonic plates. Eleven years later, Jackson and Butler’s research in Peckham suggested that middle-class families did not simply ignore social and ethnic ‘others’ but that the latter’s presence had become a way to construct their own cosmopolitanism and to distinguish themselves from a more mainstream middle-class living
in white homogeneous neighbourhoods. In fact, middle-class people actively negotiated an accommodation with social mix by tracing ambivalent articulations against and with the ‘others’ in concrete physical spaces, either avoiding or going to the places where they usually were, for example a shopping street called Rye Lane: “[t]heir practices in relation to this contested place revealed a desire to take control of this space, to bring it more in line with a middle-class habitus, while also celebrating its diversity” (Jackson & Benson, 2014: 1207). Thus, the spatial boundaries defined by Rye Lane traced a symbolical space for subjectivity negotiations: a space in which White middle classes were able to symbolically place themselves in relation to others.

Applying Jackson and Butler’s (2014) contributions to the educational field is useful in order to understand social mixing as not only physical interaction but also the production of narratives around who ‘the others’ and ‘us’ are. Within this framework, exploring the micro processes shaping mixing and the potential development of particular dispositions to social class difference require the analysis of the processes of negotiation at the basis of subjectivity formation, i.e. the relationship between the way ‘one’ imagines oneself and the way one imagines the ‘other’ (Neal & Vincent, 2013; Papapolydorou, 2014; Wilson, 2012).

4. Conclusion

By drawing upon Dewey’s philosophical arguments and empirical research evidence on the social dynamics taking place in socially diverse settings, I argue that the promotion of social diversity is crucial to foster democratic societies (Section 2). This is because engaging with people from different backgrounds and interests potentially encourages the development of democratic learning amongst those involved in socially heterogeneous relationships (e.g. learning values such as respect and empathy). However, the evidence on socially diverse settings such as schools and urban contexts warns of the conditionings that can affect this learning taking place. Prejudices and antagonisms between groups may even be strengthened when there are no actual interactions between people from different backgrounds. In the school context, this means that school mix needs to be accompanied by school mixing to promote mutual understanding across difference, which is something that authors argue to be likely to happen in contexts where habitual engagement is compulsory, such as schools.

In Section 3, I first (3.1.) analyse empirical evidence on parents’ preferences regarding social diversity at the schools, which identifies the prevalence of homophily, that is, of ‘love towards the similar’. This is argued to be an important reason for the existing social homogeneity within
schools and the resultant lack of school mix in several national contexts, including Chile: parents tend to choose schools for their children composed of students with a similar socioeconomic and ethnic background.

Studies also reveal heterogeneous/mixophilous attitudes amongst some middle-class parents who make ‘against the grain’ school choices and enrol their children in socially diverse schools, declaring themselves as celebrating the possibilities of engaging with a heterogeneous range of people (3.2.). However, the evidence warns of the need to avoid an idealisation of these parents as completely open to diversity, since their attitudes towards difference are ambivalent and bounded by certain minimum conditions to guarantee ‘the right mix’ (i.e. a mix that benefits their children, according to the expectations these parents have for transmitting their advantage).

Finally (3.3), I review evidence on parents who chose socially diverse schools and argue that, despite this, there is a tendency for segregation to be internally reproduced through mechanisms of homophilous differential association: despite being surrounded by difference, students and parents tend to associate and make friends with those with a similar social background to theirs. Nevertheless, there is also evidence arguing of the value of more subtle encounters and the negotiations involved in navigating unavoidable social difference in sites such as schools. Agreeing with this reasoning, I aim in this thesis, to explore an aspect crucial to understanding how parents and schools approach socioeconomic diversity and negotiate coexisting with ‘others’: their dispositions towards social class difference.

Below, I review theoretical resources helpful to conceptualise those dispositions to social class differences.
Chapter III. Theoretical resources: A Bourdieusian Approach to Social Class and the Dispositions Towards Social Class Difference

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework I used to address the concept of social class and the dispositions towards social class difference, based on the arguments developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

First, in Section 2, I present the concepts that are relevant for the study, such as field, habitus, and capitals. I argue that a Bourdieusian framework is useful to understand social class as a complex analytical category that articulates both positional and subjective dimensions. The latter is the main focus of my thesis.

In Section 3, I argue that further literature expanding on Bourdieu’s concepts is necessary to address the possibilities for the habitus to change, an area undeveloped in his writings. In particular, I postulate that such literature is relevant to address the more reflexive aspects of the habitus entailed in the study of the dispositions towards social class difference.

Finally, in Section 4, I operationalise these concepts to address the analysis of the schools’ and the parents’ dispositions to social class difference. I define the dispositions towards social class difference as one of various other aspects that constitute the habitus.

2. Main concepts

I propose a theoretical framework to explore the mechanisms through which particular dispositions towards social class difference may emerge in schools with socioeconomic mix. In particular, I analyse the concept of habitus or dispositions—that is, subjective schemes of doing, thinking, and feeling on the basis of people’s practices—developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984a, 1984b, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2005; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), along with other complementary theoretical resources, paying attention to the ways in which habitus may be altered through encounters with social class difference.

Bourdieu conceptualizes the social world as a relational and stratified social space composed of different ‘fields’ (educational, artistic, academic, intellectual, economic, political, etc.), that
is, social spaces with “more or less institutionalized barriers to entry” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 100). A field’s boundaries (i.e. what constitutes a field) cannot be defined a priori, but have to be determined empirically and, in fact, fields can exist at different levels of aggregation and may overlap (e.g. educational field, schooling field, school field37) (idem; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). More precisely, a field is “a set of objective, historical relations between positions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 16), “a space of difference, of struggles and strategies” (Atkinson, 2015: 104). In other words, a field is a network of agents occupying differential and relational positions, which are defined

“by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.)” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 97)

Let me break down the concepts in this definition. Following Bourdieu’s analogy between field and game, although a field is not the product of a deliberate act of creation—as a game is—it follows implicit rules and expresses regularities that are not necessarily formally codified and made explicit. In each field there are stakes (‘enjeux’), something considered to be of value that the ‘players’ are ‘playing’ for from their differential positions in that field, generally competing with others. What is at stake is the accumulation of a certain capital (see below for a definition). The players play by “being taken in by the game”, that is, by having a belief (‘doxa’) in the game and its stakes without questioning its structuring rules, but taking them for granted and agreeing that “the game is worth playing” (idem, p. 98). In this sense, the players believe that what is at stake in the field is actually desirable, so it is worth participating and making investments in the game (‘illusio’) in order “to safeguard or improve their [the participants’] position and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favourable to their own products” (idem, 101).

The concept of capital is a key one here, in that the position from which each agent participates in the field will depend on their capitals and the capitals of other participants in the field. The types of capitals defined by Bourdieu38 are the following (Bourdieu, 1986):

a) Cultural capital: competencies and skills, including certified ones. It can exist in three forms:

37 For a discussion on the understanding of a school as a field, see Burke, Emmerich, & Ingram (2013).
38 Further research has identified additional sorts of capitals, such as identity capital (Gao, 2018) and emotional capital (Reay, 2000).
- Embodied state: long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, that is, as habitus (see further discussion below).
- Objectified state: cultural goods, such as books and musical instruments.
- Institutionalised state: educational qualifications.

One of the common assumptions is that cultural capital entails an appreciation of ‘highbrow’ cultural tastes (e.g. elitist aesthetic preferences), an interpretation that has been contested by claims of an understanding of culture as “the situated frame through which we meet our world rather than the more limited notion of culture as marker of class position” (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014: 197). The latter implies a conception of cultural capital as a cultural ‘toolkit’ composed of relevant cognitive and behavioural competencies to successfully negotiate the ‘rules of the game’, particularly fields, and adapt to them (Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014).

b) Social capital: social connections, more precisely, “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group” (Bourdieu, 1986: 21).

c) Economic capital: assets and liabilities oriented to profit, such as money and property rights. It is at the root of other capitals that can appear to be disassociated from economic capital, but that can, in practice, be derived from and converted into it (e.g. a particular embodied cultural capital that is sufficiently appreciated to be hired in certain jobs).

d) Symbolic capital: The symbolic apprehension (misrecognition and recognition) of a capital. Thus, the whole symbolic capital an agent possesses is the result of the legitimation of the other three capitals. As such, it presupposes the intervention of the habitus (see below) as a socially constituted cognitive capacity.

Capitals are mutually constitutive since, for instance, “economic capital affords the time and resources for investment in the development of children’s cultural capital, which is associated with future educational and occupational success and, in turn, contributes to the accumulation of economic capital” (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014: 195). In this sense, convertibility of the different types of capital, particularly of economic capital into cultural capital (e.g. access to a certain education), plays an important role in the transmission and reproduction of capital and the position occupied in social space. In Bourdieu’s words, “because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than
those of economic capital, [cultural capital] is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e. to be unrecognized as capital recognized as legitimate competence” (1986: 18). It is due to this convertibility operation, Bourdieu argues, that the educational system takes the false appearance of distributing honours and social positions based solely on the candidate’s ‘natural’ qualities, which provides it with its legitimation and efficacy: “As an instrument of reproduction capable of disguising its own function, the scope of the educational system tends to increase, and together with this increase is the unification of the market in social qualifications which gives rights to occupy rare positions” (Bourdieu, 1986: 26).

The unequal distribution of capitals in a field is the source of their specific effects and which defines that an individual’s social position will always be relational, depending on that of others. Capitals are like cards whose relative value varies across fields/games, since some configurations (structure and volume) of the capitals differentially possessed by the agents will be more useful than others to achieve an advantage in a given field. This is because each field has a specific species of capital that is defined as valid to play for what is at stake (e.g. he who has more economic capital in the economic field will be better positioned within it). Thus, capitals are powers or competencies that delineate the agents’ probabilities of obtaining a particular benefit in a certain field, with their value hinging on the existence of “a field in which this competency can be employed: a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle” (idem, p. 98). Therefore, “a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field” (idem, p. 101). In this way, the field is the locus of relations of force, where the capitals defined as of value and at stake are in constant conflict—that is, potentially contested by those in dominated positions and supported by those in dominant positions, who ‘play the game’ aiming to reproduce the field’s ‘rules of the game’ in order to retain their social advantage.

The very way power and domination is conceived (i.e. how the capitals considered to be of value and at stake are defined) in each field is conditioned by the overarching “struggles for the imposition of the dominant principle of domination” (idem, p. 76). Such struggles take place in what Bourdieu calls ‘the field of power’, a sort of meta-field where the struggles between participants are constantly shaping how power will be shared amongst them and how the work of domination is going to be divided: “The sets of agents, situated within their own fields (political, bureaucratic, economic, religious, intellectual, media, legal, scientific, etc.), invested with the power to decree the ‘legitimate’ definition of reality” (Atkinson, 2014: 225). In Bourdieu’s words, the field of power is:
“a space of play and competition in which the social agents and institutions which all possess the determinate quantity of specific capital (economic and cultural capital in particular) sufficient to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields [...] confront one another in strategies aimed at preserving or transforming [the existing] balance of forces” (Bourdieu, 1994: 76)

In turn, social positions originate the habitus, that is, systems of embodied dispositions or schemes of doing, thinking, and feeling which are at the core of the agents’ practices. Dispositions are also embodied tendencies to see others in distinctive ways (Oliver & O’Reilly, 2010). As it is embodied, the habitus is not only formed by mental attitudes and perceptions, but by ways of using the body (e.g. manners of speaking, walking, dressing, etc.). In Bourdieu’s words, habitus is a:

“system of lasting, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor” (Bourdieu, 1990b, 82)

This way, when dispositions are habituated and permanent or long-lasting, they become part of the habitus as structured structures, that is, as a result of the accumulation of history. As such, embodied dispositions are adapted to certain possibilities and impossibilities inscribed in social position. Habitus is the social world inscribed in the body, an “internalised structure and physical embodiment of objective structure” (Nash, 1999: 184). Thus, habitus is shaped by both personal and collective experiences (e.g. history of family and the class of which the individual is a member), although individual experiences in the early years are of particular importance in Bourdieu’s accounts to explain the limitation on unpredictable behaviour innovations. Hence, the limits of the habitus are defined by its historic and socially situated production, which in turn defines the limits to what it is possible to perceive, to think, and to do; limits that are transposable (i.e. the habitus orients practices in different fields from the ones in which it originated) and durable: “since it is embodied, the habitus develops a history and generates its practices, for some period of time, even after the original material conditions which gave rise to it have disappeared” (Nash, 1999: 184).
Therefore, the habitus can also be understood as having a function as *structuring structures*, as they work to generate principles of perceptions and practices. Habitus is supposed to produce a range of practices, varied to a degree, but limited in their diversity, so ‘crazy’ or unlikely practices are excluded as unthinkable for particular actors. Therefore, Bourdieu’s main argument is that the practices produced by the habitus contain principles of regularity without attributing this regularity to mechanical causes (primacy of the power of social structures over individuals) or mindful ends (primacy of the power of individuals over social structures), but to a practical knowledge/logic that transcends the structure and agency dichotomy. In Reay’s words:

“Habitus provides a method for simultaneously analysing ‘the agents and … the objective structures which make [their] experience possible […] While it is important to view individuals as actively engaged in creating their social worlds, Bourdieu’s method emphasizes the way in which ‘the structure of those worlds is already predefined by broader racial, gender and class relation […] Habitus, then, is a means of viewing structure as occurring within small-scale interactions and activity within large-scale settings” (Reay, 2004: 439)

Bourdieu also thinks of habitus as a concept that overcomes the dichotomy between stability and change, since “[b]eing the product of history, it [habitus] is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal!” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 133).

However, as I will elaborate in the next section, it has been argued that Bourdieu tended to pay more attention to the effects of structures over individuals and did not fully address the mechanisms explaining changes in the habitus. Aligned to this, the concept of habitus has been a focus of criticism due to its indeterminacy, which, according to Reay (2004), “fits in well with the complex messiness of the real world. But there is also a danger in habitus becoming whatever the data reveal” (p. 438). Specifically, Reay argues that educational research has tended to use habitus to explain the data rather than to interrogate and work with them, partly because of the difficulty of operationalising the concept (see also Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Since “habitus cannot be directly observed in empirical research and has to be apprehended interpretively” (Reay, 2015: 169), it is necessary to have the appropriate categories of analysis to do so; and since Bourdieu conceives his concepts as open and “designed to be put to work empirically in systematic fashion” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 96), such categories of analysis are not provided *a priori*, but need to be developed by researchers as ‘operational
concepts’, that is, “defined in terms of the pragmatic requirements and constraints of empirical measurement” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 96).

Particular attention needs to be paid to the close relationship between the concepts of habitus and embodied cultural capital. Educational research has tended to approach them separately, focusing on one or the other, or conceiving cultural capital as cultural resources (i.e. skills and knowledge) and habitus as the orientation (i.e. disposition) to using those resources (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). However, embodied cultural capital also entails dispositions that orient how resources are used (i.e. cultural capital working as habitus). Following Edgerton and Roberts (2014), I understand that both concepts emphasise different aspects of the same process as in a dialectic.

The dispositions constituting the habitus exist as such, that is, as a feature of an agent. But dispositions also exist in relation to a field, which is what their conceptualisation as embodied cultural capital sheds light on. In fact, an agent’s dispositions will work as assets or resources when these dispositions enable “knowing ‘how things are done’ in particular contexts” (France, Bottrell, & Haddon, 2013: 601), which means that they are (consciously or unconsciously) enacted in a field where they are vested with symbolic capital (i.e. skills and knowledge that are valued or preferred in a particular context).

Such alignment between field and dispositions (‘a well-constituted habitus’, in the terms of Bourdieu) is likely to enable the agent to obtain profit and an advantageous position in that field, whereas “[t]he greater the habitus-field incongruence an actor experiences, the less cultural capital they have in that field, because their dispositions (via the practices they generate) secure lower returns” (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014: 209). In Crossley’s words:

“[T]he notion of ‘capital’ adds . . . an attention to the exchange value which specific dispositions have within particular social fields. When an agent’s ability to ‘read’ great works of art or their accent and demeanour suffice to impress others sufficiently that they ‘connect’ with those others and secure a strategic advantage in the pursuit of their goals, for example, then those specific dispositions function precisely as capital” (Crossley, 2001: 107, cited in Edgerton & Roberts, 2014: 208)

And, it should be added, the disparity in the distribution of embodied cultural capital tends to be transmitted intergenerationally, perpetuating the imbalance.
At the same time, the fact of not working as cultural capital in a certain field modulates possible adjustments of the dispositions of the habitus. In other words, behaving in ways that are not valued in a field might motivate the agent to adopt dispositions that are valued in it: “[p]ractices, and the dispositions underlying them, that are valued (rewarded) in the field are reinforced or encouraged, those practices and dispositions that are valued less or not at all are discouraged” (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014: 209). However, the authors warn, the agents’ capacity to exercise these adaptations varies, since “the greater the disjuncture, the greater the disadvantage and the more difficult the adjustment” (idem, p. 210).

Both these structural (social position) and subjective (dispositions constituting the habitus) elements compose what Bourdieu defines as social class: an analytical construction grouping agents who are similar amongst themselves and different in relation to members of other classes (Bourdieu, 1998). This is a particularity of Bourdieu’s definition of social class, given that “the structure of social space cannot be understood through economic position or culture alone” (Oliver & O’Reilly, 2010: 50). Thus, there is an

“interplay between both external constraints and internalized structures (or habits and dispositions) [...] class and lifestyle are related through the creation of conditions of existence according to capital possession, which produce habitus, or dispositions and tastes for certain foods, music and leisure pursuits” (Oliver & O’Reilly, 2010: 51-52)

Such understanding of social class entails that the members of a class are relatively homogeneous in terms of habitus. However, as argued in the literature informed by Bourdieu’s concepts (e.g. Savage, 2015; Vincent, 2017), homogeneity of habitus within a certain social class cannot be completely assumed. The social space is not only constituted by social class locations (which depend on the agents’ volume of capitals), but also by class fractions within a social class (which depend on the agents’ composition of capitals (Weininger, 2005)39. Thus, a class fraction is defined by the relative preponderance of each kind of capital within the set of actually usable capitals, which shape distinctive everyday preferences and practices that take place in the arena of taste and cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984a).

This thesis uses the analytical categories of social class and class fraction by paying special attention to their subjective aspects, that is, by enquiring into the subjective experience of class and, more specifically, people’s dispositions towards ‘class others’.

39 Within Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, there is a third element shaping the agents’ position in the class structure, which is trajectory: the change or stability that agents experience over time in terms of the volume and composition of their capital.
It must be noted that I am focusing on social class alone, although acknowledging the intersectionality of identity. Intersectionality theory emphasises that identities are not reducible to just one dimension (e.g. social class or race) (Crenshaw, 1993, cited in Vincent, Rollock, Ball, & Gillborn, 2012b). This theory seeks to understand the complexity of social identity by focusing on the interrelated roles of differentiation markers such as gender, class, and ethnicity. Advocates of an intersectional approach argue that it avoids a misrepresentation of the individuals’ experiences and their social positionings (e.g. it is not the same to be a white middle-class woman as a black middle-class woman), as well as a more subtle understanding of the production and reproduction of social inequalities (Vincent, Rollock, Ball, & Gillborn, 2012a, 2012b). I recognise the benefits of using the concept of intersectionality. However, I decided not to take an intersectional approach in this thesis due to two reasons. First, to allow a greater focus on the category of social class, because it is the clearest marker defining Chile’s huge segregation and social inequality. To make it clear: Chile is also highly unequal in relation to, for example, gender, ethnicity, and nationality (i.e. women, homosexuals, indigenous people, and migrants have very restricted rights and access to social opportunities compared to their dominant counterparts); however, as I showed in Chapter I, socioeconomic inequality is a longstanding and particularly striking feature of the country. In spite of this, there is almost no research in the country focusing on socioeconomic mix and mixing in schools (see Chapter II). Moreover, my expectation was that a focus on social class allowed me to address the challenges associated with the perceived illegitimacy of recognising socioeconomic differences (while other sorts of differences, such as the ethnic ones, are usually assumed to be morally important to recognise). In this sense, I was interested in attending a moral question: if poverty is morally unacceptable, should the poor be recognised in the context of a socioeconomically heterogeneous school? And if so, how should they be recognised?

3. Exploring reflexivity in the habitus

Despite Bourdieu’s attempts to avoid the dichotomy between agents and structure, that is, both over-determinism of structures and over-individualism of agents (Bourdieu, 1990b), as a means of understanding both the maintenance of social regularities and social change, his framing has been criticised for underplaying the possibilities for transformation (e.g. Bottero, 2009, 2010; Reay, 2004). In particular, “while Bourdieu’s conceptualization opens up both the possibility for stability and change of subjective dispositions, the concrete mechanisms at the basis of stability (importance of prior experiences) appear to be more clearly explained than those of change” (Mendoza, 2019: 432). This might be explained by the fact that Bourdieu
paid greater attention to the structured condition of habitus as he was attempting to challenge what he considered to be the over-rational views of behaviour, dominant in the economic theory and educational policies at the end of the last century—i.e. Rational Action Theory (RAT) and its assumptions of mindfulness, calculation, and maximization. For Bourdieu, “consciousness and reflexivity are both cause and symptom of the failure of immediate adaptation to the situation” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 11).

How, then, to analyse the possibilities for habitus to change and, eventually, for the agent to develop dispositions that are not directly inscribed in social position? To address this question, I propose to complement Bourdieu’s conceptualization of habitus with additional theoretical resources discussing habitus disruption and reflexivity (e.g. Aarseth, 2016; Aedo, 2014; Akram & Hogan, 2015; Bottero, 2007, 2009, 2010; Decoteau, 2016; Farrugia & Woodman, 2015; Jin & Ball, 2019; Lahire, 2003; Mouzelis, 2008; Pöllmann, 2016; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009; Sweetman, 2003, Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a).

According to authors such as Bottero (2009) and Mouzelis (2008), the impression given by Bourdieu’s writing of the over-stability of habitus is a result of Bourdieu’s neglect of substantive networks. Echoing this diagnosis, I argue that in spite of stressing the relational nature of fields—understood as relations between positions—Bourdieu does not focus on concrete interactions and intrinsic properties of groups. His interest in social capital is mostly based on the resources it provides (i.e. access to those capitals possessed by others); also, the prevalence of homophily is assumed, in accordance with which agents tend to associate with others with similar social position and habitus, that is, following a pattern of homophilous differential association and elective belonging: “proximity in social space predisposes to closer relations: people who are inscribed in a restricted sector of the space will be both closer (in their properties and in their dispositions, their tastes) and more disposed to get closer, as well as being easier to mobilize” (Bourdieu, 1998: 10–11). Thus, social homogeneity in interactions is treated as a theoretical a priori, instead of subject to an empirical realisation.

This is due to the fact that Bourdieu attributes particular importance to early experiences in life—mostly related to the intimate and family context—to shape dispositions and to favour experiences likely to reinforce those dispositions: “the habitus tends to protect itself from crisis and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible” (Bourdieu, 1990b: 61). In this scenario, habitus disruptions occur due to infrequent dissonances between habitus and field—a poor fit between position and disposition, and a consequent poor ‘feel for the game’ in a definite field (hysteresis, in Bourdieu’s terms). As such, these are defined by Bourdieu as moments of crisis that shape a cleft or divided habitus,
that is, a habitus that is felt as contradictory and strange within a certain field (Bourdieu, 1999). As a consequence, the habitus has to abandon its taken-for-granted orientations and become reflexive, calculating modes of operation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, the assumed homogeneity in one’s own social world would act as a barrier to reflexivity:

“The objective homogenizing of group or class habitus that results from homogeneity of conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any calculation or conscious references to a norm in the absence of any direct interaction or, a fortiori, explicit co-ordination” (Bourdieu, 1990b: 58–59).

Further developments on the idea of habitus disruption have emphasized the psychological and emotional labour involved in the articulation of different identities, particularly emphasizing the costs that adaptation and social mobility have for working-class people (e.g. Aarseth, Layton, & Nielsen, 2016; Friedman, 2016; Reay, 2015; Ingram, 2009, 2011). Studies have also argued that reflexivity sparked by a lack of fit between habitus and field (or different parts of a field) may be understood not in terms of crisis but as a more and more habitual process characteristic of modern societies, where individuals transit through a number of varied social environments or fields. As a consequence, the habitus itself could become reflexive (Sweetman, 2003). Ingram and Abrahams highlight the potential positive and empowering aspects of a cleft habitus and argue that “a rearticulation of habitus (rather than a division) [may] contest the terms of two incommensurable fields to create a new space” (2018: 140).

This new space is what they call a ‘reconciled’ (Ingram & Abrahams, 2018) or a ‘chameleon’ (Abrahams & Ingram, 2013) habitus, that is, a habitus that allows the person to negotiate the structures of different and even contradictory fields and successfully navigate them. However, in their habitus interruption typology (Ingram & Abrahams, 2018), the authors also identify less positive rearticulations of the habitus: a) abandoned habitus, which is divided from the original (working-class) field, as the “person renegotiates their habitus in response to the structuring forces of the new [middle-class] field” (2018: 148); b) re-confirmed habitus, which rejects the new field and re-confirms the structuring forces of the field of origin; and c) destabilized habitus, since the “person tries to incorporate the structuring forces of each field into their habitus but cannot achieve successful assimilation. Instead they oscillate between two dispositions and internalise conflict and division” (2018: 148).

---

40 For example, Reay and colleagues’ (2009) research on working-class students at prestigious UK universities sustain that, due to previous experiences of not fitting in, often experienced as stressful, these students possess dispositions where reflexivity has become habitual, helping them to manage tensions between habitus and field.
It has also been argued that reflexivity is not only triggered by habitus/field mismatches. As posed by Sayer, the very process of embodying habits of thought and action usually entail at least some reflexivity or internal conversations before these habits become pre-reflexive and part of the habitus, which “may vary from focused and coherent deliberation to fragmented and fleeting musings” (Sayer, 2010: 5). Other authors have asserted that reflexivity can be activated by tensions between dispositions within an individual’s habitus (e.g. Decoteau, 2016; Farrugia & Woodman, 2015; Lahire, 2003; Mouzelis, 2008). In relation to the latter, habitus should not to be understood as a uniform and static concept, but as complex and potentially constant restructuring, which is something that was acknowledged by Bourdieu, although not fully developed.

Bottero highlights the role of intersubjective negotiation in this restructuring, that is, the relational nature of habitus formation, in that “[a] ‘community’ of shared dispositions cannot be assumed. […] agents modify and reconstruct their dispositions throughout their lives, as they traverse different social contexts and contacts… [Thus] our practice is subject to the characteristics and dispositions of the (contingently variable) people around us” (Bottero, 2009: 418). Therefore, despite the importance of early experiences, people’s dispositions continue being shaped by experiences with other people, as agents move through a variety of more or less heterogeneous social milieu. In this framework, disruptions of habitus—meaning ambiguities and ambivalences that may foster reflexivity and a critical distance from one’s own situation—are related to shifts in social connections. Hence, reflexivity is the “internalization of a dialogical process” (Crossley, 1996: 47), the “incorporation of the role or perspective of the other within our own habitus’, so ‘habits fit into an ongoing dialogue between social agents and their world” (Crossley, 2001: 112, 116, both cited in Bottero, 2010: 12).

The importance given to heterogeneous interactions in promoting reflexivity as a driver of subjectivity change had been already highlighted by US philosopher John Dewey at the beginning of the last century (1916): human beings have an active potential for ‘plasticity’, meaning “the ability to learn from experience” (p. 53) and to retain and apply that learning to other situations. In this regard, plasticity supposes the “power to develop dispositions” and habits, which is at the basis of “the power to modify actions” (p. 53). Plasticity comes with ‘dependence’, referring to social interdependence, in that the very possibility for an individual to grow rests upon their relations to others:

“A being whose activities are associated with others has a social environment. What he does and what he can do depend upon the expectations, demands, approvals, and
condemnations of others. A being connected with other beings cannot perform his own activities without taking the activities of others into account” (p. 14)

Therefore, the capacity for plasticity relies on the relation with the social environment and the active capacities of agents to readjust their activity to meet new conditions: plasticity is “the flexible and sensitive ability of children to vibrate sympathetically with the attitudes and doings of those around them” (p. 51). In other words, people may develop new dispositions when they are socially related to others.

According to Lahire (2003), such a multi-socialization implies that an individual’s habitus is never completely unified or coherent but is plural, as

“depending on the people with whom an individual lives on a permanent or a temporary basis […], depending on the position he has in his relations with these people, or by virtue of what they do together […], his heritage of dispositions or competencies will be exposed to different influences of varying strength” (p. 353)

Such situations of socialization may be more or less coherent/contradictory, affecting the relative coherence/contradiction between dispositions. Similarly, authors such as Reay (2004, 2015) and Decoteau (2016) understand habitus as a multi-layered and hybrid concept, respectively, in that:

“Habitus are permeable and responsive to what is going on around them. [So] current circumstances are not just there to be acted upon, but are internalized and become yet another layer to add to those from earlier socializations […] Thus, while habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed, it also carries within it the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced” (Reay, 2004: 434-435)

Decoteau argues that hybridity of dispositions in an individual’s habitus is a result of their interstitial positionality “at the intersection of multiple overlapping fields, with disparate valuations [doxa, in Bourdieu’s terms] and distributions of capital, which can provide each of us with multiple (and quite often contradictory) ontological orientations and perspectives” (2016: 316), which shape layers of dispositions. As individuals move through different fields, a multi-layered concept of habitus implies that dispositions generated in one field are also in use when those individuals are participating in other fields. This may enable a reflexive
distance and conscious understanding of our positioning in these other fields and, potentially, to questioning such positioning and opening up the possibility for change.

In this framework, whenever agents take part in a social space, habitus is never determined and closed but is flexible to some extent and, as such, the possibility for transformation is inherent to it instead of being exceptional. However, the inherent possibility for change is not to be confused with an inevitable process of change: "reflexivity may also be bound into habitual action, reinforcing habits and acting to perpetuate norms" (Bottero, 2010: 11). In other words, heterogeneous social interactions may produce reflexivity and such reflexivity may lead to subjectivity negotiations and changes in habitus, but they could also reinforce the conservative impulses of the habitus (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a).

Thus, whilst a pure Bourdieusian approach would focus on socialized subjectivity, meaning the pre-reflexive nature and tendency to regularity of the habitus, a consideration of the more reflexive aspects of subjectivity highlighted by these authors implies defining habitus as 'situated intersubjectivity' (Bottero, 2010), which means that subjectivity construction and change processes may be understood as being influenced by the experience of difference: identification is “intrinsic to social life [because] one may be called upon to identify oneself—to characterize oneself, to locate oneself vis-à-vis known others, to situate oneself in a narrative, to place oneself in a category—in any number of different contexts” (Bottero, 2010: 7).

This understanding of habitus as ‘situated intersubjectivity’ allows a more subtle observation of mixophilia (Chapter II) and suggests that an analysis of the dispositions towards social class difference has to consider the intersubjective negotiations involved in an individual’s daily encounters with people from different backgrounds (e.g. how do parents regulate their children’s friendships? How do they define ‘desirable’ and ‘undesirable’ friends for their children?).

These theoretical contributions also imply understanding habitus as composed of a plurality of dispositions, which entails conceptualizing it as a dynamic concept in dialogue with the fields and agents that social actors encounter. Therefore, it is worth asking how the socioeconomically diverse environment of a school might relate to a reflexive perspective and whether this links to the development of a particular layer of schemes of perception and action that results in individuals relating democratically to people from different social backgrounds, that is, on an equal basis with respect for their differences. In this sense, the potential process of subjectivity change related to interaction with others with different life experiences and
dispositions should not be understood as a necessary radical transformation of the self, but as a complexification of it. In other words, to what extent do socially heterogeneous encounters and relationships (i.e. a particular social capital) contribute to disrupting the common sense of homophily (Chapter II), that is, a particular disposition towards difference (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a)?

4. Operationalisation of the concepts

In this Bourdieusian framework, I consider schools as fields, that is, as social spaces where there is something at stake (e.g. good quality of education, academic degrees, access to social capital, etc.) and where there are immanent rules and taken-for-granted assumptions, shaping the possibilities of accessing what is at stake (e.g. desired grades, attitudes, and expectations, amongst others). I understand those rules and assumptions as what some Bourdieusian scholars have called institutional habitus (McDonough, 1996; Ingram, 2009; Reay, 1998; Burke, Emmerich, & Ingram, 2013; Reay, David, & Ball, 2001), that is, “the set of dispositions of an institution” (Ingram, 2009: 432). Like an individual’s habitus, a school’s habitus can be understood as a “system of lasting, transposable dispositions” (Bourdieu 1990, 82), schemes of perception and expectations about education and the students’ trajectories which are “the product of historical, social and cultural actions and interactions” (Ingram, 2009: 424). As such, the institutional habitus translates into a stated mission and ethos, specific approaches to education, organisational activities, and status, amongst other elements.

The experience of being a pupil will mediate the students’ habitus in line with a school’s particular institutional habitus and, as such, it has a structuring force (McDonough 1996; Reay, 1998). In the framework of this thesis, this means that, for example, the schools’ views on social class difference will contribute to shaping that of the students. This way, the school field’s structures are internalised into the individuals’ habitus, engendering a shared habitus and bringing agents into a state of habitus homology: “[i]t is within the institutional field that positively sanctioned, common-sense behaviours are generated. These denote common forms of habitus, what we would term institutional habitus, and are forms of individual habitus collectively adjusted to the logic of the field” (Burke, Emmerich, & Ingram, 2013: 174). For instance, in the US, McDonough’s (1996) study emphasises the influence of high schools’ unique configuration of principles, practices and processes in students’ college choices, mediating and specifying the effect of the capitals they bring from home. In the UK, Reay and

colleagues (2001) have argued that the schools’ institutional habituses have an impact on the students’ higher education choices. In this thesis, I focus on the staff’s dispositions towards school mix and mixing, linking these with other aspects of the school ethos and understanding that such dispositions are likely to impact the students’ dispositions to social class difference.

To some extent, a school’s institutional habitus can be (re)structured by its own history and the habitus of the individuals (e.g. pupils and staff), although—due to its collective nature—it is less fluid and able to change than an individual habitus (Reay 1998; Reay, David, & Ball, 2001). This is aligned to Bourdieu’s definition of habitus as producing “practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of their generative principle” (Bourdieu 1990: 78). In Ingram’s words,

“as dispositions (in this case, an institutional disposition) are borne from the collective habitus they tend to reinforce rather than contend with social norms, allowing for these norms to reproduce. A school therefore inculcates a habitus (in its members) that reinforces its institutional habitus rather than transforms it” (Ingram, 2009: 424)

Therefore, a school’s institutional habitus will tend to reproduce itself and may even contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities (Horvat & Antonio, 1999, cited in Ingram, 2009: 423). Studies, though, have shown that the structuring force of an educational institution is not exempt from resistances and misalignments, given the potential clashes between the students'/parents' habitus and the institutional habitus (e.g. Ingram, 2009; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009, 2010).

I understand then that families are participants in the school field and that, as such, they are positioned differentially within it and in relation to its institutional habitus: for example, some parents/students may not have the capitals valued by the school (thus they occupy less advantageous positions) nor the habitus aligned to the institutional habitus (thus they do not have a well-rounded ‘feel for the game’). In particular, I explore the parents’ habitus, understanding that parents are key actors in the children’s socialisation.

As I argued in Section 1.1., in this chapter, there is not solely one way of operationalising the concept of habitus. Like other studies (see Reay, 2004, for examples), this thesis explores what I interpret as one potential component of the parents’ and schools’ habitus, namely, their dispositions towards social class difference and mixing, regardless of whether these dispositions are or are not habituated and part of the habitus. I understand these dispositions as schemes of feeling, thinking, and doing in relation to the presence of students/parents from
different socioeconomic backgrounds at the school, for example, their perceptions regarding who the class ‘others’ are, as well as emotions and attitudes towards these others. More specifically, I focus on how participants make sense of the schools’ social class mix and how this relates to their expectations and aspirations for the children (e.g. perceived benefits/risks of interacting with certain ‘class others’). In this sense, I consider that the parents’ and staff’s views regarding the children’s social class mix/mixing are indicative of their own and institutional dispositions towards social class difference, respectively.

My interest in understanding how the participants make sense of the social class differences links with an attempt to address more reflective areas of the habitus that are somewhat obscured in Bourdieu’s writings, as well as potential processes of change, namely, the development of new layers of dispositions. While the methodological approach taken in this thesis does not allow a study of the actual processes of change in the habitus (see Section 4, Chapter IX), it does consider reflexive aspects of the habitus that a purely Bourdieusian approach cannot account for, and which suggest a more dynamic conceptualisation of subjectivity. In particular, an understanding of habitus as situated intersubjectivity and multi-layered (see Section 3 in this chapter) sheds light on the “ambivalence that lies at the heart of being human” (Reay, 2015b: 174) (e.g. tensions between dispositions) and on how these ambivalences are inevitably intertwined with our social relationships.

Moreover, following Andrew Sayer, I argue that a focus on the degrees of reflexivity involved in the constitution of the dispositions and the habitus allows the analysis of what he calls ethical dispositions (2005, 2010), which refer to the ethical dimensions or moral sentiments of the habitus (e.g. respect, care, kindness, gratitude, benevolence, resentment, compassion, shame, guilt, classism, racism, contempt, selfishness, etc.). In this sense, “[w]e not only act and make sense of things” (Sayer, 2010: 1) [but]

“continually monitor and evaluate things, partly subconsciously through our emotional responses, and partly consciously through reflection […] Although we do much on automatic, we do so with some degree of attentiveness, often noticing failures of things to work out as hoped, feeling good or bad about them in various ways, and it is through these repeated minor evaluations that we confirm or gradually shift our moral inclinations” (idem, p. 5)

In this sense, emotions at the basis of ethical dispositions need to be understood not only as feelings, but as responses to our situations and concerns (e.g. emotional responses to injustice and social inequality), which to some extent are mediated by lay reflexivity (e.g.
convictions, when conscious deliberation is very strong). In turn, ethical dispositions affect the ways in which we act towards such concerns, as it is the case of our attitudes towards class others.

A particular kind of ethical dispositions are of special importance in this thesis, specifically those that are at the basis of democratic/inclusive/convivial attitudes towards ‘others’, which were analysed in Chapter II (Allport, 1979; Amin, 2002; Dewey, 1916; Garces & Jayakumar, 2014; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado, 2005; Janmaat, 2014; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Rojas, 2009; Wilson, 2012). These attitudes, I argue, are ultimately based on egalitarianism, that is, on the justification of equality of recognition of moral standing, in order to allow “everyone equal opportunity to develop differences, and for abilities, virtues and vices to be valued appropriately, without distortion from morally irrelevant differences of class, gender, race, sexuality or age” (Sayer, 2005: 171). Thus, I understand egalitarian dispositions towards social class difference as ways of thinking, doing, and acting in relation to social class ‘others’, based on the commitment to equality across human beings.

The concepts of ethical dispositions and, more specifically, of egalitarian dispositions, are especially relevant to this thesis when combined with an understanding of habitus as intersubjective (Section 3 of this chapter). In fact, an individual may develop particular ethical dispositions not only due to their own experiences, but due to their encounter with others and their capacity to sympathise with them. In this sense, as I argued in Chapter II, engaging with different ‘others’ may contribute to developing egalitarian dispositions (i.e. democratic/inclusive/convivial attitudes), and these may contribute to relating democratically to others and to more democratic societies. As Sayer argues in relation to the development of egalitarian dispositions amongst people in the dominant groups:

“[they] seek to reduce the power of their own group because they recognise it as unjust. This recognition need not come merely from political discourse, but from having experienced some other, perhaps smaller, form of injustice themselves, which has heightened their sensitivity to injustice, or simply through being able to sympathise with others who have suffered injustice [emphasis added]. The moral sentiment of resentment at injustice is not reducible to a matter of self-interest, but can be felt on behalf of others” (Sayer, 2010: 9)

Therefore, socioeconomically heterogeneous contexts such as the schools in my sample might be analysed in connection with particular developments of these ethical dispositions in the parents and the schools themselves, which is what I explore in this thesis.
However, it is also important to be aware of the limitations of these dispositions, since treating everybody as equals, as if there were no socioeconomic differences, could (unintentionally) contribute to reproducing social inequalities through having produced the illusion that these do not exist:

“As given that class forms a hierarchy and not merely a pattern of differentiation it is clear that class-mixing is itself unequal. [...] Despite this, it is not unusual [...] to imagine that class differences can be neutralised by ignoring them and treating others as equals, as if class were purely a product of misrecognition [...] but this is also naive, given the embedded nature of class and the way that behaviours are subtly differentiated by class [...] [T]he treatment of the subordinate as an equal is bound to clash with the objective inequalities of the relationship [...] [egalitarianism] is seen as an act of resistance, but it can have conservative effects [...] It may even ease class tensions by reducing symbolic domination and with it resistance to economic inequality by encouraging the illusion that we are all equally resourced for living as equals.” (Sayer, 2005: 172-173)

These limitations have been empirically explored in relation to so-called egalitarian white middle classes who choose socially heterogeneous schools or neighbourhoods (Chapter III). These studies show that, despite embracing class and ethnic diversity and mixing, these families tend to reproduce patterns of segregation by associating with people of a similar social position (Asante & Nooral-Deen, 1984; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008; Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu, 2005; Schrieff, Tredoux, Finchilescu, & Dixon, 2010; Smith & Moore, 2000; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2015, 2018a). In the chapters on the analysis I explore the positives and limitations of the participants’ egalitarian dispositions towards social class difference and mixing in schools.

5. Conclusion

The chapter discusses the Bourdieusian theoretical framework of this thesis, which allowed me to approach the concept of social class and specifically the dispositions towards social class difference. Section 2 presents the main concepts developed by Bourdieu and used in my study: field, capital and habitus, amongst others, which I argue are valuable to address the entwinement between structural conditionings and social position (field and capitals) on the one hand, and agency and subjective dispositions (habitus) on the other. The latter is
particularly relevant to this thesis given the need to focus on the subjective experience of social class to address dispositions towards social class difference.

However, I argue that the study of such dispositions implies addressing an area poorly developed in Bourdieu’s writings, namely, the reflexive aspects of the habitus. Thus, in Section 3, I further analyse literature that seeks to expand this area and argue that heterogeneous social encounters and interactions such as those facilitated by school mix may produce disruptions in the habitus, which may, in turn, produce reflexivity. In other words, engaging with people from different backgrounds is likely to allow individuals to relativize their taken-for-granted assumptions about the world, themselves, and the others, which opens up the possibility for developing new dispositions, for example, towards those others.

The last section (4) operationalises these concepts to address the analysis of the parents’ and the schools’ dispositions to social class difference. I argue that dispositions towards social class difference might be defined as one of various other aspects comprising the habitus, although not necessarily embodied and habituated in it. In the case of schools, I understand the staff’s dispositions towards social class difference as part of the schools’ ‘institutional habitus’, which refers to their stated mission and ethos, as well as the assumptions regarding the students and education.

All in all, I have hitherto argued that exploring the potentialities of school mix to promote egalitarian attitudes in a highly unequal country requires addressing the subjective dimensions of social class, particularly the dispositions towards social class difference and mixing. The following chapter presents the research questions and the methods used in this study.
Chapter IV. Methodological approach

1. Introduction

This thesis explores the parents’ and schools’ (i.e. staff) dispositions to social class difference in the context of unusual socioeconomically diverse schools in Chile, a country with a particularly high social and educational segregation. I have argued that a focus on parents and schools is relevant since they are key actors constituting the children’s habitus (see Chapters II and III). As Bourdieu argues, “[t]he habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences (...) the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences (...) and so on, from restructuring to restructuring” (Bourdieu, 1972, cited in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 134).

In this framework, the main research questions (RQs) this study poses are:

RQ1: How do the staff of two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of the children?

RQ2: How do parents in two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their children’s school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of their children?

This chapter first presents the qualitative research design and details the characteristics of the case-study approach undertaken (Section 2). Then, I describe the sample of schools as well as the criteria and procedures to define it (Section 3), followed by the research tools and the parents and staff participants (Section 4). Section 5 draws the ethical framework of the study and Section 6 explains the data analysis, which combines inductive and deductive approaches.

2. A qualitative case study

To address the RQs, I carried out two qualitative case studies of two Chilean schools with high levels of socioeconomic diversity by conducting three months of fieldwork (around one month
A qualitative approach was most suitable to address the research questions because it offers a way to:

“explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of [my] research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate. [This,] by using methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity” (Mason, 2002)

Accordingly, the starting point of this thesis is that reality is not ‘out there’ as an objective truth to be discovered by the researcher, as a positivist ontology and epistemology would assume. I rather adopt a constructivist-interpretivist approach from which I understand that knowledge is produced through the researchers’ interpretations, which are, for their part, oriented by their experiences and theories (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Flick, 2013). Thus, I am interested in the possible interpretations I can make about a particular phenomenon in a particular scenario.

The case-study approach focuses on understanding one or more integrated and delimited system(s) with particular value for the study´s aims (Stake, 1995). As Merriam (1998, p. xiii) points out, a case study is “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit”. This, in ‘natural’ or ‘real-life’ scenarios (Yin, 1994) such as the schools, rather than in experimental settings where variables are a priori controlled by the researcher(s) in order to understand, for instance, the historical and specific context, as well as critical events and different actors’ thinking and feelings.

Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative research based on case studies does not use probability sampling because it does not seek statistical inference and generalization from a representative sample to a population (Stake, 1995). The delimitation of the case is rather oriented to providing an in-depth description of a particular phenomenon (i.e. social mix and mixing, and dispositions to difference) in a particular local context (i.e. two schools in Santiago, Chile). However, this does not mean that the analysis should be merely descriptive of the particular context. In fact, I interpreted the data from the case studies in relation to the broader context, aiming at understanding the relationship with the social and policy landscape,

42 In Chile, schools start their first academic term in March (ending in July) and the second one in August (ending in December).
especially in order to identify ‘lessons’ from schools with some experience having socioeconomic diversity for the implementation of the Inclusion Law. I also interpreted the data in relation to a conceptual framework, making inductive and deductive approaches interact to promote links between the empirical data and theoretical (Rockwell, 2009). In particular, I was interested in exploring the ways in which a Bourdieusian theoretical framework could illuminate the understanding of the data, as well as the ways in which the analysis could contribute to expanding and/or adding nuances to the original concepts.

In this sense, the case study orientation involves ‘analytical generalisation’ (Yin, 1994) or generalisation to theoretical and transferable propositions (Riessman, 2008). This way, while being rooted in specific micro realities, ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1987) of a phenomenon in a specific context opens up the possibility to make conceptual inferences that might be used beyond the specific studied schools, as “the basis for others’ work” (Riessman, 2008: 13). In Stake’s words (1995: 78, my translation), “particular cases are not a solid base for generalisation to other cases [...]. However, people can learn several general issues from particular cases. And they do that because they are familiar with other cases to which they add the new one”. Hence, I used a case study approach to understand social mix/mixing dynamics that take place in a sample of schools and that may occur in similar ways in other schools.

In the original research design, I planned to complement the case study perspective with a focused ethnographic approach by spending a short but intensive period of time (three months) in one school, and deploying a series of methods (in-depth and repeated interviews, shadowing, conversations, observations and friendship maps) with a series of participants (school staff, parents and children). Research designs, however, necessarily entail a degree of openness and flexibility to integrate ongoing, possibly unexpected, events (Rockwell, 2009). And in fact, the research journey led me to make some adaptations since getting actual access to one of the schools I had contacted took me longer than I expected. These schools were under inspection processes by the Ministry of Education, which kept the headteachers very busy until the end of my first month of fieldwork (March). Considering, on the one hand, that I had "lost" a month of fieldwork and, on the other, that around the end of March two schools were willing to participate in the same time period, I decided to undertake a more extensive methodological strategy (as in more sites) and conduct a case study in two schools. A comparison between both schools appeared to be an interesting option as they seemed to have different discourses regarding inclusion (see Section 2 in Chapter V). In addition, I took the practical decision of focusing on the staff and parents, instead of also involving the children, which would have entailed extending my fieldwork.
3. Sample of schools

I chose a purposive sample of two key cases, which means that the criteria to select the two schools (the sample’s qualities) were more important than how many there were (its quantities). First of all, a) they had to be socioeconomically diverse schools, that is, the players of the field had to have different compositions of capitals (specially, economic and cultural), in order to analyse mix and mixing narratives and practices. In addition, I considered two other criteria: b) I was interested in schools with an explicit discourse around the importance of inclusion and/diversity, that is, an institutional habitus potentially supporting the existence of school mix and mixing; and c) I discarded schools only with secondary education, as from my previous knowledge and research I knew that secondary socioeconomically mixed schools in Chile tend to be highly oriented to their academic performance. I wanted to avoid these very academic-oriented school discourses linked with socioeconomic diversity (i.e. inclusion of a few outliers – that is, high achievers regardless of their background) because they could obscure other narratives of inclusion. Also, I considered feasibility factors: d) due to budget restrictions, the schools had to be in Santiago (where my relatives live and, consequently, I had available accommodation).

In order to identify the socioeconomically diverse schools of my sample, I conducted an exploratory statistical analysis of the information gathered by the SIMCE’s (national standardised tests - see Glossary) survey to parents. This survey asks about incomes (“In a normal month, in which of the following ranges would you put the sum of incomes of all the people who contribute to the home where the student lives?”) and educational level (“What is the highest educational level attained by the student’s mother or step mother?”), amongst other aspects. I created a Socioeconomic Diversity Index (SDI) by combining information of household incomes and the mother’s educational level corresponding to 4th year (10-11 years old) parents in 2015 (most recent data available by the time of the fieldwork). For this, I ran polychoric correlations in Stata. The polychoric correlation coefficient is a measure of

---

43 This, because an important element of the rationale of my thesis has to do with envisaging the potentialities and limits of the Inclusion Law by analysing social mix and mixing dynamics in already (supposedly) privileged settings to observe benefits from such mixture (assuming that its institutional appreciation would facilitate the emergence of those benefits).
44 In Chile, primary education is the first of the school cycles and is compulsory. It currently lasts for eight years (ideally from six to 13 years old), while secondary education lasts for four years (ideally from 14 to 17 years old).
45 In addition to the academic test answered by the students, there are three surveys that, respectively, students, parents and teachers are expected to answer.
46 I thank my colleague Gabriel Gutierrez for introducing me to this technique of analysis.
association for ordinal variables which rests upon an assumption of an underlying joint continuous distribution, in this case, between incomes (in ranges) and educational level. These variables are usually understood as correlated indicators of social class since a higher educational level generally implies a higher income (e.g. INE, 2018a, 2018b; Crompton, 1993; Franco, 2002; Torche & Wormald, 2004). The SDI takes values in terms of standard deviation, informing the degree of dispersion of the considered variables – i.e. a higher SDI indicates more socioeconomic diversity in a school. As a reference, the highest SDI I found in one school in Santiago was 1.426 and the lowest was 0.133, meaning that the first one is the most socioeconomically diverse school in Santiago and the second is the least socioeconomically diverse one.

This statistical analysis was complemented with the descriptive analysis of crosstabs as well as with a consultation with Chilean educational researchers, professionals working in schools and alumni about possible schools that matched the sampling criteria47. Since schools in Chile are, in general, socioeconomically homogeneous, the exceptions to this trend tend to be easily identifiable by means of ‘hot knowledge’ (Ball & Vincent, 2006), i.e. by direct experience or word of mouth. These informal conversations were also crucial to identify distinctive features of the schools regarding their discourses on social diversity and inclusion.

Important practical restrictions have to be mentioned here: schools in Chile tend to be highly researched and surveilled by public policy, increasing their resistance to accept participating in studies. As a result, the two schools that finally agreed to participate in my research are the ones that best match both the purposive sample criteria and practical restrictions. These are Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS)48, and their key features are summarised in Table 2 below (more details on their discourses around inclusion and diversity in Section 2, Chapter V):

---

47 In particular, there are some state schools in Santiago that have become quite famous and over-researched/surveilled amongst educational researchers due to their exceptional combination of middle and working-class students.
48 As I already mentioned, the names of the schools, participants and localities directly involved in the study have been anonymised using pseudonyms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Key features of the schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rodriguez School (RS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social composition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>SDI</strong>: 1.316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Incomes</strong>: Graph 2 below shows that, out of 30 parents who answered the survey, 6.66% declared a household income of $400,000 or less per month; 13.34% between $400,001 and $800,000; 23.33% between $800,001 and $1,200,000; and 56.66% higher than $1,200,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Mother’s educational level</strong>: 10% with completed secondary education; 26.67% with vocational or university incomplete; and 63.34% with a higher education degree (20% vocational and 36.67% university) (see Graph 3).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These indicators, along with the qualitative enquiry, suggest that this is a mostly middle-class school, with some working-class families. The middle-class families are less socioeconomically advantaged than the average of the locality. Working-class parents tend to work in the area (e.g. as maids and gardeners). Compared to IS, there is a clearer middle-class majority. Regarding the school’s ethnic composition, there are a few immigrant families, although my interviewees did not know the exact number; they are not aware of the presence of families from an indigenous background.

* $1,000 equals approximately £1 (e.g. £400.000 = £400).
* When comparing these figures (both in RS and IS) with indicators at a national level, we see that:
  - 6.66% and 30.77% of the respondent parents at RS and IS, respectively, declare a household income close to the minimum wage per worker (around $300,000), suggesting very low household incomes compared to the Chilean population.
  - More than 80% and 37% of the respondent parents at RS and IS, respectively, declare a household income over the median household income in Chile (around $780,000) (INE, 2018b). This means that these household incomes are higher than those of half of the population in the country.

88
4. Fieldwork process: Research tools and participants

The main research technique applied in this study is the individual in-depth semi-structured interview, which I applied to a variety of actors within the school communities in order to produce in-depth and complex information, namely, by capturing commonalities, differences and tensions amongst participants (Canales, 2006; Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2010). Following Hockey and Forsey (2012), I argue that the interview is an important form of participatory research. As posed by the authors, “the research interview provides an opportunity for creating and capturing insights of a depth and level of focus rarely achieved through surveys, observational studies or the majority of casual conversations we hold with our fellow human beings” (2012: 71). As such, “the interview [is] a moment of engagement, a site of participation in the life of the person we meet and talk with […] [which] can allow the
researcher to immerse herself quite intimately in the life of a fellow human being” (2012: 75-76). Therefore, understood as participant engagement, the interview may allow to achieve what is usually attributed to participant observation:

“we can hear from our participants their insights about the gap between what they say and what they do; it is not just the researcher who notices these things. [...] People are very capable of ‘showing’ us at least some of the intricacies of their lives through what they tell us through projects of engaged listening” (Hockey & Forsey, 2012: 83-84)

In each school, I conducted interviews with members of staff (teachers, headteachers and deputy headteachers) and parents from both middle- and working-class backgrounds to explore their views about social class mix and processes of mixing. Given the lack of exhaustive statistical socioeconomic data about the families composing the schools, I mainly relied on the conversations with members of staff who were aware of the parents’ occupations, economic and residential situation, and, broadly, their educational levels (i.e. degree-holding or not).

According to the discussion in Chapter I, I defined the parents’ social class mostly based on their residential situation, since it is a powerful socioeconomic indicator given Santiago’s residential segregation (Mendez & Gayo, 2018; Ruiz-Tagle, 2016; Rasse, 2015; Sabatini, Rasse, Mora, & Brain, 2012). I defined as middle class those parents who owned or rented a house/flat in affluent or gentrified localities, and working-class parents as those coming from disadvantaged and usually distant areas (although some of them work as live-in domestic workers). When my knowledge of the participants was more exhaustive, I also used information on the parents’ educational level and/or occupation, attempting to match the ENES social class structure based on Goldthorpe’s scheme (see Chapter I): middle-class parents usually held a higher education degree and worked in the service segment (upper middle class, according to ENES) or were routine non-manual workers (middle and lower middle class), while working-class parents usually did not complete secondary education and worked in so-called unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. In addition, all working-class families had been assigned scholarships by the schools (see Tables 4 and 5 below for more details).

51 In Rodriguez School, I built a database with information about the families asking for scholarships, contained in forms provided by the school. Although the information was not exhaustive (e.g. different kinds of information provided by different families) and the database did not allow to do an a priori selection of potential participants, it allowed me contrast and add nuances to the staff’ accounts regarding the families’ socioeconomic condition.
A special note needs to be made in relation to my middle-class participants in each school: they do not exactly match the liberal middle-class fractions often researched by studies on school mix (e.g. Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a). I say this because they are not the most highly qualified and left-wing professionals who live in traditional middle-class localities of Santiago (e.g. Nunoa or Providencia). They are not particularly advantaged either and do not match the stereotypical features usually associated with groups at the top of the social structure in Chile, for example, (posh) ways of speaking and a more European ethnic phenotype (i.e. white, usually blonde - see Chapter I). Moreover, in relation to the latter, there were no self-evident differences amongst middle-class and working-class participants in terms of their ethnic background: for instance, all parents, from both social classes, seemed to have a mixed-heritage ethnic background and were brown-skinned. However, I am not able to characterise my sample of participants in terms of their ethnic background, since this was not the focus of this thesis and I did not explicitly ask about it.

In the case of RS, the middle-class parents I interviewed correspond to a less advantaged, and more conservative sector in terms of their economic and institutionalised cultural capitals. For instance, Sofia and Cristian (see Table 6 below), as teachers, can be classified within the lowest professional occupations (see Chapter I), and Ana’s husband had been unemployed for a long period at the time of the interview. Also, they did not explicitly adhere to left-wing views but, on the contrary, appeared to be closer to more conservative and right-wing position: Ana’s husband used to work at Universidad de los Andes, an Opus Dei university extensively associated with the political right, and Cristian’s father was in the military (low rank), which he describes as a good experience for him in that “I was raised in a military regimen: if I arrived saying a bad word, my dad had just to yell at me [‘me pegaba un solo grito’] and it was done, so I was lucky to live in that world”. The more traditional imprint of these parents fits well with the characteristics of RS, particularly with its Catholic stamp (see Chapter V).

In the case of IS, the middle-class parent participants also correspond to a less advantaged sector: they declare to have a particularly low economic capital but possess a high cultural capital – particularly in the field of arts (e.g. Samuel is a musician in a band quite famous in Chile; also, other parents whom I did not interview are famous actors - (see Table 7). As the

---

52 Maria Teresa Rojas and Alejandra Falabella have conducted research in Chile on “counter-intuitive middle-classes” that choose state schools
53 As I said in Chapter I, Mendez associates three middle-class fractions with different territories within Santiago, one of them being Nunoa and Providencia, where “alternative voices are also likely to be found as people in these areas are more progressive in their views in public and private life” (Mendez, 2008: 226).

91
Vice Headteacher (IS) told me, “there are parents who have a master or PhD degree but they are kind of poor by option [In Spanish, ‘viven como pobres por opcion]” [fieldwork note]. However, this cultural capital was not always necessarily institutionalised in professional educational credentials (i.e. Rosa and Nicolas hold vocational degrees). In general, they are young people whose families, in some cases, possess higher-status cultural capital and more economic capital than they do (e.g. Rosa’s mother). Also, they express progressive political views, which following Mendez and Gayo (2018) I understand as opposed to conservatism and as an inclination towards social change based on social justice. In concrete, these progressive parents tend to support ‘Nueva Mayoria’ or ‘Frente Amplio’ left-wing coalitions. At the same time, they are critical of traditional politics: this is clear when, for example, Rosa explains her disappointment when she ran into Giorgio Jackson in the street – an ex student leader and current member of the Chamber of Deputies – and asked him how the current Educational Reform would address the pedagogic problems in education (and he answered that that was part of further reforms). The more alternative imprint of these parents fits well with the characteristics of IS, particularly with its focus on a holistic education (see Chapter V).

It is important to note as well that most of the ‘parents’ – a carefully gender-neutral term were women, particularly at RS. This suggests the persistent gender inequality and the key role that still women play in parenting compared to men (Leyton & Rojas, 2017; Vincent, 2017; Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2010). As Vincent points out for the UK context, there is a “dominance and continuation of the gendered male breadwinner/female carer roles” (2017: 546). In addition, most of the working-class mothers were working as ‘nanas’. ‘Nana’ (singular) or ‘nanas’ (plural) is the informal word used by both middle- and working-class people in Chile to refer to women employed as domestic workers (it is only a feminine word). As I discuss further in Chapter VII, domestic work in the country has some important particularities: it is a structuring pillar of middle-class families’ daily life, performing a series of roles such as doing the cleaning and taking care of the children. It is common for them to work full-time or even to live in the houses they work in – as it is the case of most of the working-class mothers in my study-.

54 Its predecessor is Concertacion de Partidos por la Democracia (Concertation of Parties for Democracy), the left-centre coalition created to overthrow the Dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) in the plebiscite of 1988, which they won. Nueva Mayoria, funded in 2013, includes other parties such as the Communist.

55 Frente Amplio (‘Broad Front’) is a left-wing coalition founded in 2017 and is mostly composed of organisations that emerged from the student movements of 2011. In fact, its main figures are previous student leaders.
therefore there is a complex mix between professional and emotional employer-employee relationships.

I used interview schedules (see Appendix 2) with a homogeneous set of topics whose specific sequence and terms were adapted to each particular interviewee (Valles, 1999), so their responses were elaborated in their own words and structures to express their perceptions, beliefs, desires and values in depth (Gainza, 2006). It is worth mentioning that an important challenge I faced during the fieldwork had to do with posing questions about social class differences, a topic usually difficult to talk about (Sayer, 2005), which is very clear in the Chilean context. As argued above, in Chile there has been a tendency to avoid speaking about social class as this is seen as promoting fragmentation and conflict within society (Espinoza, Barozet, & Méndez, 2013). Also, people from different socioeconomic backgrounds tend to define themselves as middle class (Espinoza & Barozet, 2009; Wormald & Torche, 2004). Accordingly, my interviewees in general tended to show some reluctance to acknowledging social class distinctions within their school contexts, as if the “right answer” was to show that they were unable to identify such differences. This is interesting in itself and, as it will be shown in the analysis below, is aligned with the participants’ willingness to express egalitarian views. Methodologically, I addressed the difficulty of asking about this topic by rehearsing different ways to ask about it, according to the experience I was gaining throughout fieldwork, what I could glean about the ease of the interviewee with the topic, and the insights each person was giving me during the interview. For example, I tried to avoid directly asking about the families’ social-class differences, particularly with parents, unless the interviewees themselves mentioned these first. Instead, I usually asked the staff and parents about their perceptions of ‘socioeconomic differences’ at the school and, more often, about ‘differences amongst the students/parents according to their backgrounds’ (e.g. their jobs and educational level). Thus, as in Mendez’s (2008), the parents in my study usually did not answer my questions then by referring to class identity in collective or traditional ways, such as openly arguing to be part of a class culture; they rather referred to social class to stress their distinctiveness and individualised identities. In this sense, I am using social class as an analytical construction (Bourdieu, 1998) which, in this case, means that I am interpreting my interviewees’ references to socioeconomic differences in terms of social class, despite they generally did not overtly speak in term of class categories.

56 A snapshot of this issue can be found in the Chilean movie “La Nana” (The Maid): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTY8CJhvjOw [Trailer in English]
In total, I conducted 35 interviews (see Table 3 below). These lasted between one and a half and two hours and were audio recorded with the consent of the participants. Then, I transcribed for analysis. I determined the final number of participants throughout fieldwork according to saturation criteria, that is, when data became repetitive and adding more participants started to confirm my analyses, without adding new information/perspectives to address the research questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010). Therefore, when the collected data continued shedding light on categories/themes that did not exactly fit into my scheme of analysis or even suggested tensions to it, I continued gathering information.

### Table 3: Number of interviews by participant and school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rodríguez School</th>
<th>Inti School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Members of staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Headteacher</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deputy headteachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents/carers (mostly mothers)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Working-class parents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Middle-class parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 35</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables below summarise the characteristics of the staff participants (Tables 4 and 5) and the parents (Tables 6 and 7) in each school:

### Table 4: Main characteristics of the staff participants in Rodríguez School (RS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Main characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headteacher</td>
<td>In the role since 2012 but first worked as a Biology teacher in the school since 1991.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Lead</td>
<td>Deputy headteacher in charge of promoting discipline amongst students. In the role since 1987.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Lead Assistant</td>
<td>Deputy headteacher in charge of promoting discipline amongst students. In the role since 2015; between 2006 and 2015 she was a Sports Teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Coordinator</td>
<td>Deputy headteacher in charge of guiding the teachers’ pedagogic work. In the role since 2015; between 2014 and 2015 she was a Sports Teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher of 7-10-year olds, with speciality in Mathematics. In the role since 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Teacher, 7-10-year olds</td>
<td>Teacher of 7-10-year olds, with speciality in Language. In the role since 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Teacher, 14-18-year olds</td>
<td>Teacher of Language to 14-18-year olds. In the role since 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher of History to 14-18-year olds. In the role since 1985.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Inclusion Lead            | Teacher on SEN Education for 14-18-year olds, with speciality in learning disorders. In the role since 2016, when the SEN
Programme (see Glossary) was applied in secondary education at the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEN Deputy</td>
<td>In charge of the implementation of the SEN Programme. In the role since 2015, when the SEN Programme (see Chapter V) was applied in kindergarten and primary education at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality Deputy</td>
<td>She leads the Conviviality Team, in charge of mediating the conflicts amongst students and promoting good relationships. She is also the one in charge of ‘orienting’ the students ['orientadora escolar'], e.g. future careers. In the role since 2016.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Main characteristics of the staff participants in Inti School (IS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headteacher</td>
<td>In the role since 2012. Before, she worked for 11 years teaching in pre-schools and primary schools. Her son (21) has Asperger syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Lead Deputy</td>
<td>Deputy headteacher in charge of promoting discipline amongst students. In the role since 2015. Between 2013 and 2015, she worked as a teaching assistant in years 1 and 2; before, she worked as a teaching assistant in other schools and pre-schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Teacher 1</td>
<td>Early years teacher [Educadora de parvulos]. Behaviour lead at the school between 2013 and 2017. Also year 1 teacher since 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Teacher 2</td>
<td>Early years teacher [Educadora de parvulos]. Reception and Year 1 teacher at the school since 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 Teacher</td>
<td>Year 1 teacher at the school since 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Headteacher (also Music Teacher and Conviviality Deputy)</td>
<td>He stands in for the Headteacher when she is not available. Also, Music Teacher since 2013 and Conviviality Deputy since 2016. As Conviviality Deputy, he leads the Conviviality Team, in charge of implementing the Ministry of Education’s regulations in relation to mediating conflicts amongst students and promoting good relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Teacher</td>
<td>History and Technology teacher in years 1 to 7 at the school, since 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Coordinator</td>
<td>Deputy headteacher in charge of guiding the teachers’ pedagogic work. In the role since 2016. Between 2014 and 2016, she worked as a SEN Teacher [Educadora diferencial] at the school. Her son was a student at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN Deputy</td>
<td>In charge of the implementation of the SEN Programme. In the role since 2013. She is also the psychologist at the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Main characteristics of the parent participants in Rodriguez School (RS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Family composition</th>
<th>Social class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ana (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Ana, her husband and two sons (9 and 7), both enrolled in RS.</td>
<td>(Upper) Middle class (M/C). Ana studied physiotherapy at university and currently works in a hospital [service social class, according to ENES scheme, presented in Chapter I]. Her husband, a Civil Engineer, was unemployed at the moment of fieldwork, although they chose the school when he was still working and had a high salary. They live in The Hills, the established affluent area where Rodriguez School is located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Family composition</td>
<td>Social class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Sofia, her husband (Cristian, also present in the interview) and three children: two sons and a daughter. Only the eldest (9), attends RS; the other son attends a state school; the youngest, the girl, has Downs Syndrome and has not attended any school.</td>
<td>(Upper) Middle class (M/C). Both parents studied pedagogy at university and work as sports teachers [service social class] in state schools in La Pintana, a very poor locality in Santiago. They live in The Hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of her, her husband and two sons (9 and 7), both enrolled in RS.</td>
<td>(Middle) Middle class (M/C). Victoria is currently a stay-at-home mother. Until 2014, she worked as a secretary in a company [routine non-manual worker]. She stopped working to take care of the children. Her husband is an accountant and owns a company for window cleaning [small proprietor]. They live in The Hills, but in a less socioeconomically advantaged area compared to where Ana and Sofia live.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniela (Mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Daniela and her daughter (9), who is enrolled in RS. They live with Daniela’s brother and mother.</td>
<td>(Lower) Middle class (M/C). Daniela started studying Forensic Studies at university but did not finish due to economic restrictions (she got pregnant). She currently works as a receptionist at a private health centre [routine non-manual worker]. She and her daughter live at the house where Daniela’s mother has worked as a live-in domestic worker for more than 32 years (she takes care of an elderly woman), in The Hills. I classified this mother in the lower middle class based on a combination of elements that suggest her more precarious condition compared to other middle-class participants. For example, the fact of being a single mother and her economic dependence on her mother (housing). Also, the analysis reveals a constant concern of distinguishing her family from the vulnerable girls and boys in her neighbourhood of origin (in a disadvantaged area of Santiago), a point to which I return further below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Emma and her son (10), who is enrolled in RS. They live with Emma’s employer.</td>
<td>Working class (W/C). Emma works as a ‘live-in domestic worker’ [‘nana puertas adentro’] [manual worker] in The Hills, at an elderly woman’s flat, where she has worked for 16 years. Her son has lived his whole life there. Emma did not complete primary education and is illiterate. The child was assigned a scholarship by the school so they do not pay the school’s fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Paula, her husband (Julio, also present in the interview) and two daughters (10 and 19). The youngest is enrolled in RS.</td>
<td>Working class (W/C). Paula works as a domestic worker in The Hills and her husband works driving for Uber [manual workers]. Neither of them completed secondary education. They live in Cerrillos, a disadvantaged locality far from The Hills. The child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Main characteristics of the parent participants in Rodriguez School (RS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Family composition</th>
<th>Social class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Sara, her son (9, enrolled in RS) and her daughter (24). Her son maintains contact with his father.</td>
<td>Working class (W/C). Sara works as a domestic worker [manual worker]. Sara did not complete secondary education. They live in Lo Prado, a disadvantaged locality far from The Hills. The child was assigned a scholarship by the school so they do not pay the school’s fees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Main characteristics of the parent participants in Inti School (IS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Family composition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monica (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Monica, her partner and their son (10), who is enrolled in IS.</td>
<td>(Upper) Middle-class (M/C). Monica studied industrial design at university [service social class, according to ENES scheme] and works in a company. Her partner is a teacher [service social class] in a primary school. They live in a gentrified area close to IS (Soles). Monica is part of the school’s Parent Centre (‘Centro de Apoderados’), which is an organisation that all Chilean schools have in order to promote the parents’ engagement. It is ruled by an elected group of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel (father)</td>
<td>Family composed of Samuel, his partner and their daughter (10), who is enrolled in IS.</td>
<td>(Upper) Middle-class (M/C). Samuel studied music at university and currently has two jobs: he plays in a famous band and teaches in a university [service social class]. His partner is a dancer and teaches philosophy at IS [service social class]. They live in the gentrified area close to IS (Soles).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David (father)</td>
<td>Family composed of David, his wife and their son (12), who is enrolled in IS and is diagnosed with Intellectual Development Disorder.</td>
<td>(Upper) Middle-class father (M/C). David and his wife studied sociology at university. He is currently unemployed and his wife is a university sociology scholar [service social class]. The family lives in a middle-class area far from IS (they were told about the school due to its focus on SEN).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Maria, her son (16), her daughter (10, enrolled in IS), and her daughter’s father.</td>
<td>(Upper) Middle-class mother (M/C). Maria studied graphic design at university and currently works in her family’s business (metallurgy) [service social class/small proprietor]. Maria was born in the locality, then lived in Cerrillos (a disadvantaged locality) and after 20 years came back. They currently live in the Heath, very close to IS (not in Soles, the gentrified area nearby). Maria is part of the school’s Parent Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Rosa, her son (10, enrolled in IS) -</td>
<td>(Middle) Middle class (M/C). Rosa studied cooking (vocational higher education studies),</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7: Main characteristics of the parent participants in Inti School (IS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Family composition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosa (mother)</td>
<td>and her partner, who is not the child’s father. His father lives out of the capital and Rosa defines him as a present father, although it is her partner with whom her son spends most of the time.</td>
<td>the same as her son’s father [service class]. Her son was born in Barcelona, where they lived until 2010. Currently, Rosa, her partner (a musician) and her son live in Soles, the gentrified area close to IS. Rosa is part of the school’s Parent Centre. I classified Rosa as middle middle class (instead of upper middle class) because her higher educational degree is not considered to be a professional one in Chile (2 years of study).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolas (father)</td>
<td>Same-sex family composed of Nicolas, his partner and their son (6), who is diagnosed with Asperger syndrome and enrolled at IS.</td>
<td>(Middle) Middle class (M/C). Nicolas has vocational higher education studies and works as a computer technician [service social class] and his partner works in sales [routine non-manual worker]. They live far from IS but were recommended the school due to their son medical diagnosis. I classified Nicolas as middle middle class because his higher educational degree is not considered to be a professional one in Chile (2 years of study).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica (mother)</td>
<td>Family composed of Jessica, her son (5) and daughter (10), and her son’s father. Her daughter has no contact with her father, despite them being neighbours. Both children attend IS.</td>
<td>Working class (W/C). Jessica is currently a stay-at-home mother; before, she informally worked cooking and selling lunches to neighbours and shops nearby [manual worker]. She completed secondary education. Her husband works as an agricultural labourer ['temporero'] [agricultural worker] in the countryside and comes to stay with his family every two weeks. The family depends on his income. They live in The Heath, very close to the school. Both children were assigned a scholarship by the school so they do not pay the school’s fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel (grandfather)</td>
<td>Family composed of Gabriel, his wife, their daughter and her husband, and their son (10 -Gabriel’s grandson), who is diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. Gabriel has a key role in the child’s upbringing and is in charge of taking him to the school and picking him up every day; he is also the one the school has more communication with (e.g. he goes to the parent meetings).</td>
<td>Working-class (W/C). Gabriel did not complete secondary education and works as a taxi driver [manual worker]. His daughter (the child’s mother) has reduced mobility due to a physical disability and is unemployed; her husband works as a constructor. The family lives in a disadvantaged area far from the school but were recommended IS due to the child’s medical diagnosis. They do not pay fees thanks to the scholarship given by the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once I gained access to the schools, I was allowed to go whenever I wanted and to freely move around the premises (respecting the need not to disturb lessons). This involved me in
the necessary daily constant interactions and rapport to contact the potential participants by myself rather than, for example, asking the headteacher to organise the interviews, which could make both teachers and parents feel pressured to participate. Therefore, I went to each school every day, as if I were doing an ethnography, first in one school and then in the other, as a way to gain the potential participants’ trust and identify key staff participants. People started to ask who I was, which helped me to have informal conversations, mostly with teachers but sometimes also with parents who were walking around. I usually explained that I had chosen this school to conduct my study because it has more social diversity than the average in Chile, which tended to spark their interest. In IS, access to the teachers was very smooth and did not require any specific strategy, which I think has to do with the fact that it is a very familial and small school, and with the close relationships between teachers and between them and the headteacher. Thus, once the headteacher gave me her approval to do the research at her school, I felt that I immediately gained everybody else’s trust and I just had to ask them if they wanted to be interviewed, when I ran into them in the playground.

In RS, at the end of the first week of fieldwork, I participated in the weekly teachers’ meeting and introduced myself. I explained that I would be at the school for around six weeks and that I wanted to speak to whoever was interested in sharing with me their views and experiences regarding the school’s social diversity. At the end of the meeting, a few teachers individually approached me and said that they were interested in participating, so we immediately agreed the dates for the interviews. This meeting also helped me to develop a sense of familiarity with the school infrastructure and members of staff, who seemed to be progressively more comfortable with my presence, and even started informal conversations with me in the hallways. One day, after interviewing the Maths teacher, she invited me to have a cup of tea at the teachers’ room “because it is cold outside [it was winter], so why would you stay in the playground without doing anything?” (fieldwork notes\textsuperscript{57}). She said that I could go there whenever I wanted. Gaining access to this room was really useful because it allowed be to have a more constant proximity with the teachers, since they went there several times a day and usually stayed for a while: they go there for their breaks to organise the upcoming classes, prepare materials, mark exams, have meetings with colleagues, or just to relax and chat with colleagues. Although at the beginning I felt slightly uncomfortable of being there (I was the stranger, so it was evident that they were surprised by my presence), that was a helpful space

\textsuperscript{57} I used these notes to keep a track on and organise the fieldwork process, for example, by writing the names of potential teacher participants and their timetables. In addition, I made notes on my observations of the schools’ infrastructure (e.g. spatial distribution in RS, described in Chapter VI, Section 3.1.4), as well as on my preliminary analyses and issues that attracted my attention and that I wanted to further explore in the interviews.
to strengthen my bond with them and contact potential interviewees. I did not even need to start any conversations (I did not want to disturb them) because my sole presence usually attracted their attention: while I was there having a cup of tea, they sometimes asked me questions about the project, which gave me the opportunity of inviting them to participate in the project.

My constant presence at the schools also allowed me to get access to the parents to be potentially interviewed. In RS, after interviewing the Behaviour Lead Assistant, she helped me to identify potential participants and she also provided me with their contact information, so the main contact strategy was calling them. All the participants accepted the invitation, except of one middle-class mother. In IS, the Vice Headteacher provided the conditions for me to attend a couple of parents’ meetings and invite them to participate in the study. After doing this, I waited in the school’s entrance for the meetings to finish, so I could directly ask some parents if they wanted to be interviewed. However, by that time it was dark and cold, so most of them quickly left the school and I just managed to schedule a couple of interviews. Therefore, I then asked the Vice Headteacher to suggest me possible interviewees and help me contact them. He agreed but preferred not to give me these parents’ contact details but to organise the interviews himself, which he did.

When inviting the potential participants to be interviewed, I always showed flexibility regarding the location to do so, making clear my willingness to accommodate myself to their availability and preferences. All the interviews with members of staff were carried out in the schools’ premises, at the preferred time of the participants. In both schools I was allowed to use a meeting room (usually the one used for one-to-one meetings with parents), although in some cases the interviewees preferred to stay in a different place (e.g. a classroom). Interviews with parents were conducted, in general, in the meeting rooms provided in each school. In three cases (two out of seven at RS and one out of eight at IS) I did the interviews in their houses, which only happened with middle-class parents. I also conducted four interviews in intermediate spaces. In the case of RS, this only happened with working-class parents: I did two interviews at cafes near the mothers’ workplaces (also near the school), and one interview in a car outside the school. In the case of IS, I conducted the interview with a middle-class father whose daughter has Asperger Syndrome at the SEN centre where he takes her for weekly treatment.

The locations where I conducted the interviews are informative in themselves and, it might be posed, have consequences for the kind of participant engagement (Hockey & Forsey, 2012) enabled by the interviews. I argue that reflecting on this issue is an important aspect of what
Bourdieu calls ‘epistemic reflexivity’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Maton, 2003), that is, “the systematic exploration of the ‘unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought’ (Bourdieu, 1982a: 10), as well as the practical carrying out of social inquiry” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 40). In other words, “what has to be constantly scrutinized and neutralized, in the very act of construction of the object, is the collective scientific unconscious embedded in theories, problems, and [...] categories of scholarly judgement” (idem: 40). In particular, following Brinkmann (2018), I would like to point out to the limitations of interviews as focused on the discourses and meanings articulated by interlocutors, a common understanding in the field of social sciences. From a post humanist perspective, the author argues that it is important to address “the significance of material factors such as the sound recorder, the arrangement of the furniture in the room, or the physical location of the setting for the interview as co-constitutive of what goes on” (2018: 594).

This opens interesting questions. For example, why did some (middle-class) parents opened their intimate spaces to me and others did not? Echoing Vincent and colleagues’ (2018a) findings, it could be posed that my working-class participants were more cautious about opening their intimate spaces to me because they recognised me as a middle-class person who could judge the more precarious materiality of their houses. Aligned with this, some of these parents lived in localities very distant from the schools and they acknowledged that I would have had to travel a long distance to go there (although I offered this option to them, they usually thought that it would be too complicated). In addition, most of these parents had a quite busy and fixed schedule of work, so I think inviting me to their homes could have been more difficult to organise for them. Moreover, conducting the interviews in one setting and not another entailed different challenges, with different implications for the kind of the data I was able to gather. When I conducted the interviews within the schools, I needed to make sure that we would not be interrupted (e.g. staff needing materials from that room). Also, I tended to feel like if I were there on behalf of the school, so I had to make clear to the parent interviewees that I was not a member of the staff and that I was not going to share details from their interviews with anyone. In turn, the main challenge of conducting the interviews in intermediate spaces was that I was not able to completely prepare the space for the interviews and that there tended to be more distractions than in the interviews at the schools. This was very clear at the cafes: even though I chose some relatively quiet ones, their smells, noises and constant transit of people posed difficulties to create a private atmosphere. However, these aspects seemed to have also contributed to create a nice and enjoyable setting for the interviewees, which I felt helped them to relax and open themselves to the interview.
When I conducted the interviews in the parents' houses, I had to pay attention to not disrupting their home routines and intimate lives. For example, when I interviewed Sofia (M/C, RS), the whole family was there, including the couple's youngest daughter, who is diagnosed with Down Syndrome. Thus, the parents were paying significant attention to her during the interview. This implied that I had to adapt the interview to the space and the situation in which I was doing it, for instance, by stopping it several times and keep it shorter than others. However, doing the interviews at their home also provided me with valuable information about the families' material living conditions and lifestyles. For example, despite both Sofia (M/C, RS) and Victoria (M/C, RS) live in The Hills, the first seems to have a more advantaged socioeconomic situation than the second: not only the neighbourhood in which Sofia lives is more affluent, but her house is bigger. What got my attention about Maria's (M/C, IS) house, in turn, was its peculiar shape (pretty narrow and with a high ceiling) and an apparent messiness, given the unique combination of functions that the main space seemed to play: the sitting room, the kitchen and Maria's art studio were all there, with no clear boundaries between them. In the three cases, I conducted the interviews in the sitting-room and could appreciate how these spaces played different roles and were full of objects, most of them, the children's toys: little cars and lots of different kinds of toys spread over the carpet in a quite minimalist sitting room, which only had two sofas, at Sophia's (M/C, RS); a guitar and a small drum-set besides the sofa, the television, and the dining table in Victoria's (M/C, RS) tiny sitting room; papers and pencils on the floor, in between a clothing hanger and the gas stove at Maria's (M/C, IS). Going to these parents' houses also allowed me to get some hints about their usual routines. For example, when they are not working, Sophia and her husband (M/C, RS) are very busy taking care of their children at home, they told me. This is something I could appreciate during the interview, particularly because their daughter demands special attention. Their sons, in turn, seemed to have a high ability to be by themselves and were quiet, playing with their toys, during most of the time I spent there. This situation contrasted with the one of Victoria (M/C, RS), who currently is a stay-at-home mother: I went to her house at 9 am on a Tuesday, because "this is the moment I have time for myself, after the kids leave to school and before I start cleaning and preparing lunch" (fieldwork notes). When I arrived, Victoria was on her pyjamas and was making breakfast, which I felt was too intimate and made feel uncomfortable; however, I was also positively surprised that she felt so at ease with my presence. In the end, I think the cosiness of the setting was helpful because Victoria seemed to be very relaxed and the interview lasted for more than two hours.

In order to complement the institutional accounts concerning diversity gathered from the interviews and attend the first research question, I reviewed the internal documents of the
schools, most of them produced at the request of the Ministry of Education and written by the school staff, defining the orientation of their actions and procedures. I argue that these, like the staff’s accounts, provide information about the schools’ institutional habitus, which I analysed with a focus on the views on inclusion and social diversity. These documents are:

- Institutional Educational Project (‘Proyecto Educativo Institucional’): This is perhaps the most important document as it defines the main guidelines giving order and sense to the educational labour of a school (Mineduc, 2014, 2015c). Circumscribed by the limits defined by the Ministry of Education in the General Law of Education (‘Ley General de Educación’) (Mineduc, 2009) – i.e. the principles of autonomy, diversity and flexibility - an Institutional Educational Project is defined by each school in order to “orient its activities and processes, giving the school actors a sense of attainment of the improvement goals and organising the institutional, curricular and pedagogic management in the medium and long term” (Mineduc, 2014: 5, my translation). There is no fixed structure for it, but it generally includes the vision or approach of the school (a sense of future), its mission (what it aims for), its values and principles, the pedagogic approach and a consideration of the social context in which the school operates.

- Internal Rules (‘Reglamento Interno’): This specifies the norms regulating the functioning of a school, such as: duties and rights of the school community, as well as regulations regarding the admission and expelling processes, and the use of school uniform, amongst others.

- Improvement Education Plan (‘Plan de Mejoramiento Educativo’): It is a strategic planning tool for the school to organise its goals and actions. It is oriented to the constant improvement of the school’s institutional and pedagogical practices.

- Conviviality Handbook (‘Manual de Convivencia’, in Spanish): It defines the norms regulating social relationships and conviviality in the schools, as part of the National Policy of Conviviality (‘Política Nacional de Convivencia’). This policy was created in 2015 as part of several educational reforms being implemented by the government. The aim of this policy is “to raise the formative goal of education and promote spaces for dialogue and democratic participation that foster critical and reflexive thinking, which are key elements for education in and for conviviality ['convivencia']” (Mineduc, 2015d: 4, my translation).
5. Ethical framework and positionality

The ethical framework of this thesis is based on the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research determined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). According to this framework, it is crucial that educational research is conducted within an ethic of respect for the people directly and indirectly involved, as well as for knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research, and academic freedom. Here, it is essential that researchers establish a relationship with the researched based on trust, and that they accept responsibility for their actions.

In relation to my responsibilities to the participants of my study, it was vital to treat them “fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice, in recognition of both their rights and of differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant characteristic” (BERA, 2018: 6). This entails that, as a researcher, I should maintain a special attentiveness to all stages of research regarding the ways in which structural inequalities – e.g. differences, socioeconomic status – affect social relationships, including those that are formed in the course of research.

This issue has been particularly important given the sensitivity of the topic of my thesis, related to the participants’ perceptions of social differences. In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that my positionality as a middle-class woman, who studied in a highly privileged, private school in Chile, and who is currently undertaking a PhD in London, has some important implications that I had to keep in mind during fieldwork, particularly with parents. The process of getting their trust to speak about social-class issues involved building a bridge between them and myself, for example, by adapting the interviews’ schedules (i.e. very open questions at the beginning, followed by more specific ones based on the participants’ answers) and thinking about the way I presented myself. My advantaged social background was helpful to get the trust of my middle-class participants, who in general seemed to take me seriously and as ‘someone like themselves’ because of my postgraduate studies in the UK. Also, as I lived in The Hills until I was 21, my familiarity with places and local issues was helpful to ask relevant questions to my interviewees in RS, without even mentioning terms such as socioeconomic level or social class (e.g. I asked some of them to compare RS’s families with the ones in other schools in the locality, which I knew were socioeconomically more privileged). My background also helped me access the more alternative and with low economic capital parents in IS (see Chapter V), many of them artists, since my parents themselves match that profile.
In turn, I had several anxieties related to my social distance from the working-class participants. First of all, I felt less confident about my skills to interpret these parents, given my lesser familiarity with their contexts of origin, compared with the middle-class parents. I was concerned about being seen by working-class parents as socially distant and presumptuous which could restrict their openness towards myself; I also worried that any acknowledgment of our socioeconomic distance would push them to adapt their narratives to present themselves as less socially distant (e.g. as completely comfortable in middle-class fields).

I addressed these issues by relying on my previous research involvements in disadvantaged areas, especially my experience as an ethnographer in school choice studies with working-class parents. Although perhaps the most helpful to approach the working-class parents have been my own experiences transiting different social fields and encountering people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, which I think have contributed to high degrees of reflexivity and consequently to the capacity to ‘read’ others and to adapt to different social spaces (refer back to Chapter III for a discussion on the concepts).

In fact, I myself have engaged in heterogeneous social relationships like the ones described in Chapter II that I believe have equipped me with skills to relate to a variety of people despite not sharing the same position in society. The most recent example is my experience studying in London, which has not only allowed me to experience a field/habitus mismatch (e.g. due to not being a native-English speaker) and the discomfort it produces (e.g. a diminished sense of entitlement in the academic field), but also to meet people from a variety of nationalities (although quite homogeneous in terms of social class, since most of them have a higher education degree and are also studying a PhD). Amongst other consequences, such discomfort, I think, has sparked high degrees of reflexivity on the differences and commonalities between my friends/acquaintances and myself, as well as a greater awareness of what I have to do to fit into particular social spaces and develop bridges with other people (e.g. I tend to listen more and speak less). Another crucial experience has to do with my friendships with originally working-class students who accessed higher education, whom I have met throughout my post-secondary job and educational trajectory. Although I acknowledge the limitations of these experiences since my friends have in general been exceptionally successful in their social mobility, my close relationship with them has opened the door to me to meet their relatives and sporadically enter their fields of origin. We have also been able to discuss issues of social class by comparing our life experiences. Alongside the possible benefits of social class diversity identified by my participants (see chapters of analysis), these experiences have been key to develop a greater awareness of the social
structure and the lifestyles of the people positioned in its different strata; they have also equipped me with a greater ability to sound out how to talk about possibly sensitive topics.

In practice, having awareness of my background and of the possible limitations linked with it allowed me to apply strategies to ameliorate such limitations. What I did during the interviews was to generally avoid highlighting aspects of my background that could make me look too privileged or exceptional. For example, I usually introduced myself as a student rather than as a PhD student, since having a doctoral degree is a quite elitist phenomenon in Chile. Also, outside the academic world and particularly amongst less affluent groups, people tend to not know what a PhD is, and I wanted to avoid them feeling ashamed of that (which I acknowledge is a concern biased by my own classed position).

All in all, despite these strategies, it is very likely that my research has particular limitations related to the differences in the ways I addressed the topic under study with working- and middle-class participants. However, I could at least follow certain procedures to guarantee an impartial ethic of respect for all my participants, regardless of their social background.

A first step to safeguard such ethic was to make sure that all the participants, starting with the schools' headteachers, were consenting on an informed basis to their participation (see information sheets and consent form in Appendix 3). To ensure this, I first formally told them – in general terms - about the study’s aims and – more in detail – the activities and uses of the research. After this, I asked them to read the information sheets and to sign the informed consent. I also explained them about their right to refuse to participate, including withdrawing once the study/interview was underway. It is worth mentioning here that the headteachers expressed their concerns regarding the uses of the information and/or benefits for their establishments. This concern was particularly clear in IS, where the headteacher agreed to participate only after I brought her a notarial letter stating that I would not cause any damage to the school’s reputation (see Section 4.2. above). Also, in both schools, the headteachers were clear that they expected recommendations for educational improvement. I made clear that identifying factors for this was not the goal of my research but that I would be happy to share with them my views on the school’s general approach to dealing with social diversity; also, I offered to somehow contribute to the school given my researcher skills. After discussing possible contributions with the headteachers, I built a database with socioeconomic information on the families in RS and, in IS, I conducted a final workshop with the staff. In this workshop, I presented what the parents and members of staff thought the main goal of IS was (a question I asked in the interviews) and then facilitated the discussion on this. After fieldwork,
I sent RS’s and IS’s headteachers the written reports on the database and on the workshop, respectively.

In addition, during data collection and analysis I have paid special attention to protecting confidentiality and the anonymity of both individuals and places (i.e. schools and localities) by using pseudonyms and keeping the data on a password protected machine. A key aspect was to assure confidentiality amongst participants within each school. As I was gaining the participants’ trust, it was common that they expressed their criticisms and gossip, for example, from members of the staff in relation to colleagues, from parents about teachers and from deputy headteachers about parents. In order to reciprocate their trust and make sure I did not encourage the emergence of conflicts in the school communities, I was particularly careful about not sharing any information amongst interviewees. For this, when I explained them the information sheets, I emphasised that I would not share any of their opinions with other participants; also, when they asked me about emerging results and/or other interviewees’ views, I only provided them with information on arising general trends, not highlighting differences or tensions amongst participants (e.g. in relation to the difficulties of dwelling with socioeconomically diverse students).

A third strategy to keep an ethical attitude of respect and dialogue has to do with my approach to conducting the interviews, namely, by being especially reflexive and aware of the details (e.g. participants’ discomfort, which can be more or less evident) (Christensen & Prout, 2002). Additionally, regarding the uses of the information, I have ensured that the data are reported accurately and that the information provided will be used only for the academic purposes of the research (see Appendix 4 for links to dissemination resources).

6. Data analysis

A key issue within the analysis was to focus on the particularities of the case studies at the same time than to avoid a merely descriptive analysis by articulating it with the wider social context and theoretical concepts, as “little facts speak about big issues” (Geertz, 1987: 34). In this sense, I understand the microscopic approach of my study as leading to a theorised analysis. In Coffey and Atkinson’s words, “theories are not added only as a final gloss or justification; they are not thrown over the work as a final garnish. They are drawn on repeatedly as ideas are formulated, tried out, modified, rejected, or polished” (1996: 158).

For doing this, I chose what Blaikie (2007) calls the ‘abductive research strategy’, which addresses analysis as a constant dialectic between data and theory, that is, combining
inductive and deductive approaches, rather than one preceding the other (neither an analysis oriented at testing theoretical hypothesis nor a pure grounded theory analysis). This strategy allowed me to identify themes, that is, extended phrases or sentences that identify what a unit of data is about and/or what it means (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014); “ideas presented by participants during interviews that summarize what is going on explain what is happening, or suggest why something is done the way it is” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012: 118). The identification of these themes, in turn, is tightly linked to a process of interpretation, that is, to making sense of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2016), by relating the analytic categories to previous literature and theory (Wolcott, 1994).

Following Bourdieu (2003), I understand that linguistic forms used by participants to express key themes (such as their views on social class difference and perceived benefits of it - see below) are produced in the context of particular fields and from the interviewees’ relative position in relation to them (i.e. differential possession of capitals in the school field). In this sense, my analysis reveals that the school field has certain rules of acceptability and implicit censorship about what can be said both in general and depending on the speaker’s position in the social space and, in particular, in such a field. As explained above, this is especially evident in relation to the legitimate ways of speaking about social class distinctions.

In practice, I categorised the data from the interviews in four Word documents: a document for the staff in RS, one for the staff in IS, one for parents in RS and one for parents in IS. I coded the transcripts according to a two-level structure of codes (codes and sub-codes) that combined deductive and inductive reasoning (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). I usually defined the codes (i.e. the broadest ones) deductively, based on the research questions, literature review and theoretical framework; then, throughout the process of organisation of the information, sub-codes (i.e. more specific) emerged inductively. Table 8 is an example of the two-level structure of codes I used for categorising the interviews with members of staff in IS:
### Table 8: Structure of codes – Interviews with members of staff in Inti School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Sub-codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General features of the school</td>
<td>1.1. Number of students, year of foundation, fees, scholarships, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Distinctive general discursive aspects | 2.1. A school open to the parents and the local community  
2.2. Definition of the school as inclusive, welcoming and based on respect  
2.3. An alternative educational approach  
2.4. Familial character of the school  
2.5. Integrative, eclectic approach |
| 3. Views on social diversity at the school | 3.1. Inclusion as a reason of pride  
3.2. Inclusion of SEN as most evident element shaping diversity  
3.3. Appreciation of the of middle-class majority (an alternative lifestyle)  
3.4. Working-class families not evident to all  
3.5. Perceived reasons of socioeconomic diversity  
3.6. Perceived homogeneity amongst families  
3.7. Informal mechanisms for identifying working-class families  
3.8. Social-class differences as something that has not to be highlighted  
3.9. Importance of solidarity towards working-class families |
| 4. Views on the possible benefits of social class diversity | 4.1. Disadvantaged children can better themselves through the encounter with middle-class families  
4.2. All children learn that they are the same despite differences  
4.3. All children develop a broader viewpoint and tolerance (existence of different realities)  
4.4. Affluent children learn to value disadvantaged classmates (i.e. they are decent despite disadvantage)  
4.5. Affluent children learn to appreciate their privilege |
| 5. The perception of a corpus of families with similar dispositions | 5.1. High levels of engagement with and participation in the school activities  
5.2. Strong commitment of disadvantaged families despite their disadvantage |
| 6. Institutional strategies to manage social class diversity and its challenges | 6.1. Efforts mostly focused on the presence of students with SEN  
6.2. Good relationships across social classes seen as a result of the school's focus on inclusion and openness  
6.3. Promotion of good relationships through everyday practices  
6.4. Regulation of undesired behaviours and conflicts |

The very process of coding also allowed me to identify necessary changes in my original codes and emerging sub-codes. For example, I realised that 2.3. and 2.5. were too similar so I merged them. Also, I reorganised the sub-codes in code 4. according to the expected beneficiaries of these benefits: expected benefits for disadvantaged students (4.1.), for all (I merged 4.2. and 4.3.), and for affluent students (I merged 4.4. and 4.5.). Then, as 4.1. concentrated too many quotations compared with the other sub-codes grouped in code 4., I subdivided it in relation to the kind of capital disadvantaged students were expected to improve, with embodied cultural capital being the most evident one (e.g. changing their ways of speaking and eating habits). The quotes that I finally included in the chapters of analysis
are the ones that better illustrate the identified themes. When possible, I also attempted to
provide quotes from different participants to support the elaborated arguments, while paying
attention to avoid repetitions.

These codes and sub-codes constitute the key themes organising a first version of the analysis
chapters, which I initially defined by school and type of participant, following the categorisation
logic: one chapter about the staff in RS, one about the staff in IS, one about parents in RS and
one for parents in IS. This ‘within-case’ structure of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles,
Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) allowed me to holistically address the research questions and
understand the staff’s and parents’ views on social class difference in each school. However,
this structure was not completely helpful to establish a constant dialogue between the case
studies. In addition, there was too much conceptual overlap between chapters, in terms of the
dialogue between the data and the concepts (i.e. theoretical discussions that apply for both
schools). Thus, I decided to reorganise the chapters according to a thematic approach,
merging the data from both schools into key themes while keeping a division between the two
kinds of informants. This also allowed a more comprehensive approach to the themes, in order
to address the research questions (see the Analysis part below). As this strategy entailed
including more participants in each chapter (i.e. members of staff or parents from each school),
the main challenge was to clearly guide the reader to make links between abstract ideas and
empirical data. I addressed this challenge by paying special attention to signposting. For
example, I included the name of the schools at the end of quotations, as a way to remind the
reader which school I am speaking about. Also, I included names only when completely
necessary to distinguish the participants, restricting these to parents (I refer to members of
staff by their role).

This point leads me to another methodological issue I encountered: language and translation.
For example, I wanted to avoid language adaptations regarding the names of my participants
to keep the analysis as anchored as possible to the Chilean context. However, since I am
aware that using names in Spanish makes the reading more difficult for non-Spanish
speakers, I decided to use Spanish-English bilingual names. Keeping data true to its context
of origin was in general difficult though, particularly because of the need of translating the
quotes into English. As argued by Nes and colleagues, the main risk of translation is to miss
the interpretation of valuable meaning, which is crucial in qualitative research: “[l]anguage
differences may have consequences, because concepts in one language may be understood
differently in another language. This is in particular relevant for qualitative research, because
it works with words” (Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010: 313). Since I am native in the same
language as the participants and I am also Chilean, I was able to capture a wide range of
subtle meanings that may not be explicitly disclosed to someone not familiar with the language and context. For instance, some words or expressions used by the interviewees are informative in themselves, adding nuances to what is reflexively said (e.g. words and expressions that are commonly used by certain social classes and not others, even when the interviewees do not declare to belong to a particular social class). However, a big challenge was to try to keep these original subtle meanings and nuances, given that I am neither native in English nor a professional translator (and did not have the economic resources to hire one).

I addressed this issue through two main strategies: a) keeping the word in Spanish/‘Chilean’ as originally said by my interviewees and explaining it in English (e.g. ‘flaite’ and ‘nana’ – see Glossary); and b) looking for precise translations either in Chilean slang dictionaries or discussing translations with other Chileans fluent in English.

7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have first presented the research questions guiding the thesis, which refer to the analysis of the staff (RQ1) and parent (RQ2) respondents’ views on social class mix and mixing processes, and the possibilities and limitations they perceive these present for the children’s development (Section 1).

I addressed these questions by using a constructivist-interpretivist epistemological approach and conducting a qualitative case study in two socioeconomically diverse schools in Santiago, the capital of Chile (Section 2). This approach allowed me to enquiry intensively into the participants’ experiences and interpretations regarding school mix/mixing, as well as to make connections with their concrete school contexts and with broader issues, such as the policy context and theoretical conceptualisations.

In Section 3, I explain the criteria defining the sample of schools on my study, which is composed of Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS), two schools with above-average levels of socioeconomic diversity and a majority of middle-class students. I argue that since their heterogeneous student composition precedes the implementation of the Inclusion Law (Chapter I), these schools present possibilities to understand existing processes of school mix/mixing and to envisage the potentialities of the Law. Also, the schools have distinctive discourses around diversity and inclusion, and are located in different areas of Santiago: RS has a traditional and Catholic approach, and is located in an established affluent locality; IS

---

has an alternative educational approach and emphasis on holistic education, and is located in a gentrified area.

Next, in Section 4, I describe the research tools and participants involved in each case study, namely, in-depth semi-structured interviews to parents and members of staff (headteacher, deputy headteachers and teachers). I also reviewed internal documents elaborated by the schools in order to address RQ1. Aligned with the discussion in Chapter I, I defined my potential parent participants’ social class mostly based on their residential situation, and broadly their educational level and occupation: middle-class parents usually held a higher education degree and worked in middle-class occupations, while working-class parents usually did not complete secondary education and worked in so-called unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. Amongst the latter, all of them had been assigned scholarships by the schools.

Section 5 discloses the ethical considerations I have kept in mind throughout the whole research process and my positionality in relation to the topic of study. Particular challenges were posed by aspects of my identity, specifically, my advantaged socioeconomic background, which situated me closer to my middle-class participants than to the working-class ones, in terms of life experiences and interests. I argue that awareness of this situation allowed to ameliorate its possible limitations.

Finally, in Section 6 I describe the principles and procedures to analyse the data from the interviews. I applied an ‘abductive research strategy’ according to which I understand analysis as a constant dialectic between data and theory, and as combining inductive and deductive approaches. I identified themes by categorising the data from the interviews according to a two-level structure of codes, with inductive sub-codes nested in more deductive and broader codes. These themes organise the final version of the analysis, which I present below (chapters V-VIII).
PART II: ANALYSIS
Introduction

As I have already argued in Chapter I, social class diversity is an infrequent phenomenon in Chilean society, which is characterised by high levels of both social and school segregation and, thus, concurrent social homogeneity within schools. The schools participating in this study, Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS), are an exception to this trend. Although their levels of socioeconomic diversity are still low, they both have greater diversity than the national average prior to the implementation of the Inclusion Law.

The first two chapters (V and VI) address the first research question (RQ1) of this thesis: How do the staff of two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of the children? To provide answers, I analyse RS and IS’s fields, particularly, the role that social class mix and mixing have in their institutional habitus, that is, “their ‘taken-for-granted’ assumptions about education and their pupils’ educational trajectory” (Ingram, 2009: 423), a sense of the school tradition or ethos (i.e., from ‘a’ school to ‘this’ school) (see Chapter III for a discussion on this concept).

The following two chapters (VII and VIII) of analysis attempt to explore the families’ experiences in such school fields, with a focus on the parents’ views on and dispositions towards social class mix and mixing. Specifically, these chapters address the second research question (RQ2): How do parents in two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their children’s school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of their children?
Chapter V. The schools’ celebration of social class differences

1. Introduction

First, in Section 2, I describe the main characteristics of Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS) by combining the analysis of documents and interviews. I pay particular attention to those elements defined as structuring the schools’ approaches to education and to the students, which I interpret as their institutional habitus (Chapter III). Both schools not only have exceptional levels of socioeconomic diversity, but also explicitly define themselves as inclusive and celebrate the diversity of their student populations. Despite these commonalities, I argue that they present particularities in the way they articulate their inclusive stances: While at RS Catholicism is a key aspect explaining its openness to inclusion and social class mix, at IS it is its holistic approach which plays that role.

Then, in Section 3, I go more into detail and analyse the benefits of socioeconomic mix and mixing perceived by the schools’ members of staff. I identify three kinds of potential benefits across both RS and IS: for working-class students to ‘improve’ their resources or capitals, fundamentally their cultural capital (i.e., competencies and skills); for all the students to expand their understanding of society and develop what I call ‘egalitarian dispositions’ towards social class difference and mixing, that is, values and attitudes towards others based on respect and a commitment to equality across humans, despite socioeconomic inequality; and for the most affluent students to develop a greater awareness of their privilege in society. Despite specificities in the way the staff at each school refer to these benefits, I argue that in both cases celebration of social class diversity is mainly supported by a discourse based on solidarity amongst those in the school and the aim of helping less affluent students thrive, through their contact with more advantageous students. In this sense, the schools’ institutional habitus and the role that school mix/mixing plays in it appear to be based on an understanding of social justice, the target of which is to aid ‘the poor’ (i.e., alleviating the effects of poverty on individuals’ achievement).

2. Two different institutional habituses that celebrate diversity

At both RS and IS, the members of staff I talked to celebrated being recognised as a socially diverse school. That was the headteachers’ reaction when I contacted them to obtain access to their schools in order to conduct my research, and the first thing they both proudly said when introducing me to the staff was that I was there because the school has exceptional levels of social heterogeneity. They expressed a feeling of being special because of this
reason, based on the acknowledgement that their job is more challenging in such a context and, consequently, academic achievements are considered to be even more worthy. Next, I analyse the schools’ main features and the way they articulate with the celebration of inclusion and diversity.

2.1. Rodriguez School: Catholicism and inclusion

RS is a private subsidised and Catholic school founded in 1965. It is situated in a middle-class locality of Santiago called The Hills, one of the wealthiest areas of the capital, on land donated by a powerful family descended from a former president of Chile. The school has primary and secondary education sections and, in 2017—when I conducted the fieldwork—there were around 575 students, which is the highest number the school had had until then and is close to its maximum capacity (590). There is one group of students per educational year, each composed of approximately 40 students. Until 2015, the school only accepted boys, and then the entrance of girls was allowed as a means of increasing the number of students and, consequently, its income (through fees and vouchers). In 2016, other important changes were introduced, such as the implementation of the SEN Programme, a state funded programme oriented to work with students diagnosed with SEN (see full definition in Chapter I, section 3), and the introduction of new pedagogic technologies and strategies (e.g., subject specialists teaching the youngest students, aged 7-10, which is not the norm in Chile). That year the school also restricted its all-day-open-door policy (i.e., previously, parents could enter the school whenever they wanted), in order to limit what was considered as excessive parental intrusion in the classroom. In addition, most of the oldest teachers—who had a strong emphasis on discipline and had taught at the school for around 50 years, even after retiring—left, producing a generational turnover in the school’s corpus of teachers. Monthly fees at RS are around £90 (the highest allowed by the state in private subsidised schools) and it provides scholarships and differentiated fees according to a family’s socioeconomic situation, for a maximum of 60 families per year.

Being a Catholic school is probably what best defines RS’s institutional habitus. A small divergence is necessary here to explain the role of Catholicism in Chile.

The Catholic Church has been a pillar in shaping education and social structure in Latin America in general and Chile in particular; some have even conceptualised it as the main factor determining Chilean identity (Parker, 1996; Morandé, 1992; and Cousiño, 1985, all in Larrain, 2001). As a Spanish colony (1598-1810), formal education was the full responsibility of the Catholic Church, as a means for the Spanish Crown to guarantee not only the
exploitation of the conquered lands’ natural resources, but also the so-called civilising function, that is, the evangelisation of the people and the eradication of their traditions and religious beliefs\textsuperscript{59} (Aedo-Richmond, 2000). In fact, the first schools and, later in the XVII century, universities, were created by the Catholic Church, the Jesuits being the most influential ecclesiastical order. With the constitution of the Independent Republic of Chile (1818), the authority of the state was separated from the church, and so the latter’s power over education—now the responsibility of the state—was reduced. Nowadays, although the Chilean state has been constitutionally defined as secular since 1925, the Catholic Church still plays a crucial role in the configuration of the country (e.g., according to the National Census of 2012, 67.37% of Chileans define themselves as Catholic)\textsuperscript{60} and, specifically, of the education system, both because of the powerful network of private schools under its administration and, consequently, its influence on policymakers: it owns around 2,000 schools, which corresponds to two thirds of the private schools (both private subsidised and non-subsidised, which together educate around 60% of the students) and a fifth of the total number of schools in Chile (Fernández & Victoria, 2010). Amongst these, more than 680 receive funding from the state (private-subsidised), involving more than 452,000 students (approximately 15% of the students in Chile)\textsuperscript{61}.

As is declared on its website, education at RS is developed “in the light of Christian and universal values such as charity, freedom, participation, loyalty, responsibility, solidarity, justice, generosity, and respect” (my translation). Furthermore, a value-oriented education is perceived as even more important than academic performance: “\textit{Not only are academic results important, but also the formative aspect. Maybe not all of our students are doctors, lawyers, or flashy things but we have proved that they are boys and girls with good values, they’re good people}” (Headteacher). Ultimately, though, both aspects are seen by the staff as related, since RS’s focus on Catholic values is said to promote the students’ discipline and conviviality (see Chapter I), consequently benefitting academic achievement. For example, the Maths Teacher explains: “\textit{A kid with a good set of values is also a kid that learns with pleasure, and that learns knowing to respect the space of others, that they shouldn’t make noise, that they shouldn’t bother the others.}” Also, on the school’s webpage it is stated that its mission is to provide “an

\textsuperscript{59} See also: http://www.mapuexpress.org/?p=528

\textsuperscript{60} There has been criticism towards the way in which the topic was asked (‘What is your religion or belief’) and the response alternatives, since there is no consideration of the possibility of being agnostic or atheist, amongst other issues. For further debate see, for example: http://www.eldesconcierto.cl/2018/01/12/chile-laico; http://www.elmercurio.com/blogs/2017/10/20/55068/Es-Chile-un-Estado-laico.aspx; https://laicismo.org/chile-el-censo-2017-y-la-duda-religiosa/

\textsuperscript{61} See also: http://www.lasegunda.com/Noticias/Nacional/2014/05/932409/el-peso-de-la-iglesia-católica-en-la-educacion-subsyencionada
education based on values and virtues to foster our students’ employment or higher education possibilities. We promote a disposition to learn how to solve problems with assertive, effective, and efficient leadership, as well as with good work quality” (my translation).

Moreover, I argue that RS’s Catholic identity shapes its particular way of approaching social inclusion. In a work document produced by the Education Vicariate (who runs the school) called ‘Inclusion, expression of our Catholic identity’, it is stated that “inclusion has to do with the most intimate workings of our Catholic identity […] [thus] schools cannot be resigned to [simply] replicating the segregation of our society” (Scherz, 2014: 5, my translation). In the same document, the Education Vicariate’s Episcopal Vicar claims that “inclusion is a quality that highlights a certain conviviality [‘convivencia’, in Spanish] […] ‘a school community driven by the evangelic spirit of freedom and charity’ [citing a text of the II Vatican Council, Gravissimum Educationis]” (p. 14). Thus, the importance that inclusion is declared to have at RS is supported by a moral principle directly shaped by religion. In particular, I will argue that the Catholic value of charity is crucial in shaping the possibilities for social class mix to exist at the school and that notions of charity inform positive attitudes towards diversity.

Following Tiramonti and Ziegler, charity can be understood as a central element of Catholic schools’ ethos, consisting of “loving God above everything and loving your neighbour [‘projimo’] as yourself, and it is defined as one of the three theological virtues […] [This implies] assisting those in need with gifts, caring, and consolation” (2008: 136, my translation). Of course, I am not trying to imply that Catholicism is a mandatory requirement for the promotion of inclusive practices, but pointing out that religion appears to be a crucial explicative factor of RS’s exceptionality in terms of its social class mixture.

For example, RS’s Webpage states that:

“Educational inclusion is a necessary horizon for our teaching and learning process. We do not restrict ourselves to SEN but we have a broader view. Conceptually, this view allows us to guarantee families and students their right to a good quality education and equality of opportunities. We attempt to address the diversity of interests, habits, sensibilities, capacities, and characteristics of all the community members, especially students, in order to build a safe space in which everybody feels welcomed and valued as unique individuals. Educational inclusion, as we understand it, is oriented towards eliminating all forms of arbitrary discrimination and social exclusion as a

---

62 From now on, the words in square brackets within quotations are in Spanish.
consequence of certain attitudes in relation to social [and] cultural […] diversity. As a Catholic school, we demand respect and appreciation of our pastoral activities and religious, Eucharistic, and liturgical classes. We demand the same of ourselves in relation to diversity in terms of race or ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic situation, language, ideology, and religion or beliefs” [my translation and emphases].

In this sense, inclusion is understood as a way of promoting equality across students not only with different educational needs, but also from a variety of religious, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. This precedes the implementation of the Inclusion Law. The presence of students identified as having SEN is a result of the implementation of the SEN Programme since 2016. The SEN Programme at RS translates into the presence of a group of specialised professionals such as specialist SEN teachers (‘profesores diferenciales’), psychologists, educational psychologists (‘psicopedagogos’) and speech therapists. These specialists work directly with the diagnosed students, as well as with teachers to assist them in adapting their pedagogy and assessments considering the whole group of students. As explained by the interviewees, the majority of the diagnosed students have mild learning disorders.

Religious inclusion is an especially interesting phenomenon given that RS is a Catholic school. The current headteacher himself is not religious—being the first lay headteacher of the school—and non-Catholic students are accepted as long as they and their parents agree to “listen to and respect what we do here” (Behaviour Lead, RS), meaning that, for example, they have to participate in the religious activities organised by the school. Ethnic diversity, in turn, is defined by the arrival of a few students from different countries as a result of the increasing number of immigrants in Chile in recent years, although the staff were unaware of the exact figure.

Particularly relevant to the aims of this study is RS’s socioeconomic diversity. Originally, the school was founded with the explicit orientation to assist the children of poor people working in The Hills, for instance, as domestic workers and gardeners, who could not afford the very expensive private schools available in the district—for example, the Jesus and Virgin Maria schools, Catholic private schools for boys and girls, respectively, which are opposite to RS. In this regard, the creation of the school was a response to a need of the aristocratic families of the locality, who needed a place for their workers’ children to study, so “employers could maintain their good employees, because before they were leaving because they didn’t have a school for their kids” (Headteacher). As the History Teacher explains:
This was an absolutely aristocratic locality of families with a high socioeconomic level whose servants; their service staff didn’t have an option to educate their children. There was Jesus, Virgin Maria, schools that are made for the Chilean elite, very expensive, private… so they created this school thinking of giving an alternative education to poor people in this locality (History Teacher, RS)

Later on, with the economic crisis in 1982, socioeconomically more advantaged families started to enrol their children in RS once they saw their employment and economic situation affected: “Business wasn’t good so they had to move here because it was cheaper,” said the Behaviour Lead Assistant. Consequently, a more socioeconomically diverse population of families and students emerged. Moreover, the school received an important number of army generals’ children, who are also considered to be socioeconomically advantaged. However, as stated by the History Teacher, many of the richest families left the school and went to more prestigious ones when their economic situation recovered, so the current social diversity is considered to be less evident than in the 1980s and 1990s. In the next quotation, the History Teacher analyses the reasons why these rich families moved to other schools, referring not only to educational reasons but—mostly—to social ones, specifically to the acquisition of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) or networks: “Then their income levels recovered and they were once again able to have their child at a high-status [‘alta alcurnia’] school. What you pay for in these schools is not only education […] but the status, the social connections.” The original aim of including socioeconomically disadvantaged students is maintained, though, by having differentiated fees and complete scholarships.

Nowadays, the majority of the student population is composed of middle-class pupils who live in The Hills or in adjacent affluent areas. The staff identified different reasons for the middle-class parents choosing this school (rather than a private one, which is the tendency in the locality), the most important being their lower economic capital compared to the average in The Hills. As I said, monthly fees at RS are around £90, while private schools nearby can easily cost five times this amount, in addition to the “incorporation fee” they charge prior to enrolment (approximately £1,000-£4,500).63: “This is a school of second-rate people [‘gente de
This is a school of posh [‘cuicos’] people that declined [‘venidos a menos’]. This school is poor compared to the area” (Language Teacher, 14-18-year olds, RS). This, combined with the fact that RS is a private (subsidised) school that has a certain academic reputation, seems to be a key element for attracting “middle-class families that prefer to save money on education” (Language Teacher, 7-10-year olds, RS). In fact, RS is the only cheap school in The Hills that is not a state school (Chilean state schools are free and usually have a worse academic reputation than private subsidised schools). The Language Teacher (14-18-year olds) even adds that “For a long time this school was the favourite for many parents, given its academic level, because the school is not as expensive as the private ones, like our neighbours and others.” In this scenario, despite RS being declared to be the “poor relation” of the majority of private schools in the locality, “we are not a state school, and with everything that is being said about state schools—people prefer us” (SEN Deputy).

The school also has a minority group of working-class students. Some of them live in The Hills, as their parents, mostly mothers, are domestic workers, while the rest come from fairly distant localities (e.g., San Bernardo, Renca, Puente Alto, Huechuraba, etc.), attracted by the school’s accessibility, with a tube station just five minutes away\(^64\), and/or the fact that one or both parents work in the locality. According to the Language Teacher (7-10-year olds), “these families come to the school even when they have to travel long distances because they know the school has a good level of prestige, or because of this social thing of studying in The Hills,” referring to the fact that it is a middle-class locality. Most importantly, the access of these students is promoted by the schedule of differentiated fees and full scholarships according to the economic situations of the families. Family income is identified by the school administration through questions about their employment, salary, expenditures, and/or catastrophic circumstances (e.g., parent’s death). To access these benefits, parents are required to complete an application form and provide relevant documentation, according to which the school decides the fee percentage to be discounted: from 25% to 100%. This information is processed by the Headteacher’s secretary.

2.2. Inti School: holistic education and inclusion

\(^{64}\) This is unusual in Santiago (the only city in Chile with tube stations), as the underground system does not cover the whole city.
IS is a private-subsidised school founded in 2013 by the current headteacher and owner, located in the increasingly gentrified borough of The Heath, which adjoins the city centre of Santiago. Its monthly fees are around £45 and it annually provides approximately 15 full scholarships to those families proving to be unable to pay those fees. IS is a primary school, with an average of 16 students per class, which is significantly fewer than the average in Chilean schools (30 in primary education, OECD, 2018), and a total number of approximately 116. There are around 10 teachers teaching at different levels at the school. IS’s small size is understood by the staff as facilitating personalised education.

Linked with this, I will argue that IS’s institutional habitus is highly shaped by its declared holistic approach where the whole institution owes its coherence to the connection between its parts: “Here we work with a bit of everything and everybody adds what they bring [‘cada uno pone de su cosecha’]” (Early Years Teacher 2, IS). This approach is reflected in the school’s name, “the house where all wisdoms are shared” (written in Quechua, the indigenous language of the Incas65), which entails understanding education in a broader way, not restricted to academic results, to “educate boys and girls with a reflexive view of reality and with a strong creative spirit, […] cultivated students, individuals interested in knowing and exploring the world” (IS’s Webpage). This translates into the appreciation of a range of educational approaches, in particular, giving priority not only to the areas traditionally assessed by SIMCE, the national standardised test in mathematics and Spanish, but also to sciences, arts, and sports. This, along with Latin-American indigenous traditions, for example, the use of herbs and environmental care in Science lessons (which is not the norm in Chilean schools), in order to “reunite the history of our ancestors with the experience of the current world.” According to the Vice Headteacher, “this school includes the ancestral culture, taking the traditions of the indigenous peoples [pueblos originarios], as well as the cultural legacy from Europe: we aren’t an ‘indigenist’ school [i.e., rooted in indigenous people’s culture], we’re a school that integrates.” Such an approach is thought to be an exception in the Chilean school system, an alternative educational perspective that is usually restricted to private schools66. In practice, the teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of pedagogic methods, which is facilitated by the small number of students and which led to a restructure of the teaching staff

65 The Inca civilisation or Twantinsuyu (in Quechua language) was the largest empire in South America until its colonisation by the Spanish in 1526.
66 Private schools with a completely alternative educational project in Chile (e.g. Waldorf and Montessori) can operate but are not recognised by the state. One of the consequences of this is that, at the end of their education, students have to take exams elsewhere in order to validate their learning and, for example, be able to apply for higher education institutions. Such schools tend to attract families with a similar cultural capital to those at Inti (e.g. artists, progressive, and left-wing) but tend to be more privileged in terms of their economic capital, as these schools’ fees are very high.
the year before my fieldwork: around eight out of 15 teachers were sacked in 2016, and younger teachers, “more open to alternative pedagogic styles” (Headteacher, IS), were hired.

IS’s holistic approach is also conceived in terms of personalised and familial education, contrasting with mainstream education, which “only focuses on grades and competing: students aren’t seen as persons but as numbers [referring to their results on the standardised tests]” (Early Years Teacher 1, IS). Therefore, the school is understood as a family and education as based on affective relationships: “At this school we’re concerned about the human, the child him/herself […]. We’re a family and we work through a pedagogy of love in which the children learn through affection” (Early Years Teacher 1, IS). In the Behaviour Lead’s words, pedagogy of love means that “here we value the children, they can express their emotions. We try to hold them so the school is a pleasant place for them, with people they can trust.” This is understood as in relation to challenging traditional hierarchies and rules in mainstream schools. Thus, the school staff, for example, do not require the students to wear uniform and encourage pupils to call them by their first names, instead of just calling them ‘Teacher’, which is the norm in most schools as a way to show respect for their authority:

“This is a welcoming school […] as we try to protect our children, take care of them. Since we’re a small school, we’re like a little family, and we all treat each other with respect, which is the most important thing […]. Here everybody calls me by my name. Why? Because saying ‘teacher’ something creates an authority that we don’t want to create. We’re here to care for them. That’s why we’re different […] the school has a relaxed style (Early Years Teacher 2, IS)

In this context, I argue that this holistic approach is a key factor of IS’s declared appreciation of inclusion and “the richness of diversity” (Headteacher, IS). As is stated in its Institutional Educational Project (defined in Chapter 4, Section 4), the school’s original aim was to “generate an inclusive school for the locality and its surroundings,” an educational space “where everybody has his/her place and is treated with respect for their diversity” (my translation). In this regard, IS defines itself as welcoming and diverse since “our foundations and principles seek to develop an educational project based on pluralism, humanitarianism, and the respect for the other and their history.” Moreover, one of the stated pillars of the school’s Conviviality Handbook (defined in Chapter 4) is “no discrimination of people based on their ideologies, religion, ethnicities, etc.” Hence, it can be argued that IS defines itself as what Hollingworth & Mansaray (2012) call a ‘multicultural canopy’, that is, a space for the peaceful co-existence of different cultures, but, in this case, also used to signal the mixture and inclusion of people from different social classes. In the Vice Headteacher’s words:
The school provides a space to establish a link between different cultural, socioeconomic, and religious perspectives, a space where conviviality ['convivencia'] is possible. This school started receiving people who didn’t have the chance to have an educational space, either because of their SEN or other reasons. So this school was started with this idea about the path of the Inca, with the idea of reaching a point where it's possible to develop conviviality ['convivencia'] between all cultures (Vice Headteacher, IS)

As it can be seen in the quotation, IS’s inclusive approach is to a high extent supported by its explicit orientation towards including children diagnosed with SEN, thanks to having specialist SEN teachers hired by the SEN Programme: at the time I conducted the fieldwork, there were four students diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome and one with Down Syndrome. Another clear example of this approach is the teaching of religion. Unlike RS, IS does not address this by focusing on Catholicism, but from a broader and more philosophical perspective. This allows IS to attend to the field of power’s requirement to maintain its position in the school field (that is, the Ministry of Education’s requirement to include religion lessons in the curriculum), while sticking to the school’s declared aim of promoting mutual understanding across the students’ differences:

Here we don't pigeonhole anything. For example, in religion lessons, we don’t speak about one religion because there’s a wide spectrum amongst the children so we have to respect them. Due to this, we created the ‘Philosophy for Children’ lesson, where we speak about values and religions but from the angle of culture: what do people do, what does a mosque or a church look like [...]? We work from this [...]. The children chat… “I'm a Jew”, “my mom goes to the Catholic Church”, “What does your church do?”, “We pray, we sing”, “ah, ok, mine as well”. So they start realising that, in the end, they're the same [same values]. It’s the name which changes (Headteacher, IS)

Likewise, even though the school is not Catholic, they celebrate the Day of Solidarity, inspired by Chilean Jesuit priest Alberto Hurtado (1901-1952) and work with this value in a secular and community-based way, also with the intention of promoting an ecological consciousness:

---

67 A sort of meta-field composed of agents who occupy dominant positions in their respective fields (see Chapter III for a detailed definition).
68 As I said, although Chile is not defined in its Constitution as a Catholic country, most Chileans declare themselves to be Catholic (67%, according to the 2012 Census) and the teaching of religion is mandatory in all schools receiving state funding (more than 90% of students attend these schools).
69 Unlike P4C in the UK, this is an initiative by IS, not an independent programme.
We aren’t Catholic, this is an open school and there’re kids from many religions. But the Day of Solidarity has this concept of respect and solidarity, the care of and respect for the other. So that day the whole school goes out to clean the neighbourhood [‘barrio’] […]. And with this they also develop an ecological awareness. We wanted them to understand that the care of the space is part of ecology, even if it’s [care of] cement (Vice Headteacher, IS)

This inclusive stance can also be seen in the way the school approaches certain national festivities, for instance, by not celebrating Mother’s and Father’s Day, in order to promote respect of the different family configurations: “We try to work out the activities in a different way. We don’t celebrate Mother’s Day, because […] we’ve got different kinds of families […]. We respect the space of the other” (Year 1 Teacher, IS).

Although social class diversity is not immediately evident to all members of IS’s staff (see Chapter VI), it is presented by some of them, especially the Headteacher, as an important element of the school’s inclusive approach. In particular, having a socioeconomically mixed student composition is understood as one pedagogic source amongst others orienting IS’s institutional habitus towards openness. This is thought to distinguish IS from mainstream schools with a restricted curriculum (limited to training on the contents and skills assessed in the national standardised tests) and with a socially homogeneous population.

As at RS, the staff identify two main social-class groups. On the one hand, a majority of middle-class families (around 60%), mostly composed of left-wing professionals (mostly artists, but also lawyers, social scientists, architects, and teachers) who live in gentrified areas in a nearby locality. They are defined as “parents who have studies, even postgraduate qualifications, but have a low economic situation due to their ideology” (Vice Headteacher), meaning that they do not seek a particularly wealthy lifestyle. However, the economic capital of their families of origin could be particularly high: “The ones who are artists, their families have a lot of money. For example, one of our mothers is the daughter of [famous Chilean actress]” (Headteacher). In this sense, socioeconomic advantage at IS is mostly presented in terms of cultural capital advantage, which not only takes an institutionalised form (educational level) but also an embodied one (e.g., sophisticated aesthetic dispositions), which is highly appreciated by the staff. For example:

We have a father who is a luthier and he fixes the instruments of a series of famous [‘topisimos’] bands such as [names two Chilean folk bands, well known as being left-
wing]. We also have the granddaughter of [member of one of these bands] and half of the children of [Chilean band] (Headteacher).

**The parents are alternative**, not traditional. For example, at the get-togethers, you can see they're different: there's lots of fruit, only a few pastries or sweets [...]. I think the majority of the parents at the school are very homogeneous, the same vibe, the same style. Many are professionals. And the kids have a good cultural capital [...] which comes from their home [...]. They ask very interesting questions during the lessons [...] They [students] are very interested in **current affairs**. And they enjoy listening to **music** [...] it's remarkable the kind of bands they know about at their age [...]. They all have similar tastes, like all into yoga. It's kind of an alternative culture (History Teacher, IS)

**The parents** are very hippy70. The majority are musicians, dancers. Many are into arts, so I think this **cultural thing** benefits all the children, it favours their learning [...]. Their children participate in a lot of social activities, they **travel** a lot. At the other school where I worked [very vulnerable] 80% of the students had never seen the sea71. Here the kids travel, I'm the only low class one ['la única rota'] who has never gone abroad [...]. We also have other extremes where the families are from a humble background, not professionals (Year 1 Teacher, IS)

In contrast with this main group, the staff identified a minority of working-class families composed of parents—especially mothers—who they describe as lacking both economic and cultural capital, the latter directly divergent from the described middle class:

*We also have women ['señoras'] who work doing the cleaning in homes, or who work in call centres, or in stores, or selling things on the streets or the market (Headteacher)*

*We have various parents who enjoy going to the theatre, dancing, reading [...] and we have others who are very **culturally deprived** [...] and have almost no money, only their eagerness ['las ganas'] (Behaviour Lead)*

---

70 In contrast to other contexts, here ‘hippy’ is seen as a positive quality, referring to their progressive views.
71 Santiago is close to coastal towns (approximately 120km) and this is the reason why not having been able to “see the sea” reveals a very vulnerable economic situation that does not stretch to a relatively cheap bus ticket.
As can be seen, it is much easier for IS’s staff members to provide details and to value the middle-class families’ particular features, compared to their working-class counterparts. These features are all in the domain of the embodied family cultural capital that these middle-class families are able to mobilise to the school field. Moreover, the middle-class parents appear to represent the totality of families in the school, by being referred to as “the parents.” The fact that the working-class families are more obscure in the staff’s accounts is especially remarkable considering that they are the ones who originally constituted the majority of the school’s families’ and for whom the school was planned: “the original idea was to open a space for the kids of the locality”, the Headteacher explains, although then she adds, “a space to open the world of culture for them.” In this sense, the ease with which the majority of the staff describe the cultural capital of the middle-class families in the school suggests that there is an assumption about its more legitimate, ‘worthy’ nature, whilst I will argue below (Section 3.2.) that aspects of the working-class’ cultural capital appear to be within the domain of the illegitimate and unspeakable.

As explained by members of staff, both kinds of families are mostly attracted by IS’s holistic education and focus on the education of students with SEN, but also by its low fees since “apart from this school, you can only find this kind of education in private schools” (Year 1 Teacher). Early Years Teacher 1 specifies that IS being “different, freer” is one of the reasons why it attracts people from different social backgrounds and “localities, such as Vitacura, Providencia [both very middle-class], Santiago Centro [mix of backgrounds] and Maipu [working-class].”

Such socioeconomic diversity is also closely linked to the characteristics of the area where IS is located, The Heath. This is an originally working-class borough with a large majority of people with secondary education or less (80% approximately in 2009). However, some areas of the borough closer to the city centre have experienced a strong process of urban renovation accompanied by an increasing gentrification. This is especially clear in Soles, an area relatively close to IS, with a high concentration of new, mostly high-rise buildings that have been constructed since mid-2000, when changes to the urban regulation plans were made (Lopez-Morales, 2012). These buildings are more expensive and smaller than the houses already existing, and tend to attract young people with the capacity to pay higher prices or attract credit (Lopez-Morales, Arriagada-Luco, Gasic-Klett, & Meza-Corvalán, 2015), and who have a preference for the diverse cultural assets located in the city centre (Contreras, 2011, cited in Lopez-Morales, Arriagada-Luco, Gasic-Klett, & Meza-Corvalán, 2015). In Maria Luisa Mendez’s words (2008), gradually gentrified areas of the city centre such as Soles represent
“an interesting mixture of several groups, some of who choose to live and belong there as a rejection of the Barrio Alto’s [wealthy areas in Santiago such as The Hills, where RS is] values, some of whom are interested in preserving and regenerating tangible and intangible urban heritage, and some who are just trendy, alternative, and bohemian” (Mendez, 2008: 225-226, my translation)

These new inhabitants’ middle-class profile contrasts with the original population of that area (Soles), composed of a majority of heads of household ['jefes de hogar'] with only secondary education (65%), followed by those who had only completed primary education (14%), and with incomes lower than $600,000 pesos (around £600) (63%) (Lopez-Morales, Arriagada-Luco, Gasic-Klett, & Meza-Corvalán, 2015). In this sense, the urban renovation of this area has taken place along with a process of ‘elitisation’ of its local residential markets and a higher pressure for the original, poorer population to relocate themselves to more peripheral areas due to increases in the price of land (Lopez-Morales, 2015), or, in other words, gentrification (Lopez-Morales, 2013). This is aligned with the statistics provided by the CASEN survey, which show a reduction of poverty (from 15% in 2011 to 9.45% in 2013) (CASEN 2011 and 2013) and the increase in the population’s incomes (52% between 2003 and 2009) (PLADECO, 2012) and educational qualifications. At the same time, in the last few years, the locality has experienced growth in the number of migrants, mostly from Peru, Ecuador, and Haiti.

In this context, the school defines itself as enabling access to what the Headteacher calls ‘a window to culture’, meaning a particular sort of cultural capital open to all students equally:

Here the students have learnt to watch theatre plays. Sopranos have come to the school and the kids listen and like them ['se quedan admirados']. A young man who sings hip-hop on the buses also came. The kids have seen clowns [...]. The school looks for activities to open a window to culture for the kids. Now they know there’s more than reggaeton. They listen to classical music. If they have dancing lessons, they listen to certain types of music. In yoga, another music. So they can speak to you about a violin player, for example, even if their parents don’t understand (Headteacher, IS)

Thus, what the headteacher means by access (“a window”) to culture refers to the awareness of a range of styles within arts, particularly music, so the children “know there’s more than

72 Even though now it is less usual than in previous years, in Chile it is common to see artists and street vendors working on public transport, particularly buses.
In this sense, the school is pictured as enabling them to acquire an aesthetic cultural capital that is not as commonly possessed by the families as, for example, reggaeton is: even if a family does not have a particular preference for reggaeton, it is fairly easy to access this musical style in Chile (e.g., on the radio, clubs, etc.). Most of the headteacher’s allusions refer to classical music, which is traditionally associated with the so-called ‘high culture’ and the middle classes (Bourdieu, 1984a). In the context of the school, though, this ‘high culture’ is signalled as being democratised, open to everybody.

Also, IS’s emphasis on an education based on affective relationships articulates with the socioeconomic support provided to the families, both through its low fees and full scholarships to those in need, and by not expelling defaulting students. This despite the fact that, according to the headteacher, it is difficult to maintain the school economically, as “the state subsidy is small and there aren’t many parents who pay the full fees, so it’s only enough to pay the teachers. I’ve been working for free for five years.” As she states, she has had to ask for loans to improve the school’s infrastructure, which she is not yet able to repay; moreover, in 2014-2015, she maintains that her co-founder stole money from the state subsidy, as well as some fees that were paid by the parents directly to her. Then she disappeared, so the money was never recovered, and as a result, this increased the headteacher’s debts: “Here at the school no one could notice a lack of resources, but I’ve been struggling at home […]. The school was falling down, it’s only this year [2017, when I conducted fieldwork] that we are settling down” (Headteacher, IS). In this sense, there is a strong charity discourse at the basis of the school’s welcoming of families with low economic capital, which seems to translate into economic supports that do not derive from an institutionalised policy, but from the ‘goodwill’ of particular members of staff.

3. Perceived benefits of social class diversity

In this section, I argue that celebration of socioeconomic diversity at both schools is justified by their staff’s perception of its benefits in terms of the students’ personal and social development. Next, I discuss these perceived benefits, first at Rodriguez School (RS) and then at Inti School (IS).

3.1. Rodriguez School

The staff’s capacity to identify benefits of diversity at the school is particularly clear in relation to the presence of foreign students and the resulting multicultural population. This is expected to have positive consequences in the students' ability to engage with people from different
cultures and ethnicities. This ability is similar to what Reay, Crozier, and James call multicultural capital, a sort of embodied cultural capital to “deal with people of other races and nationalities openly and respectfully […] [which equips] children for an increasingly diverse global world” (2011: 88). At RS, what is valued is to learn from the traditions of different countries, for example, their languages, customs, food, clothes, words, dances, and music. This cultural interchange is seen by the headteacher, deputy headteachers, and the majority of the teachers I talked to as something that occurs naturally and does not require any institutional intervention. According to the interviewees, the only activities explicitly oriented at emphasising ethnic differences amongst the students and their families at RS have been a Folklore Exhibition during the International Arts Week organised for the first time in 2016, as well as an exhibition on the indigenous groups of Chile. These activities take on a traditionalising approach to other cultures, which is clearly expressed by the Behaviour Lead in the following quotation, where—similar to other studies on ‘multicultural days’—the value of other cultures is framed as being exotic and in the past (i.e., when speaking of the indigenous people of Chile); at the same time a cultural homogeneity of minority groups is assumed (e.g., all Peruvians are the same).

“It’s good that the others know about the typical things ['cosas tipicas'] of the kids ['niñitos'] from Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, or Mexico […]. We also had an exhibition about Mapuches [see footnote], about the different indigenous peoples that lived here in Chile, about their traditions, their clothing, their way of making a living, of surviving […] to value the ethnic thing” (Behaviour Lead)

The Behaviour Lead’s account of these ‘multicultural days’ reveals not only that ethnic-cultural recognition is valued at the school, but also that such a recognition is not neutral. There are very specific aspects—particularly the most traditional manifestations of culture, which may look exotic to the Chileans’ view—of being from a certain country/ethnicity that are named and highlighted in the school field. It is noteworthy how the potential development of a form of

---

73 As stated on the Ministry of Culture’s website, the International Arts Week (‘La Semana de la Educación Artística’) is an international festival promoted by UNESCO with the aim of sensitising the international community to the importance of arts education, as well as of encouraging cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion” (https://www.cultura.gob.cl/educacion-artistica/sea/). During that week, the participant schools organise activities around their artistic experiences and projects.

74 Indigenous populations in Chile are not extinct. Currently, the country recognises the following: Mapuche, Aymara, Quechua, Atacameño, Colla, Diaguita, Rapanui, Yagán, and Kawésqar. There are significant conflicts in relation to the recognition of these populations, the most iconic case being that of the Mapuche people, who demand their autonomy and sovereignty over the lands in the south of Chile and Argentina, taken by the respective states in the XIX century. However, the curriculum does not address these issues. A discussion on the current subtle strategies of domination of Mapuche people in education can be found in Webb & Radcliffe, 2015.
multicultural capital is conceived here in terms of cosmopolitan capital, this is, “an openness, interest and ease of engagement with the Other—in the form of exotic/foreign cultures, places and people” (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016: 782), which acts as a valuable resource in an increasingly globalised context (Snee, 2013). In this framework, the approach to the ‘ethnic other’ (Reay, Hollingworth, Williams, Crozier, Jamieson, James & Beedell, 2007) is fragmentary and subjectivating: as foreign students enter the school field being recognised by their exotic authenticity (Youdell, 2012)—that is, by the food they eat, the music to which they dance, and the words they speak—their subjectivity is also circumscribed to these aspects, reproducing “an Other that is exoticized, romanticised” (Snee, 2013: 158).

This analysis of the staff’s views on ethnic diversity at RS is interesting in that it contributes to a better understanding of how they understand social class diversity. In what follows, I will argue that working-class students are the quintessential social class ‘others’ at the schools. However, unlike the ethnic ‘others’ above, they are not conceived as possessing an exotic authenticity that renders them legitimate subjects of recognition. In contrast, less affluent students are mostly thought of as in deficit (like the students with SEN), not only economically but also in cultural terms. In this scenario, it can be suggested that working-class students are, like foreign students, also romanticised, but not because of their particular (working-class) features but due to the opportunity they give RS to define itself as helping them and to strengthen its Catholic approach.

3.1.1. ‘Bettering’ the working classes

There is a generalised tendency amongst my staff participants at RS to view the main benefits of socioeconomic diversity as for the poorest students, since being at this school is expected to help them to reduce their existing deficit of capitals and improve their future opportunities: “The disadvantaged ones have the possibility to get ahead […]. A kid that doesn’t have the resources… one can help him,” the Conviviality Deputy observes. Therefore, the staff picture themselves as contributing to social justice by addressing a very concrete and material objective, which is increasing the economic capital of the most disadvantaged families. At its most immediate level, this translates into more or less informal strategies of economic support such as the “Job Pool” (‘Bolsa de trabajo’) administrated by the Headteacher’s Secretary, who operates as a bridge between those parents who own a business and are looking for workers and those parents who are unemployed and are looking for a job. Other initiatives are the Solidarity Fund (‘Caja solidaria’)—a supportive mutual benefit fund managed by the Catholic congregation in charge of the school—and the fundraising and supplies’ collections carried out by the school community to help families at the school who are in need. A more informal
strategy is the collection of lost items, particularly clothes, conducted by the Behaviour Lead Assistant, who then donates them to the students in need.

One of the most important elements seen by RS staff as increasing the working-class students’ chances of social mobility is to increase their volume of particular cultural capitals, such as educational credentials, as well as embodied skills and attitudes towards education. This process takes place through access to an education supposedly of good quality, despite the families’ low economic capital, thanks to the scholarships provided by the school. “A student whose mother works as a cleaner doesn’t have to pay fees, and that allows them to access a good quality of education,” the Behaviour Lead Assistant notes. In the Inclusion Lead’s account, the very possibility of improving these students’ living conditions is associated with the possibility of developing aspirations that are unusual in their local fields, that is, their family of origin. Here, not only is it important to access skills, knowledge, and credentials delivered by a school with academic status, but also to develop the disposition of aspiring to conduct higher education studies. The account by the Inclusion Lead is very clear in this respect due to the comparison he makes with the school he previously worked at:

The students can gain more experience as they know about more realities, which gives them the possibility of broadening their horizons and finding out that they have a wider range of options to choose from. In the [disadvantaged] school I worked at, I saw that this lack of [broader] experience affected their expectations of what they wanted to achieve, as they saw higher education as something very distant, almost unreachable (Inclusion Lead, RS)

Additionally, working-class students’ possibilities of social mobility are perceived by the staff as encouraged by their interaction with their middle-class counterparts, this interaction being seen as beneficial to acquire ways of thinking and acting that are valued in other fields of society—that is, embodied dispositions that work as cultural capital. For example, some of the interviewees explicitly and positively refer to the way in which working-class students tend to change their way of speaking after a few months amongst the school’s middle-class majority, which is perceived to be a means of transmuting their identity as ‘flaites’. ‘Flaite’ (singular) or ‘flaites’ (plural) is a Chilean idiom with a meaning similar to the term chav in the UK. It does not have a strict definition, but is generally used to refer to poor young people (usually men but it can also include women) on the margins of society, for example, people who spend a lot

---

75 This is considered to be very difficult in Chile, as the most prestigious schools tend to be the most expensive.
of time on the street consuming drugs, with no aspirations of studying and/or having a stable job. As in Ingram (2009), the following quotations illustrate the importance attributed by RS’s staff to instilling a more middle-class way of expression into working-class students:

The most important thing is what these [disadvantaged] students can gain in terms of values, of language. They learn a language different from the most popular one, the one in their neighbourhood ['de barrio'], and that benefits them, it contributes to their personal formation (Mathematics Teacher, RS)

Here, the poorest kids have the possibility to relate to more advantaged ones who have access to more culture ['mas cultura'], to more social friction […]. The parents have less resources but they know that if their kid comes to this school they will leave the school being different, for example, they will speak differently […]. They won’t be ‘flaite’ […]. Here, we don’t select the students, it’s forbidden, but the social group is quite stable so when someone different comes, they will change his way of speaking very quickly […]. This kid [a particular student] had been raised in a poor locality, Renca, so what happens? He spoke like a ‘flaite’, so the classmates started to… [he suggests they were making fun of him] he was respected but he realised that the way he expressed himself was… that it was different from the others and he changed. His mother was very grateful because there had been a notable change in his personality, his way of speaking, of communicating […] step by step, these [disadvantaged] kids get into the habit of being our students […]. Because the school maintains its core students, the surcharge ['recargo'] is minimum, it’s small […] the school manages to maintain its ethos […]. The school’s social environment moulds these [working-class] kids (Behaviour Lead, RS)

The Language teacher’s account regarding secondary students is very clear in revealing that the language differences amongst students are not seen horizontally, but vertically, in a cultural capital hierarchy: the language capital of the working-class students is signalled as being lower than that of the middle-class students:

At the secondary level, sometimes it happens that the new kids arrive speaking ‘flaite’ ['flaitongo'], saying ‘ah yeah bro’ ['ashi hermano'], wearing earrings, but then the kids change. We encourage them not to use earrings, then they stop speaking like ‘flaites’

---

76 For more information on the common prejudices associated with this stereotype, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaite
It doesn’t last too long, the students blend in ['se mimetizan'], they adapt to what they see. I wouldn’t like to get into a deprived space and start changing the way I speak, but I think that for the ones who have poor language ['lenguaje bajo'], they listen to people speaking at a better level and they get used to it, so they become educated step by step (Language Teacher, 14-18-year olds, RS)

As seen in the quotations, the interviewees suggest that social interaction between working-class and middle-class students provides the possibility for the former to expand their cultural capital, particularly to access a 'higher' culture (i.e., an understanding of legitimate cultural capital as being that possessed by the most privileged students). In this sense, it is assumed that there are certain ways of speaking and expression (the middle-class ones) that are more desirable than others. Likewise, the SEN Deputy explicitly refers to the possibility for working-class students, who have not had the opportunity to travel abroad, of find out about other cultures through conversation with their more socially advantaged classmates. Thus, socioeconomically diverse interactions are seen as a way to develop a cosmopolitan cultural capital—and, if accumulated and embedded, a cosmopolitan disposition— (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016) amongst working-class students who have not had the opportunity to travel far outside their neighbourhood:

The year I started working here I asked the students which of them had travelled abroad, and many of them raised their hands [...] and other kids approached them and asked 'tell me what it was like there, what did you do, what did you see', and the kids spoke about that. I think this is very useful to culturise ['culturizar'] these children who haven’t travelled (SEN Deputy, RS)

Additionally, interaction with middle-class students, especially when this becomes friendship, is viewed by the staff as allowing working-class students access to a valuable social capital, that is, social connections and obligations (Bourdieu, 1986). In Putnam’s terms, this expected benefit can be understood as a ‘bridging social capital’, that is, “social networks that bring together people who are unlike one another” (Putnam, 2002: 11), which can allow the transference of other capitals to working-class students (e.g., economic capital through job opportunities in the future):

I believe that, for the kids from a lower socioeconomic level, spending time with classmates from a higher socioeconomic level, sometimes during their whole school life, opens up future possibilities that they wouldn’t have if they didn’t study at this school. When you finish school and enter university or another higher education institution, after
that, who are you going to ask for a job? Who can maybe give you the opportunity? Well, your classmate for your whole life (History Teacher, RS)

Overall, allowing the entrance of working-class students to RS, a field dominated by middle-class possession of capitals, is framed by the interviewees as an opportunity for these students to access a social capital that will allow them, in turn, to possibly enrich their cultural, economic, and symbolic (e.g., sense of entitlement) capitals. Consistently, the benefits of socioeconomic diversity at the school are perceived as conditioned by the presence of a majority of middle-class families, who—as explained by the Behaviour Lead in a quotation above—are defined as “our students,” thus suggesting a more liminal position for working-class students until they have assimilated to the extent that their social class can be disregarded. On the contrary, the potential increase in the number of working-class students (e.g., due, for instance, to the current reforms promoting free education in those schools that receive funding from the state) is seen as a reason for concern:

There are parents who have told me, ‘look, the day this school becomes free, I’ll take my child out because too many ‘flaites’ will arrive, because having no fees to pay will mean that children from all socioeconomic conditions will arrive’ […]. Well, the [school] environment transforms them [students deemed flaites] because the majority are from another social environment, but the day we’re totally free, it will happen just as in the state schools [with a bad reputation] (Behaviour Lead, RS)

Following Beverley Skeggs, the staff’s accounts suggest “representations of the working class to signify all that is mad, bad and dangerous” (1997: 160), that is, as possessing a habitus considered to be illegitimate and pathological, in contrast to the middle-class, respectable habitus. In this scenario, being surrounded by a middle-class majority is seen as a natural way for working-class students to access and develop a more middle-class habitus themselves and attain certain positions of respectability in the school field and potentially in other fields.

Therefore, the potential benefits for working-class students are seen as a natural consequence of their being part of RS, that is, something that does not require the intervention of the staff but that occurs through the daily interactions between students.

3.1.2. Expanding all the students’ horizons

A second set of perceived benefits is mentioned by some members of the RS staff, according to whom, and in line with Gordon Allport’s ‘contact hypothesis’ (1979), establishing socially
diverse relationships is thought to enrich the children’s development. Specifically, encounters with people from different social classes are signified as promoting the acquisition of a particular embodied cultural capital, both amongst advantaged and disadvantaged children, namely, the expansion of their horizons. As stated by the headteacher and some deputy headteachers and teachers, this expected cultural capital is the ability “to find out about other realities” (Headteacher), to understand that “the world is composed of diversity” (Conviviality Deputy) and that there are “different modes of seeing the world […] [to] look from another point of view, rather than being immersed solely in what one thinks” (SEN Deputy, RS). The Inclusion Lead’s comparison with his previous job experience illustrates the value attributed by the staff to bringing together students from localities with contrasting socioeconomic conditions:

In other schools the kids are compartmentalised, they are in ghettos, so their capacity to know the world is smaller […]. I worked in a very poor school in Bajos de Mena, in Puente Alto [a very poor locality in Santiago], and the kids were diminished […] their goals were very low because they knew nothing. Once I asked, ‘what would you like to do?’, and someone said ‘I would like to go to Providencia [middle-class locality in Santiago] because I was told it’s beautiful’ […]. And I asked which places he knew, and he had only been in Puente Alto all his life… there’s no possibility to acquire absolutely anything else besides what that area gives you. The same happens in other schools, the guys don’t go beyond Escuela Militar [middle-class area] […]. There is a ghetto of friends, everybody has the same standards, everybody travels to the same places, everybody has the same tablet, so they don’t have the possibility to know about other realities (Inclusion Lead, RS)

Likewise, the History teacher understands that the different students’ backgrounds can be pedagogically used as a way to develop a broader knowledge of the different socioeconomic positions composing Chilean society:

Diversity might be useful to the educational process when the teacher is able to use it […] making the kids express their different life experiences so the others can see them, to see that life can be different, that could enrich them […]. At the moment, we are having Economy lessons, so I say ‘well, what are the needs?’, and we start to discuss what luxury is for a family, what it is for another one, and I do that based on their experiences […]. I asked, ‘how many of you belong to a family earning this amount of money’, and they raised their hands […]. I ask several collective questions… ‘How many of you own a house?’, so I show them the diversity we have at the school (History Teacher, RS)
Moreover, knowing about different socioeconomic realities is deemed important by the staff for the students to develop attitudes based on values such as tolerance that contribute to conviviality, that is, the embodied capacity to live together and to negotiate multiplicity (see Chapter II). For example, the Behaviour Lead Assistant highlights that social diversity may contribute to developing tolerance: “Diversity is positive because the kids grow up in an environment of tolerance […] and that’s good because that’s life, life teaches you that, that we have to appreciate people for what they are.” Specifically referring to the school’s socioeconomic diversity, the Inclusion Lead says, “here we have mothers who are ‘nanas’ [domestic-worker77] and parents who are professionals, so the students learn to live together.”

Based on the concept of egalitarianism discussed in Chapter III, I interpret these expected attitudes and values for ‘living together’ in terms of ‘egalitarian dispositions’, that is, ways of thinking, doing and acting in relation to social class ‘others’ based on the commitment to equality across human beings.

An interesting view is displayed by two interviewees in relation to the importance of having experiences of socially diverse relationships based on a symmetry of status (as opposed to, for example, middle-class people meeting working-class people only as their employees), to understand that we all share a common humanity, despite our social differences. This view is particularly clear in the Catholic understanding of humanity expressed in the interview with the Academic Coordinator:

*I am a supporter of diversity because it enriches me when I consider the other as a potential I. The benefit will be the greatest when we all develop an awareness of that, considering that God created us the best he could, with abilities, gifts, capacities… and everything he creates is good and has a purpose […]. We are unique and unrepeatable beings* (Academic Coordinator, RS)

In this regard, learning from ‘the other’ would be possible only if people see each other as equals, this is, when people acknowledge the value of the others as human beings, which is something that—according to the Inclusion Lead—does not always happen at RS:

*Once I mentioned that I lived in Puente Alto [a poor locality] and the students stared at me like ‘ohhhhh he comes from Puente Alto’, like being impressed […]. So I feel that*

77 See Chapter IV, Section 4, for more details on this concept.
they are all here in the same school but sometimes there’s no contact. Not necessarily mixing but not even contact, in terms of being able to relate to each other beyond labour divisions, because some people never stop being the ‘nana’ for them (Inclusion Lead, RS)

This emphasis on empathy, in the Academic Coordinator’s case clearly shaped by a religious belief, resonates with the idea of critical compassion by Zembylas (2013). This refers to the students’ cultivation of political dispositions based on the understanding of “the conditions (structural inequalities, poverty, globalization, etc.) that give rise to suffering [so they] acknowledge some sort of human connection between themselves and others […] [and] they begin to question and challenge arguments based on binaries like us/them” (Zembylas, 2013, p. 516). In this sense, the last two quotations suggest a possibility to recognise ‘the other’, either socioeconomically advantaged or disadvantaged, as having a subjectivity that requires respect.

3.1.3. Building a socially aware middle-class

Linked with the above, a few interviewees identify consciousness of other people’s social realities as particularly beneficial for middle-class students’, since contact with working-class students would allow them a greater awareness of their privileges in society. “I think that it is good for the one higher up [socioeconomically advantaged] to know the others who have less, so they can value what they have,” the Behaviour Lead expresses. Such social awareness is represented by the Conviviality and SEN Deputies as values helpful for middle-class students to appreciate their less affluent classmates as valuable regardless of their (dis)possession of material goods, and to consequently exercise empathy and charity towards socioeconomically disadvantaged people in general:

> There are really valuable people and it is possible to know, to appreciate the person as a human being, not because of what they have but because of what they are” (Conviviality Deputy, RS)

> I feel there’s been a learning and that the children have changed in a positive way, they’re more empathic, they empathise with other children who don’t have too many economic means […]. The most advantaged students, when they see their classmates’

78 ‘The ability to share someone else’s feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person’s situation’ (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/empathy)
situation, they empathise with them, they help them, they are more charitable (SEN Deputy, RS)

Although the SEN Deputy uses both the concept of empathy and charity, it is important to point out that they are not the same. As defined in the footnote above, empathy refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person/group, while charity is ‘the voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need’ 79. In this regard, whereas empathy presupposes a feeling of ‘putting yourself in someone else’s shoes’ and, as such, the attenuation of possible asymmetries, charity can be enacted maintaining the distinctions us/them and same/other (Lewis, 2003; Youdell, 2012).

The social awareness amongst middle-class students expected by these members of staff could be understood in terms of an incipient reflexivity and, eventually, of a reflexive habitus (Sweetman, 2003). As I explained in Chapter III, the concept of reflexive habitus refers to the possibility for individuals to self-observe their positions and dispositions in different fields. The result is that the habitus stops being taken for granted, which is conceptualised by Sweetman, following Bourdieu, as occurring in moments of ‘crisis’—that is, when there is a disjunction between habitus and field, in this case, because of the interaction with people with different capitals and dispositions. In this sense, these participants’ accounts may be interpreted as revealing an institutional habitus that could potentially encourage school mixing for promoting reflexivity about and questioning of middle-class social privileges. However, this expected benefit of school mix is less strongly emphasised, particularly compared with the benefits identified for working-class students: the narratives of the staff at RS do not fully describe why exactly it is important for middle-class students to increase their awareness of their place in their social structure, and how this links with empathy and charity.

Altogether, the socioeconomic diversity at RS has to be understood in terms of the inclusion of disadvantaged students, driven by the promotion of meritocracy. In other words, the way the staff picture the possible benefits of socioeconomic mix and mixing at the school suggests an understanding of social justice whose main target is ‘the poor’ (i.e., alleviating the effects of poverty on individuals) rather than ‘the rich’ (e.g., redistributing wealth).

79 https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/charity
3.2. Inti School

Whereas at RS ethnic differences were the most highlighted, at IS it is the presence of students diagnosed with SEN. This is aligned to the fact that, as I mentioned in Section 2 of this Chapter, IS was founded with the explicit orientation of including children diagnosed with SEN. As the Headteacher (also founder) explains, she was inspired by her own experience searching a school for her son (21 years old by the time of the fieldwork), who is diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, and to “do for other kids what other schools found so difficult to do for my son” (Headteacher, IS). This personal situation allowed her to identify problems related to education for students with SEN, particularly, the difficulties for being accepted in non-SEN schools able to offer a balance between academic demands and flexibility, as well as a varied social environment composed only of students with SEN. This is what the Headteacher expects IS to offer.

Thus, the main benefit of diversity in terms of educational needs is posed for SEN students to be included in the mainstream educational system and not to be labelled or stigmatised (for example, by taking them out of their classroom to work with the specialist teachers). In turn, it is expected that the rest of the students learn to relate to people with SEN not only on a basis of respect but also acknowledging them as equals since “we believe that we all have a special education need, including adults” (SEN Deputy). Similar to RS, such ability can be interpreted as a sort of multicultural capital (Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011), but this time not in relation to cultural differences but to individual abilities. In this regard, it can be argued that IS aims to challenge what I have argued (Chapter I, Section 3), which is a national SEN policy based on a concept of difference as limited to stereotypical subjects: targeting those students with SEN is conceived as a strategy to help them with compensatory mechanisms to learn what the normal students can more easily learn.

This analysis is interesting because it contributes to better understanding of how IS’s staff view social class diversity at the school since “the most evident differences are not socioeconomic but of educational needs” (SEN Deputy). Therefore, despite the explicit institutional orientation to avoid labelling students with SEN, they are still more recognisable than the existing working-class students, which I argue has to do with the more legitimate condition of the former. In this sense, and contrasting with RS’s case, while there is an overt

---

80 SEN schools (‘escuelas especiales’) in Chile are oriented to students diagnosed with SEN, in order to provide them with relevant pedagogic resources and specialist teachers. These schools do not take part in SIMCE, the national standardised test either.
intention at IS of not conceiving of SEN as deficit, the same does not happen in relation to poverty. The following sections provide more details on this argument.

3.2.1. ‘Bettering’ the working-class

As at Rodriguez School, the most evident perceived benefit of having a socioeconomically diverse student population at IS is the fact that this is a sign the school is contributing to social justice. Thus, by providing socioeconomically disadvantaged children with the opportunity to ‘better themselves’ the school is potentially improving their future life conditions. This opportunity is signified as linked to the development of dispositions considered to be valued in society and that enable the children to pursue and achieve better positions whatever their field of interest is. Following Edgerton and Roberts (2014), such dispositions can be understood then as an embodied cultural capital, since they can translate into returns or advantages in the field in which they are valued (see Chapter III, Section 1, for a discussion on this theoretical argument).

One of these dispositions is students’ willingness to “better themselves,” compared to their parents, which tends to be viewed under a meritocratic lens and associated with the expectation of accessing higher education as a way to secure more advantageous future possibilities. As can be seen in the Headteacher’s account below, working ennobles but studying is more ennobling:

"[we are contributing to] a more equal education [...] that all the children have the same right [...] regardless of whether they have or don’t have money. So we are helping these [working-class] families so their children then have other expectations [‘proyeccion’] and break the circle within their families, a circle that is usually very difficult to escape from. “My mum became a mother at 15 and had to start working” [...] that’s not degrading, working ennobles you. But maybe that girl will want to be much more than her parents and will realise that she has the right to be more, to study whatever she wants. Here we tell them “you can dream whatever you want, your limit is the universe and the universe has no end, therefore you can do whatever you want." (Headteacher, IS)

In addition, several members of staff highlight the positive consequences that the interaction with middle-class students has for their less affluent counterparts, in order to adopt habits and knowledge that are seen as valuable and that their parents do not possess. In this sense, school mix is understood as allowing the most disadvantaged students to access a form of
social capital that, in turn, will allow them to develop dispositions that act as valued cultural capital in the school. As at RS, particularly appreciated by my interviewees is the middle-class families’ ‘correct’ use of language, which is seen as beneficial for those working-class students to ‘improve’ their accent and manners of expression:

_I don’t know if it’s very ethical but… I can speak from my own experience because my son studied here […] and he noticed the differences of some of his classmates, and said to me: “Why does he have that accent? Why does he speak like that?” So I never said to him that this difference was because they were poorer, because they lived in a certain locality, and told him: “son, if you know that this word has to be pronounced this way, pronounce it well so your classmate can change the way he says it”_ (Academic Coordinator, IS)

A second embodied cultural capital that, according to some members of staff, most affluent families at IS possess “a very marked critical and political view” (Vice Headteacher, IS), in association with their capacity to travel abroad and experience different realities. Contact with more socially advantaged people, then, is perceived as allowing the students with less economic capital to know about those realities without having to go through a broad range of experiences themselves. In other words, they can develop a cosmopolitan disposition through their classmates’ cosmopolitan experiences (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016):

_The parents have a very high educational level and their lifestyle is very different […]. The kids here have a broader access to culture. They even go to marches. They are aware of what is going on. There’s a kid who travels to China with their parents who are actors and he sends videos of the places he’s exploring. His mother asked me and I said ‘yes’. And I showed the videos to the kids so they see the cultural thing […]. So the rest of the kids end up seeing many places_ (Year 1 Teacher, IS)

_They [middle-class students] come from families with higher levels of education, they earn more and have been able to travel, for example, so of course they arrive with new things, and the others absorb that. They learn everything and enrich themselves from the others who have travelled_ (SEN Deputy, IS)

Thirdly, the alternative lifestyle of the middle-class parents at IS, especially their ‘healthy’ eating routines (e.g., veganism) and reduced use of technological devices is considered by some interviewees to have become a distinctive positive feature of the school itself and, as such, a cultural capital expected for the other families to acquire.
The families are special. There’re many vegans, many vegetarians. There’re a few who eat the ‘normal’ way. And that has started to spread ['se ha ido pegando'] to the others who come from other localities, and even to the teachers. They’re very healthy: olives, nuts, quinoa, rice with chia seeds, with sunflower and pumpkin seeds. You rarely see them eating crisps [...]. They are kids who see reality in a different way. You talk to them and they are completely different to other kids. Instead of thinking that they want games and buy things, they’re happy to play in the square. They use their imagination because they don’t get home to ask their ‘nana’ if they can watch the television. They get home and play, because their parents are artists and they say they don’t like television because it stifles imagination. And this is kind of spreading ['mimetizante'] amongst everybody (Early Years Teacher 2, IS)

Therefore, as at RS, there is a tendency amongst the staff at IS to picture working-class students as the main beneficiaries of being in a mainly middle-class school field, in order to develop social connections that will positively affect their own cultural capital. Unlike RS, though, the strengthening of the working-class students’ embodied cultural capital is framed by the staff in IS as valuable per se and not necessarily linked with its convertibility into economic capital (e.g., future job possibilities). In this sense, mixing with their more ‘culturally advantaged’ classmates tends to be seen in terms of these working-class students’ subjectivity construction. In other words, school mix is thought to benefit the working-class children’s personal growth (Allport, 1979) through the acquisition of a habitus considered to be ‘better’ (i.e., with higher symbolic capital) than their family or local one (Bourdieu, 1984a).

In this regard, and although these ‘cultural features’ of the middle-class families are presented as independent from their social class, they can be interpreted as aesthetic dispositions and, as such, as markers of class: “an acquired disposition to ‘differentiate’ and ‘appreciate’” (Bourdieu, 1984a: 466), for example, a certain musical style. In fact, taste presupposes a decoding operation that, in turn, assumes the relevant cultural codes (e.g., experience, knowledge, skills, etc.) to do so; cultural codes that are rooted in particular economic and social conditions. Thus, aesthetics dispositions “are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (habitus) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions” (p. 5). As such, “[t]aste classifies, and it classifies the classifier”: “[s]ocial subjects [...] distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar” (p. 5), defining “[u]s as opposed to ‘them’” (p. 478), this is, a classificatory system of inclusions and exclusions. In other words, cultural consumption operates as a distinctive sign, producing
and reproducing social closure—“the process by which social collectives seek to maximise rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligible” (Parkin, 1979: 44) and legitimising social differences, deliberately or not. Those tastes (e.g., classical music) whose appreciation (e.g., liking classical music) is presented in society and/or certain fields as being more challenging cognitively and, as such, restricted to a minority with the necessary aesthetic dispositions (e.g., knowledge about different classical styles and preferences), usually possess greater symbolic capital than those with a ‘higher inflation of titles’ (Bourdieu, 1984a), that is, more massified (e.g., listening to reggaetón, as noticed in Section 2.2.).

3.2.2. Expanding all the students’ horizons

A second benefit of IS’s socioeconomic mix mentioned by members of staff has to do with the enrichment of all the students’ learning and personal development (Allport, 1979), through first-hand knowledge about different socioeconomic realities (positions) and lifestyles (dispositions), and the consequent expansion of their viewpoints. Mixing is seen as beneficial for both advantaged and disadvantaged students to develop “a stronger awareness [‘concientizar’] about the world they live in” (Early Years Teacher, IS) and “to see things differently, without judging” (Early Years Teacher 2, IS). In this sense, the awareness of the social space as being wider than the students might originally appreciate is signalled to add what I interpret as a particular layer of dispositions (Reay, 2004; Decoteau, 2016): by ceasing prejudices towards others, egalitarian dispositions (see Section 3.1.2. above) such as empathy and respect may emerge. As the quotes below illustrate, the Headteacher and Behaviour Lead expect that such dispositions based on the acknowledgement of humans’ moral equality are conducive to attitudes based on solidarity and charity:

We are all equals [‘iguales’] in a space where each kid has their particularity. Understanding the ones who are different means knowing that we have different ways of inhabiting this world, different habits, religions, biological features, tastes. So I think the school has to be a space that gives the possibility for everybody to reside regardless of our differences. So this is a space in which we have to suspend [‘suspender’] our prejudices. We, as school, are in this quest […]. The kids are learning to exercise solidarity, to be respectful, to be aware of the differences […]. That I’m not good or bad because of these differences (Vice Headteacher, IS)

We try to make the children understand that they aren’t better than others [‘que no pueden pasar sobre el otro’] just because they have more economic resources […]. So
I think this [socioeconomic diversity] is beneficial for them to be more humanitarian, in a world that tends to be egoistic, where I only care about my surroundings […] here they learn to look beyond them [‘mirar para el lado’], to see that person beside them is in need, and that if we can, we will help […]. If they realise a classmate didn’t bring snacks for breaks, they are charitable and share what they have. They don’t make any distinction because they’re children who understand the kids who come from other parts, children who help others [‘projimo’] (Behaviour Lead, IS)

The quotes above suggest that learning to coexist with others is mostly helpful for the most advantaged students, as a way to be more sympathetic and benevolent to those in more disadvantaged positions, and show critical compassion towards “those distant others who suffer” (Zembylas, 2013). However, as the Academic Coordinator explains, learning to not stigmatise others is also mentioned as a disposition being developed in the other direction:

My son [also a student at IS] had two classmates with a very good economic situation. At the beginning my son saw them as “they are so posh [‘cuicos’], they are ‘daddy’s boys’ [‘hijos de papito’], they are given everything” […]. But now he understands them (Academic Coordinator, IS)

These members of staff perceive that being in a socioeconomically mixed school allows the students to learn that, despite their differences, they all have something in common. As at Rodriguez school, this view expresses a humanist approach which, in this case, is not based on religion but a secular point of view. The core of this viewpoint is that we all share a human essence, specifically biological and emotional functions. As the quote below illustrates, the very fact of all being human, sharing the same basic body functions and emotions, is something that would allow the development of bridges between people.

The kids learn that we are all different and that makes us the same, that there’s no difference from the person next to you […]. So the kids start to understand that it doesn’t matter [‘da lo mismo’] if I have more money or if I have less; what counts [‘lo que vale’] is the person, it’s what that being is […]. The kids know that we are equals, regardless of the differences: we all breathe, we have a heart, we love, we get angry, we have sorrows (Headteacher, IS)

However, the findings above regarding the staff’s perceptions of the benefits of school mix as being mostly for working-class students remind us that this humanist or humanitarian stance
is not neutral in terms of social class and, on the contrary, articulates with a greater legitimization of the middle-class habitus over the working-class one.

3.2.3. Building a socially aware middle-class

Less evident in the staff’s accounts are the possibilities of the most advantaged children to learn from their less advantaged counterparts. “One doesn’t really see what they’ve learnt, it’s not very evident, I couldn’t tell,” the Early Years Teacher 2 expresses. The few accounts in this respect are still rooted in the assumption of a deficiency, relating to the fact that despite the lack of economic and formal cultural capital, working-class families may possess valuable dispositions; this is, they may be decent despite their working-class positioning.

The other people have also something to teach you. These families are from a humble background, but they are responsible. Last year, when I had this mum… but I never saw her daughter using dirty clothes (Year 1 Teacher, IS)

Linked with the aforementioned benefit of the expansion of social horizons, a few members of IS’s staff highlight the importance of contact with working-class students for the middle-class children’s awareness of their privileges and understanding of what is worthwhile about living a modest life, which can lead to attitudes based on empathy and solidarity:

The diversity of lifestyles is beneficial for those who don’t know they can live a different life. I mean, if one lives in a nice house and the others live in one room, I think this helps them to be aware of their privileged situation (SEN Deputy, IS)

For my son [a student at IS], it was enriching to realise that he could live differently, without the same resources, and be happy [...]. It helped him to sensitize [‘sensibilizarse’] himself, to empathise […]. I don’t believe that having a brand-new phone is the best. I tell to him ‘It’s ok if you have a brand new phone but don’t laugh at others who don’t. And lend it to others so you can play together (Academic Coordinator, IS)

This finding is almost the same as the one at RS, although the latter quotation by the Academic Coordinator suggests some specificities at IS. As explained above, the expected social awareness amongst middle-class students could be understood in terms of a reflexive disposition (Sweetman, 2003), meaning the possibility for self-observation (i.e., of one’s own privileges) due to the interaction with people from different backgrounds. A potential
A consequence of such reflexivity is the questioning of what had been taken for granted (i.e., access to particular resources) and the opening of new possibilities (i.e., “live differently [...] and be happy”). In this sense, the possibility for the middle-class students to positively change their habitus by engaging in school mixing is incipiently envisaged by the Academic Coordinator at IS, which is something that remained completely invisible in the RS staff narratives. Although minor compared to the other expected benefits at IS, particularly the ones focused on working-class students, this finding suggests some hints of a possible understanding of the links between school mix and social justice that not only problematises poverty, but also affluence.

4. Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have argued that the Rodriguez (RS) and Inti (IS) schools not only both have a socioeconomically diverse student population, but also explicitly celebrate this diversity. First, in Section 2, I explored RS and IS’s discourses celebrating social class school mix and the values attributed to it by the staff's articulations with broader elements of each school’s institutional habitus. At RS, embracing socioeconomic difference is framed as part of its Catholic approach and the importance of mixing to exercise charity and solidarity towards those in need. At IS, such openness to socioeconomic differences and mixing is expressed as related to the school’s holistic approach, within a broader understanding of the value of diversity (e.g., in terms of pedagogic methods and individual skills).

In Section 3, I analysed the staff’s views on the benefits of having a socioeconomically diverse student composition. I argued that the main perceived benefit of social class mix both at RS and IS is for working-class students. Coexisting and mixing with more advantaged people and the very fact of being in these particular schools is seen by the staff as allowing less affluent children to access a social capital that allows them to acquire a habitus considered to be better (i.e., higher symbolic capital) and consequently improve their cultural capital: for example, ‘correct’ use of language (RS and IS), aspirations to access higher education (RS), and ‘healthy’ eating habits (IS). I argued that the ‘improvement’ of the working-class students’ cultural capital through school mixing is seen at RS as linked with possible future positioning advantages (e.g., job opportunities) and an increase in their economic capital. At IS such improvement of capitals tends to be signified as valuable per se for the students’ personal growth and subjectivity construction, without direct reference to their future social positioning.

A second perceived benefit of school mix and mixing refers to the possibilities for both socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged students to know about different realities.
and expand their social horizons. Such understanding of social reality as composed of diversity is considered by the staff at both schools as a way of developing what can be interpreted as egalitarian dispositions, that is, ways of thinking, doing, and acting in relation to social class ‘others’ based on the commitment to equality across human beings (e.g., attitudes based on the value of respect). This view is based on a humanist approach, highly shaped by Catholicism in RS and by IS’s holistic approach, according to which all human beings (and what they bring with them) are equally valuable and should be treated as such.

A minority of the staff respondents, both at RS and IS, identify the potential expansion of social horizons as particularly helpful for the most affluent students, since mixing with working-class students would allow them to develop a greater awareness of their privileges in society. This, in turn, would allow them not only to appreciate what they have, but also empathise and exercise solidarity and charity towards those who are in more disadvantaged positions. This expected benefit could be interpreted as revealing an institutional habitus that supports reflexivity about and questioning of middle-classes’ wealth. That is, an institutional understanding of the links between school mix/mixing and social justice that not only problematises poverty but also affluence. However, the staff’s narratives in this respect tend to be weaker (IS) or non-existent (RS) than other expected benefits of school mix/mixing and, in particular, weaker than the ones enumerating the benefits for working-class students.

To sum up, it can be argued that the celebration of diversity is established, both at RS and IS, pre-eminently through an emphasis on solidarity to address the (unnamed) dilemma about how to respond to poverty. In this sense, promoting a socioeconomically mixed school space is conceived in the schools’ institutional habituses as positive because it challenges Chile’s actual social inequalities. This is a view that, I argue, is based on an understanding of social justice as focused on ‘the poor’ (i.e., alleviating the effects of poverty on individuals), whilst the whole social structure, the other side of the coin—wealth—remains almost completely unquestioned in the staff’s accounts, revealing a lack of problematisation of the potential contributions of school mix/mixing to, for example, critiquing privilege and redistributing wealth.

In the next chapter, I continue exploring the schools’ approaches to social class mix and mixing by revealing the staff’s actions to disregard socioeconomic differences amongst students/parents. These actions serve to nuance RS and IS’s celebratory discourses.
Chapter VI. An Ontology of Social Class Sameness in the Schools

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that the celebration of social class diversity described in Chapter V links with an apparently contradictory discourse, namely, the attempt to disregard and make diversity irrelevant in teachers’ daily routines. This is present in the accounts of the staff at both Inti and Rodriguez schools, although it is especially evident at the latter. In Section 2, I argue that the schools are presented by the staff as spaces where social class inequalities can be erased. In this context, the students’ and their families’ shared human condition is presented as more important than their socioeconomic differences. This is what I refer to as an ontology of social class sameness. Moreover, sameness amongst families is supported by the perception that their sociocultural similarities are more important. However, I conclude that such apparent similarity across families is not neutral in terms of social class: it is mostly socioeconomic disadvantage which must remain hidden in the schools’ everyday life. Thus, I argue that social class sameness is constructed daily at the schools through careful management of their socioeconomic heterogeneity, which I interpret as an assimilationist institutional habitus.

In Section 3, I analyse the schools’ strategies for regulating social class mix and mixing and configure a certain homogeneity that allows the stability and durability of the field’s rules of the game. In other words, the interviewees express an image of the schools as an institution with its own dynamics, a socially closed entity with precise principles to which its participants have to adapt if they want to belong to it. This defines clear borders to identify who is included (the ‘same’) and who is excluded (the ‘different’, the Other) (Lewis, 2003). Therefore, even though the schools present themselves as open to very different people, they are not open to including all differences in terms of codes of beliefs and practices. In this scenario, those actors who are representatives of the field of power and have dominant positions in the school field (e.g., middle-class families) are key actors structuring not only the school habitus but also how socioeconomic difference is approached.

2. “Here they are all the same”: The schools as a space that eliminates the students’ socioeconomic differences

2.1. Rodriguez School

There is a tendency amongst Rodriguez School’s (RS) staff not to only celebrate but also to disregard socioeconomic differences between families—particularly students but also their
parents—and to emphasise their similarities. This was quite evident from the beginning of the interviews with the headteacher and deputy headteachers who, when I asked about the social differences between the students, tended to argue these were not substantive. My impression is that they understood my question in a normative way, assuming that the ‘right’ thing to say was that the students are socially homogeneous in general, in order to emphasise that they were not discriminating against anybody because of their socioeconomic background. In addition to the methodological challenges of speaking about social class differences (see Chapter IV), this situation was itself informative. It sheds light on the value attributed to social homogeneity and equity in the treatment of the students, in order to allow space for their individual particularities to emerge, regardless of their background:

*If you come into a classroom, you’re unable to identify any differences amongst the students, they are all the same* (SEN Deputy, RS)

*This is a school that approaches the person, that’s what we have to value […] rather than valuing what they have or don’t have* (Conviviality Deputy, RS)

In this sense, the aim of identifying the families’ socioeconomic backgrounds is declared as restricted to providing them with economic support:

*After assigning the scholarships, we don’t care about the socioeconomic situation of the students and we are unable even to recognise those who were assigned a scholarship […]. I don’t see any significant difference between the students. They become a homogeneous group […]. Their differences are not something that we highlight, it’s not a topic of conversation* (Headteacher, RS)

*I don’t care who has and who doesn’t have a scholarship. I see the person and their actions, what they do, how they perform regardless of whether they are paying fees or not* (Behaviour Lead, RS)

The following quotation from the interview with the Academic Coordinator illustrates that the staff’s everyday resistance to recognising socioeconomic differences is shaped by their belief in the illegitimacy of social class inequalities:

*I would like to sketch out a difference between diversity of human beings and socioeconomic diversity, because […] we are all different and that enriches us. But socioeconomic diversity […] is harmful. I think these differences shouldn’t be that*
noticeable. We should all be within a range, **we should all have the same opportunities** [...] I think we should be more socioeconomically homogenous (Academic Coordinator, RS)

As noted in Section 3.1.2. of Chapter V, the perceived similarity is supported by the Catholic approach of RS, according to which all human beings share the common fact that “*God created us the best he could [...] and everything he creates is good*” (Academic Coordinator, IS). But there are also more concrete, sociocultural features that the staff highlight as being common across parents from different backgrounds. These are appreciated since they facilitate the school’s job and allow the continuance of its basic rules. Such sociocultural sameness is perceived to be a consequence of the self-selection by the parents when choosing the school, based on their knowledge about it: “generally, the people who enrol their kids in the school agree with our Conviviality Handbook and Educational Project [see Chapter IV, Section 4],” the Conviviality Deputy emphasises.

One of the perceived shared dispositions is the parents’ high commitment to their children’s education and general development, and their constant surveillance regarding their school responsibilities and extra-school activities. For example, the Mathematics Teacher says that:

> The families who arrive are very heterogeneous, but they are all very committed to the school [...]. They have constant communication, amongst them and with us, to be aware of the needs of their children. They always collaborate with whatever we ask of them [...]. There is big range of professionals [...]. There are also people who work at a technical level, in offices, secretaries, education assistants in other schools, but as I say, it’s not possible to perceive differences [...]. All the school activities have good participation, all the parents come (Mathematics Teacher, IS)

This strong commitment from parents is something the school actively welcomes because “*without the family support for the educational process would be deficient*” (Academic Coordinator). Limitations of economic (e.g., to buy materials) and cultural (e.g., to support the children with their homework) capitals amongst working-class parents are not seen as restricting this commitment and they are even seen as particularly prone to following the school’s *rules of the game* (Bourdieu, 1990b). This is explained by RS’s staff as these families being aware of the great and exceptional opportunity given to their children by being part of the school. Even though there is no formal special requirement in terms of behaviour and/or academic performance, it is assumed that these families need to show they are putting effort into both areas in order to maintain the economic benefits of receiving a scholarship. In this
sense, these working-class parents—mostly mothers—are assumed to know the importance of adapting their attitudes to the field’s expectations:

*The most disadvantaged parents are usually more present in the school [...]. It might be, I’m not sure, because they are committed with the scholarship they have. They have to take care of it, to obtain certain results to keep the scholarship* (Academic Coordinator, IS)

An example of this commitment to education is illustrated by the case of Emma, a working-class mother who works as a live-in domestic worker in the locality. As it can be seen in the quotation below, she is characterised by the Behaviour Lead as being respected at the school thanks to the efforts she puts into supporting other parents. Despite her illiteracy and low economic resources, she prints textbooks that the children have to read and gives them to the rest of the parents. Most interestingly, these efforts are valued ‘despite’ Emma’s alleged inappropriate behaviour, which is attributed to her lack of formal education:

*There is a mother who is a ‘nana’ [...]. Sometimes she says silly things, but all the parents are aware that she doesn’t have much education, so they accept her, they welcome her. They are annoyed by her [...] she’s a fat ['gordita'], short ['bajita']81 woman, but she serves them, she’s very obliging ['servicial'] because she’s a ‘nana’. She does it very well* (Behaviour Lead, RS)

The quotation illustrates very clearly the embodied nature of class (Skeggs, 1997; Bourdieu, 1984a), which not only engages with particular ways of using the body such as speaking, but also with the constitution of the body itself. In Chile, being fat and short—and, it could be added, having a brown skin—are features sometimes attributed by the dominant classes to the working classes, which are thought as having a more indigenous ethnic background. This suggests that discourses of class are also discourses of race, although the actual correlation between class and race might not be that direct (see Chapter I): despite the attempts of the dominant classes to represent themselves as European-descendant (white, tall, blonde82, etc.), Chile is a mostly mestizo country (mixed-heritage, which refers to the mix between Spanish and indigenous people). Thus, for example, non-white, browner skin – compared with the usual understanding of ‘white’ in Europe -, tends to be the norm, even amongst the middle classes. Moreover, the quotation insinuates a degrading description of Emma, as well as a

---

81 In Spanish, ‘una mujer gordita y bajita’ [a woman a bit fat and short]. In Chile, it is common to use diminutives to soften the effect of adjectives that may seem too strong.

82 It is a common practice for women in Chile to dye their hair blond.
passive social inclusion of her characterised by the lack of explicit discrimination, but in which there is no integration of the different parts and emergence of a ‘new whole. According to the Behaviour Lead’s account, one of the parts, the working-class mother, is included in the middle-class community—the whole—not exactly because she is valued by the other parents, but because they tolerate her because of her efforts, both despite and because she is a ‘nana’.

Something similar is perceived about the children from working-class families, who are viewed as strongly dedicated to their studies:

*Sometimes the kids with scarce resources are more willing to learn than a kid who has everything and doesn’t make sacrifices to obtain things* (Language Teacher, 7-10-year olds, RS)

*At the lowest socioeconomic level, I haven’t seen difficulties in relation to the students’ behaviour. They are more adaptable kids, they adapt to the education provided by the school. They arrive with another mentality, knowing that they had the opportunity and the privilege of entering this school, so they try to maintain their tuition* (Mathematics Teacher, RS)

These claims are interesting in that they emphasise a sort of over-adaptation of those who could be supposed to be marginalised, who seem to be particularly successful at behaving as expected: the families who deviate from the norm in terms of social class perform as if they were part of the norm. Therefore, working-class students and parents at RS are not presented by the staff as “strangers in paradise” (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2009, 2010), that is, as experiencing discontinuity in their dispositions or as having a divided habitus—that is, a habitus that is felt as being contradictory and strange within a certain (in this case, middle-class) field (see Chapter III, Section 2) (Bourdieu, 1999). Instead they are perceived by the staff as having the ‘right’ habitus, that is, dispositions compatible with the school field and, as such, as possessing cultural capitals of worth, despite their differential possession of capitals compared to middle-class families at the school. As in Vincent and colleagues’ study on black middle-class parents (2012a, 2012b), the ‘correct’ habitus of these working-class parents (mostly mothers) can be understood as a result of their labour in doing ‘good’ parenting/mothering and establishing their and their children’s worthiness to the staff.

2.2. Inti School
Notwithstanding IS’s holistic framework—according to which the families’ particularities are understood as necessary to recognise—social class differences seem to be more difficult to articulate within such a framework than other sorts of differences (e.g., different religions and types of families). The accounts in this respect reveal themselves as extremely similar to the ones at RS since there is a clear tendency amongst the staff to disregard the students’ social class, stating that “it’s quite homogeneous. If you look at them in the yard you wouldn’t notice any differences” (SEN Deputy, IS). Moreover, similarity across students is argued to be the reason for their harmonious integration into the school:

Here you can’t notice their social classes or jobs, they all mix [‘comparten’]
(Headteacher, IS)

To us, they [the students] are all the same and they’re all included in this school since we aren’t interested in their colour or where they come from […] the relationships are very good since there’s no differences in, for example, the way a mother [una señora] is dressed compared to another […]. There’s no parent who says that he doesn’t feel welcomed at the meetings (Behaviour Lead, IS)

Instead, the focus of attention is declared by most members of staff to be on the students’ ‘personal’ attributes, meaning their abilities and personality, as well as their families’ attitudes to support the development of their potentialities.

We don’t mind about religion, we don’t mind about social class. Here we see the child and the family (Academic Coordinator, IS)

We don’t see social classes, we work with the children, with their families […]. It’s the way we treat people: we see the person, regardless of their economic or social situation (Early Years Teacher 1, IS)

In this sense, highlighting social sameness across students is thought of as a mechanism for inclusion. In the accounts below it is very clear how such an approach is perceived in contrast to emphasising the students’ differences in terms of social class, which is interpreted as a discriminatory institutional strategy:

Our hallmark is welcoming everybody […]. Since we are an open school, when the parents come to register their children we don’t ask for information about their incomes or studies […]. We don’t mind if they have higher education studies or not […]. We
**don’t discriminate** against anybody; the door is open to all, regardless of whether they can pay or not (Headteacher, IS)

**No one is discriminated against** due to their race, sex… nothing. This is a really **inclusive** school (Early Years Teacher 2, IS)

These quotes suggest a meritocratic stance according to which the children’s skills and talents can be enhanced by the school rather than being determined by their background of origin; a ‘pure’ view of the individual as untainted by structural identity markers such as social class and race. Thus, similarly to RS, the disregard of social differences is discursively supported by a definition of inclusion according to which the applicants should be accepted no matter what their social origin is.

As in RS, such perceived similarity across students is supported by the acknowledgement of students’ commonalities given their nature as human beings. As I argued in Section 3.2.2. of Chapter V, such a humanist approach at IS is not directly supported by Catholicism, but rather the fact that we all share biological and emotional functions: “we all breathe, we have a heart, we love, we get angry, we have sorrows,” the Headteacher says. In addition, the underestimation of social class differences is related to IS’s positive view about the majority of the parents whose children attend the school, since they are considered to have the right attitudes to enable the school to execute its educational labour.

As in RS, these ‘right attitudes’ mostly refer to the high levels of engagement and participation amongst the parents. Although “there are a few who don’t participate” (Headteacher, IS), most of the parents seem to fit within the legitimate parent category, which is those who actively contributes to the education of their children: “When we have an activity they come. They are very participative […]. Last year they even came as volunteers to repair the school” (Vice Headteacher, IS).

The quintessential subject embodying this valued profile, however, is not neutral in terms of social class but corresponds to a well-defined social group: the middle-class parents with an alternative lifestyle, positively defined by the staff as ‘hippies’ because of their involvement in the artistic scene: “They’re the ones who get more involved in the school […] who are more participative […] the group of the hippies” (SEN Deputy, IS). These families have arrived at IS over the last few years and are seen as aligned with the school's stated mission and ethos.
In turn, some interviewees manifested an appreciation of the working-class parents who demonstrate a strong commitment to the school, despite their lack of economic capital: “*they try to be there always, they put in effort; they’re different but they help their children to get ahead*” (Year 1 Teacher, IS). As the Headteacher describes in relation to a working-class mother whose children (2) received the school scholarship:

> *We have a mother who is from a very humble background but she does whatever you ask her. She doesn’t pay the fees but she wants to contribute and sometimes comes and says “I did this job and would like to donate $1,000 to the school.” She doesn’t take advantage. She says she’s very grateful because the school didn’t close the doors to her despite her condition. And you see that her children are impeccable, they lack nothing* (Headteacher, IS)

Therefore, as at RS, the working-class families’ habitus, specifically, their commitment to education, is seen as aligned to the dominant habitus of the middle-class families and, more importantly, to IS’s institutional habitus: the working-class parents are valued for being a particular fraction within the working-class, namely, the ‘aspiring’ working-class who shows effort and willingness for their children to improve their future life conditions (Skeggs, 1997, 2004a; Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008).

To sum up, regardless of whether parents and students at RS and IS do, in fact, possess the dispositions identified by the staff, the importance of highlighting these views here is that they manifest the nature of the habitus being valued in the school field and, consequently, which dispositions act as embodied cultural capital—that is, dispositions that are valued or preferred in a particular field, that can translate into returns or advantages in that field (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). In this regard, the staff’s appreciation of certain shared attitudes amongst families tells us about the schools’ institutional habitus, namely, their taken-for-granted beliefs about education and parental roles.

In this scenario, I argue that an ontology of social class sameness cannot be assumed to be neutral in terms of social class. In both schools, the inclusion of working-class families seems to be subject to their accommodation to the school field and its institutional habitus, that is, to demonstrate that they have the right habitus to participate just as if they were not working-class. In this sense, I interpret the schools’ institutional habitus as assimilationist.

---

83 Equivalent to approximately £1.
In addition, an ontology of social class sameness cannot be taken for granted as straightforward, since socioeconomic differences between students need to be managed daily, so that sociocultural similarity can prevail in their mixing practices. Next, in Section 3, I analyse the more or less formalised institutional strategies regulating social class mix/mixing and moulding homogeneity at the schools.

3. Moulding homogeneity: School mix/mixing strategies to create social class sameness

3.1. Rodriguez School

The staff at Rodriguez School (RS) tend to make reference to the school’s socioeconomic diversity as something completely unproblematic that has not required any particular institutional interventions. In their narratives, this is usually explained by the fact that RS has a long tradition of having such diversity (since it was created in 1965), which would have naturally shaped harmonious relationships between more and less advantaged groups. This contrasts with the staff’s views regarding the inclusion of girls since 2015 and of students deemed to have SEN since 2016, which are seen as elements that have affected the school’s composition greatly and that have required or still require institutional intervention. For example, the Behaviour Lead Assistant speaks about this unproblematic social class mixing as part of the essence of RS:

We have always had it [socioeconomic diversity] at the school, from its origins, so there’s no big challenge to us; we haven’t had to make explicit efforts for the children to integrate because there’s no discrimination. It’s just daily life [...] It’s always been very natural in that the school has always been inclusive. We haven’t had to apply any special policy for the kids to integrate [...] The school is like this [inclusive], this is its essence. We don’t need to apply very structured strategies, we don’t need to focus on the issue, no, never [...] The only time in which we applied a policy was when the girls arrived, but it had to do with gender, because it was going to happen abruptly. It can be said that they [girls] were going to invade the space [...] What I think we still need to work on is on the integration of kids with SEN (Behaviour Lead Assistant, RS)

Also, socioeconomic diversity appears to be less relevant as a focus compared with ethnic diversity: while there are pedagogic activities oriented at sharing traditional ethnic practices associated with different countries (e.g., the International Arts Week), there is no particular action directed towards engaging with the socioeconomic differences. In this sense, as I
already contended in Section 2 in this chapter, there is an implicit assumption about the illegitimacy of recognising socioeconomic differences (Fraser, 1995).

Nevertheless, the staff's views on the issue reveal more subtle mechanisms of institutional regulation of social class diversity. As Atkinson points out:

“the typification of a specific ‘school’ is inevitably structured by a whole array of more or less formalised factors [...] [that] engender a school-specific doxa [or institutional habitus, as used in this thesis—see Chapter III] amongst those who perceive themselves as part of it; that is to say, an ethos which, if often formalised into a stated ‘mission’, is usually manifest and transmitted pre-predicatively through the individual practices, policies and interactions it orients” (Atkinson, 2011: 342).

In fact, RS’s socioeconomic heterogeneity is subject to delimitations: the acceptance of people from different backgrounds does not imply the acceptance of all kinds of dispositions or identity/subjectivity performance (Bradbury, 2013; Skeggs, 1997), meaning the cultural manifestations associated with the others’ backgrounds, for example, behaviours and embodiment associated with a flâne (similar to the British term chav, as I explained in Chapter V) are not acceptable. The school, understood as a field (see Chapter III), has implicit and explicit rules, and the families who enter it have to play within their limits, that is, to have a sense of the game being played at the school (Bourdieu, 1990b). This is what defines the students’ and their parents’ belonging to the field. Therefore, socioeconomic diversity—which could add some unpredictability to the field—is managed and organised institutionally through more or less overt strategies to secure the continuity of its institutional habitus. I analyse these strategies below.

3.1.1. Academic selection

Since 2015, the Inclusion Law has been implemented gradually and academic selection is becoming completely prohibited at all levels. This is viewed negatively by some of the interviewees and seen as something that jeopardises not only RS’s academic excellence but also its openness to different social groups. In fact, academic selection according to the applicants’ grades is appreciated by RS’s staff as ensuring the entrance of a corpus of students who possess certain academic skills and attitudes towards studying and schooling (i.e., the ‘right’ academic cultural capital), consequently facilitating the teachers’ pedagogic job: “We also had a high percentage of students with scholarships, but they were selected
according to their grades. This creates a **homogeneous school** which, for you as an educator, **makes your job easier** (Headteacher, RS).

In contrast, academic heterogeneity, combined with social heterogeneity, is viewed as introducing a complexity that the school finds challenging to manage and jeopardises its 'safety in numbers' (see section 3.1.2. below). This is aligned with Ingram’s study in grammar schools in Northern Ireland (2009), where she analysed the tensions existing between working-class boys’ local habitus and the institutional habitus of these academically oriented schools. In this sense, the staff assume that there tends to be an incompatibility between academic success and socioeconomic disadvantage and, for this reason, it is crucial to have an admission mechanism to guarantee a certain academic level amongst the students regardless of their social background.

### 3.1.2. “Safety in numbers”: ensuring the ‘right mix’ to ensure the ‘right bodies’

As I already mentioned in Chapter V (Section 3), the staff at RS express confidence in the synergic effect of a middle-class majority with a habitus compatible to the school’s goals and principles, in order to integrate the new students by means of assimilation. Therefore, social class diversity is seen as possible only while the school manages to guarantee having ‘the right’ mix (Vowden, 2012), namely, keeping the proportion of working-class students low. This is why the staff view the Inclusion Law as risky, since it could contribute to increasing the number of less affluent students with a habitus that contradicts and may even challenge RS’s institutional habitus:

> What we are most concerned about is the behavioural element, that is, the arrival of students who break all the social structure of norms, a very **aggressive and violent** kid, because they spoil all the work we are doing with the rest of the students. It’s not about having a kid from a low social stratum, or a kid coming from a vulnerable background, it’s their behaviour, the kind of kid […]. It has happened that the **good elements** [other students] in the class leave the school, so that’s our main concern (Mathematics Teacher, RS)

Examples of this group’s effect on the working-class students are, as I have already shown in Chapter V (Section 3.1.1.), clearly related to the use of the body, for instance, in developing a certain (middle-class) way of speaking: “when the kids arrive and they have this **drawn-out** ['arrastrado'] **way of speaking**, within a month they stop talking that way, maybe because of the very pressure of their classmates” (Behaviour Lead Assistant, IS). In this sense, a majority
of middle-class students with dispositions that are respected in the school field allows respectability to be instilled amongst those working-class students whose dispositions are deemed to be illegitimate and pathological (Skeggs, 1997).

### 3.1.3. Normalising bodies

Linked with the above, a crucial mechanism to mould social heterogeneity and enforce the RS’s institutional habitus is regulating the students’ bodies through a strict code of practices, that is, the use of the school uniform and the prohibition of certain aesthetic styles (e.g., short hair is mandatory for boys and they cannot wear earrings):

> When I observe the kids during breaks, I can’t see socioeconomic differences […]. This is an advantage of having a uniform, they are all uniformed (Academic Coordinator, RS)

> For us, using the school uniform is a big concern because with it we make them all the same. For example, we tell them to buy completely white or completely black sports trainers, because if we left it to their choice they could come wearing Messi’s football trainers, that are very expensive, but another student might not have the money to buy them, so we just say ‘no, black or white’, because then the brand doesn’t matter […]. There are many details through which we try to make them all look the same… everybody with a shirt, tie, shaven… no differences […]. So differences aren’t visible. One knows about them because one knows their parents. But if you come into a classroom you won’t notice any differences, because, thank God, we still have the uniform (Behaviour Lead Assistant, RS)

Likewise, the headteacher states that “we don’t like long hair, beards, and earrings amongst boys,” and these are forbidden by the school’s Conviviality Handbook (see Chapter IV, Section 4) of the school. Modes of expression and the use of certain words are also constantly “corrected” by RS’s staff, particularly by the Behaviour Lead and the Behaviour Lead Assistant. In the process of putting these rules into practice, the Behaviour Lead Assistant attributes huge importance to the school environment and the conformism of a majority of students (see section 3.1.1. above) who easily adhere to these body-related rules:

> Some years ago, it was fashionable to use loose trousers [like rappers], leaving their underpants visible. Well, here it was never that way, everybody wore their trousers as they should do […]. So here the environment is so strong that even if they want a style, they stop doing so […]. When a new student arrives, sometimes it’s necessary to make
It clear and say ‘I don’t know what school you come from but here we don’t behave this way, we don’t relate to each other by hitting [‘dando manotazos’], or speaking like ‘shaaaa’ [allusion to speaking like a ‘flaite’]. We tell them ‘here the haircut is traditional. And then you start seeing that kids realise this school is different. Maybe they continue behaving that way in their homes but they learn to adapt to the school [‘ubicarse’: take their position according to the place they have], they fit in [‘entran en linea’] […]. When they are too used to certain gestures, idioms, certain rude words, a street style [‘estilo coa’] […] we try to correct these things (Behaviour Lead Assistant, RS)

This way, through its written codes and daily surveillance, the school instils respectability in certain uses of the body by attributing them positive valuations, while constraining other bodies, which are conceived as unacceptable and with no symbolic value in the school field (Skeggs, 1997; Bourdieu, 1984). Therefore, through a differential attribution of symbolic capital to different embodied dispositions, the school actively attempts to normalise those strange bodies, that is, those persons occupying a space not of their own, that they do not belong within (Ahmed, 2000; Kulz, 2014; Matus, 2016), which are commonly associated with particular stereotypes of the working-class (‘flaite’).

3.1.4. The spatial delimitation of socioeconomic disadvantage: assigning the scholarships discretely

The spatial delimitation of socioeconomic disadvantage at RS is very clear in the distribution of the facilities and the role played by the Headteacher’s Secretary. She is the one in charge of processing the parents’ socioeconomic information to assign the scholarships and has a discrete spatial location that enables her to have private contact with parents.

RS has two entrances. The main entrance is for the majority of the students to come in and go out, through the playground to the classrooms (I will call it “Sector A”). The other entrance (“Sector B”) is generally used by the smallest children and their parents, as it connects to the kindergarten room (it also has another door that leads to the main yard and the rest of the school). In Sector B there is the Secretary’s office, whose door is generally open to receive, for example, students of different ages who arrive late, as well as parents asking for a meeting or with particular questions. There is also the Headteacher’s office, as well as another two rooms, one of them with the school’s printer, which are used by the staff for meeting parents, so there is some transit of people at different times. Access to the rest of the school from Sector B is restricted since the only way to do so is through a door in the Headteacher’s office or through the kindergarten classroom.
What is interesting in this spatial arrangement is the material division of the school into two main areas, which appear to display a symbolic distinction regarding the institution’s relationship with the students’ socioeconomic condition: the detailed socioeconomic information requested from and provided by the families seems to be intentionally contained within Sector B, not passing its material limits or producing evident symbolic meanings in Sector A. More specifically, it seems that this information does not even “enter” the Headteacher’s room but remains in the Secretary’s room. I base this hypothesis on the fact that, when I asked the Headteacher about the families’ socioeconomic information to construct the database I had offered, he answered that he did not know many details about this and suggested that I ask his Secretary. In fact, as I already argued in section 2.1. of this chapter, after assigning the scholarships, the school staff explain that there is no need to continue “making distinctions” [‘hacer diferencia’] between students and, moreover, the interviewees consider this to be a sort of discrimination they want to avoid.

This is a socially heterogeneous school, we have different economic levels. Payments here are stratified, the ones who have more money pay more, the ones who have less pay less, and the ones who can’t pay study for free, we give them a full scholarship. So, there’s no economic differences within the school. As Behaviour Lead, I don’t care about this either. For me, the important thing is the kids’ behaviour in the school, if they have the right clothing [‘presentacion personal’], their punctuality, but not their economic situation. That information is evaluated in the office [Sector B] and they [Headteacher’s Secretary] manage it privately […]. To me, they are all the same (Behaviour Lead, RS)

The information about the scholarship is processed over there [Sector B]. Teachers don’t have this information, so none of us who work here know if this kid pays more or less than the other, we have no idea, we don’t even know if he pays or not. What do we know? We know about the kid, about his parents. Everything else stays in the office and we don’t have access to it, which I think is the best because the students are all the same, we demand the same of all of them (Behaviour Lead Assistant, RS)

Thus, according to the Behaviour Lead and his assistant (whose office is in Sector A, just in front of the main yard), assigning the scholarships allows the elimination of economic differences between students and, as a consequence, allows the rest of the staff to focus on the students’ individual behaviour and academic performance. The latter is seen as disconnected from the children’s socioeconomic situation. Paradoxically, this suggests institutional efforts to encourage the children to mix in such a way that the school community
do not actually notice that there is a process of socioeconomic mixing underway. Instead mixing is understood in terms of children with different individual characteristics interacting.

3.1.5. Symbolic boundaries to socioeconomic disadvantage: making donations discretely

Related to the above, the accepted behaviour amongst the staff is not to explicitly speak about the socioeconomic differences between the students unless it is completely necessary to do so in order to provide economic/material help to a particular student/family (e.g., donations). In such cases, discretion and confidentiality must be guaranteed. As described in the following quotations, this support has to be given as if it were not oriented by socioeconomic distinctions, in order to avoid stigmatising the students and instead to emphasise “the things that bring them together” (Headteacher, RS):

The donations are secret, only the teacher in charge of a class ['profesor jefe'] knows about it and he evaluates which family needs the donation, or maybe he asks the family discretely. Nothing is made public (Language Teacher, 7-10-year olds, RS)

Socioeconomic differences aren’t an issue. At least they aren’t talked about, unless we need to do it to provide help, only with those who really have to know, it’s not vox populi […] Safeguarding the families’ intimacy, the person’s dignity, is a must. It’s about professional secrecy […] There are things that don’t need to be transparent. Last year we did a collection for fraternal help, a box with goods, so we had to decide ‘who are we going to give this to?” […] We had to sit down and conduct an exhaustive analysis with the school’s Chaplain, the psychologist and the student counsellor […] and then we had to ask to do an interview with the parent in such a way that they wouldn’t feel bad, ‘this is what happens, take it as an aid, this will be useful to use your resources for other stuff but don’t worry, nobody is going to know about this” […] Because we can hurt susceptibilities and that’s not the idea. We have to go very slowly (Inclusion Lead, RS)

An interesting assumption in these quotations is that being targeted as poor is seen as something that makes no positive distinction but is, on the contrary, something the students/families could feel ashamed of (Bourdieu, 1984a). In this sense, the lack of economic capital is positioned within a framework of deficit that goes beyond the merely economic and that is immediately associated with the lack of symbolic capital: money problems are taken for granted as an issue that has to be hidden, protected from public scrutiny, as it seems to make the person involved more vulnerable to others.
3.1.6. Instilling values to live together

An important pillar of the RS field’s immanent rules or institutional habitus is the code of values and attitudes that is being promoted, which are significantly shaped by the Catholic character of the school and by the drive to promote conviviality, understood as the peaceful co-existence of different cultures (Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012). Here, mutual respect is considered to be the basic value to promote healthy relationships amongst students regardless of their social differences and to establish a basis of equality between them:

*In a Catholic school, respect is very important, even more so in a secular society [...]. At this school you will find from agnostic and lay people to Legionnaires of Christ, Opus Dei, Evangelic, Anglican, Orthodox, Jews… The most important thing for this institution is respect* (Headteacher, RS)

In this regard, the institutional view is that everyone who wants to access the school can do so as long as they agree to adhere to its code of coexistence values, regardless of their previous background and experiences. This is aligned with evidence on the role of Catholicism in creating community. It is argued that Catholic schools are relatively homogenous in relation to their culture, that is, values, rules and norms (both formal and informal)\(^84\), and that this is valued by parents who choose these schools and approve of their emphasis on values, discipline, and social commitment (Méndez, 2006, cited in Martinic, Anaya, & Torrendell, 2008). In this sense, these schools tend to have high levels of coherence between the institutional habitus and the preferences of the families within these schools, compared with non-Catholic ones (Martinic, Anaya, & Torrendell, 2008). This is seen as positively affecting their organisation—due to the relative agreement regarding the desirable/undesirable behaviours—the development of a sense of belonging and, ultimately, their academic performance, for example, results in the national standardised test (SIMCE). These findings are consistent with James Coleman and colleagues'\(^85\) theory of social capital. In particular, they argue that Catholic schools are better able to create functional communities that “compel students’ motivation, maintain effective school organization, and increase students’ learning” (Morgan & Todd, 2009: 267), thanks to their members’ common affiliation with the Catholic Church. This way, by contributing to high levels of “intergenerational closure”—that is, high

\(^84\) "Despite the differences in terms of ownership and social context, [...] all of them [Catholic schools in the study sample] pursue a comprehensive education; an education on faith, and aspire that their students are integral people and with good academic and professional competencies" (Martinic, Anaya, & Torrendell, 2008: 111).

\(^85\) Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; Hoffer, Greeley & Coleman, 1985.
levels of parents’ knowledge of their children's friends’ parents and similarities within these social circles—Catholic schools are associated with better educational outcomes (Carbonaro, 1998).

In practice, though, the process of instilling the school’s values in the students seems to be complex and to require daily efforts. The Mathematics Teacher describes how she tries to enforce conviviality every day, using dialogue and mediation with the children:

> What defines the school is its values [...]. Despite there being great diversity in terms of socioeconomic realities, nationalities… the important thing is that by working on these values the kids have integrated incredibly well […]. When we have to correct a behaviour, I don’t just listen to the general version from each student. The kid is a person who is strengthening their emotions, their personality, so they need a mediator saying, ‘I want you to communicate to your classmate how you feel’. The easiest thing for me would be to punish them, call their parents, but the important thing is that the students understand, that your classmate understands why you feel uncomfortable, why this situation affected you […]. So dialogue is important, as a mediation […]. It’s in this dialogue that they can realise what they must strengthen to improve conviviality ['convivencia'] (Mathematics Teacher, RS)

As the SEN Deputy highlights, this kind of mediation has taken place in situations of discrimination against students due to their socioeconomic condition:

> Teachers are always guiding these situations. When for example they hear someone saying ‘hey, you live in Puente Alto [a poor locality]? because I live in The Hills’ [the area where the school is], and the teacher is always aware and says ‘hey, what’s up with you? There’s no problem if you live there or here’. We’re always putting limits on these kinds of discriminatory behaviours (SEN Deputy)

In addition to this daily work on values to live together, every year the diocese in charge of the school defines a motto to be worked on by teachers and pupils. The motto in 2017—when I conducted the fieldwork—was “we are all siblings and we cannot fight,” and the year before was ‘mercy’. Aligned to this, the school develops an annual Conviviality Week (‘Semana de la convivencia’), “oriented at promoting awareness and reflexivity amongst the students about what conviviality ['convivencia'] means” (Conviviality Deputy). As the Mathematics Teacher explains, that week each class has to “speak about everything related to the problems we have as a community within the class, things that have produced conflicts during these
“months”, then, they discuss which value they will focus their work on that year, “to improve the class conviviality [‘convivencia’],” and everybody makes a commitment to act according to this value. After this, “they seal their commitment by stamping their handprint onto a poster created collectively […] and we reinforce it all the time, we put visual supports in the classroom and we say, ‘remember that this class is characterised by this value.’” In this sense, not only is the chosen value what matters but also the democratic and dialogic decision-making process itself.

Hence, through the promotion of values to live together, RS’s staff expect to mould attitudes in the students that ensure continuity within the school community.

3.2. Inti School

At first glance, IS staff’s efforts in relation to managing diversity seem only to be focused on the challenges associated with the presence of students diagnosed with SEN, as “we have to be very careful and work out which situations can make them feel unbalanced, to avoid them” (Year 1 Teacher). Instead, as at RS, social class diversity in IS is presented by the staff as unproblematic and being addressed in a natural way, without needing explicit institutional strategies to regulate the daily encounters and possible interactions that it generates. Despite this stance, I identified a series of strategies to manage social class diversity that were in practice being applied at RS; in contrast, such strategies appear to be less robust at IS.

How to understand, then, that students and parents from different social classes look so similar (see Section 2.2. of this chapter) in the eyes of the IS staff? I argue that, from the accounts of my staff participants, homogenisation of socioeconomic differences at IS seems to happen in a more opaque and less institutionalised way than at RS. In this sense, social class differences at IS seem to be less evident to the staff than at RS. Disadvantaged families are, in general, less visible in teachers’ accounts, particularly in the accounts of those who are not part of the Headteacher’s leading team. This finding may be interpreted as a less intentional and more laissez-faire assimilationist institutional habitus, which—as a hypothesis—might be related to the relatively recent foundation of IS (2015). In this context, assimilation of working-class students (and subsequently, of their parents) appears to be assumed and implicitly expected, although this is not declared to be pushed by the school. It appears to be expected by the staff but is not overtly recognised as such.

Nevertheless, two strategies of institutional regulation of social class mix and mixing can be mentioned.
3.2.1. Symbolic boundaries to socioeconomic disadvantage: making donations discretely

As RS, the staff at IS tend to describe the school’s socioeconomic diversity in terms of the sympathetic inclusion of working-class students. Although in this case the word ‘charity’ was never mentioned, the staff at IS say, as they do at RS, that acts of solidarity towards the families in difficult economic situations must be carried out in the most covert manner possible:

Last year a [middle-class] mother told me ‘Miss [‘tia’], I’ve noticed that this girl doesn’t have clothes and I want to bring her something but please don’t tell them, and she gave them to me […]. This family lives in one room and the girl said she was feeling cold in wintertime […]. Families help each other. And they quietly ['calladitos'] even bring snacks ['colaciones'] for their children to share with the others who can’t buy them (Year 1 Teacher, IS)

The same logic plays out in relation to food. Given a school context where families not only have different eating preferences (e.g., omnivorous/vegan), but also unequal economic resources to actually buy food, IS’s staff act to compensate for inequalities. Like cultural practices, eating habits operate as a strong identity marker (Bourdieu, 1984a; O’Connell, 2010), signalling, for example, respectability and worthiness (Vincent, Rollock, Ball, & Gilborn, 2012b):

“[F]ood plays an important part in the (re)production of ‘family’ identities as well as in the negotiation of […] social positionings. Food is bound up with issues of identity and ‘incorporation’, not only of certain symbolic properties of the food into the eater but also of the eater, through consumption of that food, into a particular culture or community” (O’Connell, 2010: 567)

In particular, as everyday eating practices are rooted in an unequal distribution of capitals, they are a key element defining social class boundaries:

“The antithesis between quantity and quality […] corresponds to the opposition–linked to different distances from necessity—between the taste of necessity, which favours the

---

This way, for example, Vincent and colleagues (2012b) highlight that, in the school field, sending ‘unhealthy’ packed lunches with their children was indicative of disreputable motherhood.
most ‘filling’ and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty—or luxury—which shifts
the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating, etc.)” (Bourdieu, 1984a: 6)

As the following quote reveals, the Headteacher and her team declared themselves concerned
about providing disadvantaged children with lunch and wished to do so in such a way that the
rest of the children did not notice:

_When a child doesn’t bring lunch […] we buy them one. We never leave a child without
it… because they must feel bad about that [in an emotional way]. But the other children
shouldn’t notice that they didn’t bring [lunch], because we don’t [draw attention to] that_

(Behaviour Lead)

Thus, as at RS, the accounts of the IS staff suggest a view where poverty is so shameful (i.e.,
a sort of negative symbolic capital) that a lack of economic resources must be hidden. As
such, working-class families’ lack of economic resources and acts of solidarity towards them
need to be hidden in order to protect their dignity and make them equals in the eyes of the
others.

### 3.2.2. Instilling values to live together

The majority of the staff at IS tend to emphasise naturally-occurring harmonious relationships
between children across socioeconomic backgrounds. However, some accounts suggest
there have been conflicts related to social class differences, caused either by less affluent
students’ aggressive behaviour or by wealthier students’ pretentious attitudes. In both
situations, the staff take on an active mediation role, so the students understand that, despite
their differing economic capitals, everybody deserves respect.

On the one hand, and despite the interviewees’ resistance to stereotyping working-class
students, conflicts originating due to physically and psychologically aggressive behaviours
were usually seen as a feature of the most disadvantaged at the school. In this sense,
economic impoverishment tends to be associated with forms of cultural capital
impoverishment (i.e., rudeness, fighting, causing trouble), which the staff attempt to counteract
mainly by asking for parental support:

_You can notice them [working-class students] by their language, by their use of slang
[…]. They use rude words and tend to cause trouble and fight._ (History Teacher, IS)
There’re some kids who speak like in the slums [‘hablan como de la poblacion’] […]. For example, there’s the case of [name of a girl] whose dad lives in a slum [‘toma’] […]. Life in slums is ‘complex’ [negative connotation] so she has learnt behaviours that are ‘complex’ as well. She is aggressive [‘matona’]. It sounds awful but that’s how it is. She hits the others, it’s terrible […]. So we had to speak to her mother (SEN Deputy, IS)

Some gestures and a different way of speaking are more evident amongst children with a lower [socioeconomic] level. There have been situations in which we’ve talked to the parents because their children have negative behaviour, they use rude words when they talk to their classmates […]. And the parents generally understand that we say that not because we’re discriminating against them but because the other children also need a good environment (Academic Coordinator, IS)

On the other hand, some middle-class students are deemed responsible for causing tense situations by ‘showing off’ their socioeconomic advantage. In these cases, the staff aim to transmit to the students the importance of respect. This is said to be done almost daily but particularly on Monday mornings during the ‘Welcoming Time’, a space especially dedicated to discussing issues related to the students’ conviviality. In addition, the Conviviality Team (see Chapter IV, Section 4) act as mediators by working with the families of the students involved so they can take responsibility for controlling their children’s conduct:

Last week the kids had to bring some materials, some basic materials, but one girl didn’t bring them and a boy offended her saying ‘you’re poor, your parents are poor’. And the girl felt really bad […]. When these things happen we’re the ones responsible for saying ‘stop, we don’t all have the same needs or the same privileges, nor the same situations at home, the same things’. Each parent works their own way (Early Years Teacher 1, IS)

We have had some problems with the children who have more money than the others. For example, a girl who brought a pink guitar, very beautiful, for the music lesson, and that caused problems with her classmates because they wanted to use the guitar and she didn’t even want them to touch it. Or there are kids who brought their tablets and the others felt bad and got angry […]. It’s not only about bringing these things but about highlighting it and saying ‘I’ve got this and you haven’t’ […]. We worked with their parents so they could talk to them and tell them it wasn’t necessary to show that they were superior to the rest because they had more money. We also work with the children themselves to show them that you can have more money but others might be nicer [i.e.,
possess other positive qualities]. **We work on respect, respect, respect** [...] every morning in the Welcoming Time ['Hora de Acogida'], we work on the values the school attempts to inculcate (SEN Deputy, IS)

This way, through managing conflicts and promoting respect amongst students, the staff at IS attempt to render their socioeconomic inequalities irrelevant within the school space, in order to promote their peaceful coexistence and make the school’s holistic project viable.

4. Problematic claims of sameness

Overall, I argue in this chapter that, despite the differences between RS and IS, both schools’ ontologies of social class sameness across families are supported by the assumed differential possession of families’ symbolic capital according to their social class (Skeggs, 1997; Bourdieu, 1984a; Ahmed, 2000; Matus, 2016). The middle-class families are seen as all right as they are and are not expected to experience any change in their subjectivity nor in the future social position of their children. They are seen as aligned with the schools’ principles and, it can be argued, their higher symbolic capital even gives them a positional advantage in the school field: they are given the power to be representatives of the field of power and to affect the schools’ institutional habitus.

In turn, the value that their working-class counterparts are given by the staff depends on the degree to which they match their behaviour to their middle-class counterparts. Thus, the less the disadvantaged students/parents are identified as a (socially classed) group, the better: coming from a working-class background and/or having low economic capital is something that should not be publicly seen and named. This way, and even though working-class families are said to be respected at the school, the staff’s accounts suggest that it is more precise to say that their ‘less worthy’ mannerisms are instead tolerated (e.g., when the Behaviour Lead at RS mentions that Emma is accepted and welcomed despite saying ‘silly things’ and being fat and short). In fact, the dispositions considered to be legitimate are the ones suggesting that these families are valuable despite their disadvantage and that their inclusion at the school could lead to social mobility for their children, for example, the parents’ effort and commitment to education. This is aligned to the traditional Bourdieusian understanding of the working classes’ habitus as produced out of necessity, of their capitals as negative (i.e., in deficit to ‘play the game in the right way’), and of their value as their suffering (Skeggs, 2011). Thus, what is valued by staff is working-class parents’ remarkable abilities to adapt to the school field, being able to keep their socially classed identity almost unnoticeable. This adaptability, then, is what constitutes their main cultural capital in the school field.
Therefore, I argue that the schools’ efforts to produce inclusion and equality are ultimately oriented to the cultural assimilation of working-class students into a middle-class habitus. In dialogue with the analysis in Chapter V, these findings support the existence of a celebratory and assimilative institutional habitus regarding social class diversity at RS and IS. I emphasise the additive relation (‘and’ instead of ‘but’) between these apparently contradictory rationalities (Bourdieu, 1990b)—celebration and disregard of social class differences—to point out rather that they are two dimensions of a consistent institutional habitus: the schools welcome socioeconomic diversity precisely because they expect to overcome it by integrating the working-class ‘other’ into the middle-class ‘us’.

This might be interpreted as aligned with the analysis of the Chilean pro-inclusion policies in Chapter I, where inclusion is signified in terms of a benevolent integration of subjects defined as in disadvantage, rather than in relation to the value of diversity itself. In this context, inclusion and normalisation go hand in hand at the schools (Infante, Matus, & Vizcarra, 2011; Infante & Matus, 2009). As Rojas and colleague specify:

“The concepts of diversity, interculturalismo7, integration, inclusion, amongst others, are part of a lexicon with a democratic aspiration but, in practice, educational policies are always defining subjects in relation to a pattern of normalisation built by the school system over years” (Rojas, Falabella, & Alarcón, 2016: 7, my translation).

Unlike institutional strategies focused on students diagnosed with SEN, though, my case studies reveal school strategies to normalise social class differences and promote mixing processes that integrate ‘deviated’ subjects into the dominant values of the schools. That is, mixing processes that act by means of making the ‘other’ invisible (rather than by labelling them as ‘special’ as in the case of SEN).

Such an understanding of inclusion opens up relevant debates on the relationship between recognition and justice, which I will illustrate through Nancy Fraser’s (1995) analytical distinction between recognition and redistribution. These are two areas of justice that are often thought of as separate: whilst the former addresses cultural or symbolic injustice (e.g., non-recognised or disrespected identities or groups) through cultural recognition, the latter addresses socioeconomic injustice (e.g., exploitation and economic deprivation) through

---

87 In Chile, educational policies have mostly used the concept of inter-culturalism (“interculturalidad”) rather than multi-culturalism.
political-economic redistribution. And whereas recognition claims “often take the form of calling attention to […] the putative specificity of some group, and then of affirming the value of that specificity,” redistribution claims “often call for abolishing economic arrangements that underpin group specificity” (Fraser, 1995: 74) (e.g., gender division of labour, socially segregated access to education, etc.). Thus, the former emphasizes the differentiation and valorisation of a group, while the latter aims to undermine it, “to put the group out of the business as a group” (Fraser, 1995: 74), committing to egalitarianism.

I have shown that the schools in my study do temporarily target (that is, recognise) working-class families when it comes to assigning the scholarships and donations. This is particularly clear at RS, where there are some well delimited spaces, actors, and artefacts (e.g., Sector B, the Headteacher’s Secretary, and forms) to do so. However, the views of the staff generally reassert the dilemma between redistribution and recognition by suggesting that social class differences do not require recognition but rather redistribution strategies, in order to assuage socioeconomic disadvantage.

Fraser’s later work (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Lingard & Keddie, 2013) discusses the importance of transcending the recognition/redistribution dilemma by combining a politics of economic redistribution with a politics of cultural recognition and political representation. The latter refers to providing a context where everybody is accorded a voice—e.g., both working- and middle-class students—in order to build “a difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003: 7, my emphasis). Social class differences are a particular concern here since if:

“left unattended […], class misrecognition can impede the capacity to mobilize against maldistribution. To build broad support for economic transformation today requires challenging cultural attitudes that demean poor and working people […]. Likewise, poor and working people may need recognition politics to support their struggles for economic justice […] to build class communities and cultures in order to neutralize the hidden injuries of class and forge the confidence to stand up for themselves […]. Thus a politics of class recognition may be needed both in itself and to help get a politics of redistribution off the ground” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003: 24, my emphasis)

Hence, class recognition has to be understood as a matter of justice, which facilitates the integration of claims for recognition with claims for the redistribution of resources:
“It is unjust that some individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequence of institutionalised patterns of cultural value in whose construction they have not equally participated and which disparage their distinctive characteristics” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003: 29)

Therefore, questions about redistribution are directly linked to questions about recognition and representation of non-dominant cultural knowledge and identities (Lingard & Keddie, 2013). In particular, if the working classes’ habitus is only seen as produced out of economic necessity and their capitals as in deficit, working-class dispositions are hardly likely to be recognised as valuable, unless they are somehow reinterpreted into the dominant, middle-class, cultural knowledge. Drawing upon Beverly Skeggs’ questions in this respect:

“If the working-class are only ever evaluated through the dominant symbolic and read both through methodology and theory as trapped by their habitus—positions embodied as value-less dispositions—then how do we represent them with value? And how do those trapped within the negative symbolic ever forge value for themselves? [...] Are the working-class always lacking, beyond value, without value, resigned and adjusted to their conditions, unable to accrue value to themselves? [...] And what about how practices such as respectability, assumed to be middle-class, are significantly reworked and revalued when lived by the working-class: a complete ethical re-evaluation. What about all the working-class dispositions that the middle-class crave and appropriate whenever they can?” (Skeggs, 2004b: 87-88)

But what are, if any, the working-class dispositions that the staff at my schools should recognise? What are the capitals that could be understood as valuable in these families? In a later publication (2011), Skeggs proposes a concept of personhood value as contingent and situational according to which “different material conditions offer different possibilities for value accrual [...] [and] personhood” (p. 509). She identifies an alternative set of values amongst young working-class women, different from that of the dominant symbolic (i.e., middle-class), and that “produce different relationships, different forms of attention, different desires and very different value practices” (p. 507). For instance: developing a supportive sociality that allows these women to cope with precarity; surviving with few economic resources; and the ability to enjoy themselves with very little, developing localised spaces “to have a good time in bleak conditions and cramped spaces” (p. 504). In the case of my study, I argue, what is problematic is not exactly that the staff cannot identify valuable dispositions amongst working-class families, but that those that are identified as valuable mostly refer to these families’ accommodation to the school field, revealing their subordinated condition in that context (e.g.,
that they are thankful for the opportunity of being at the school, and that they show particular
effort and willingness to help others).

With these reflections I am not arguing that being discreet about social class differences and
having an egalitarian stance is a bad thing. Certainly, I agree with my interviewees that it is
the schools’ moral duty to not reinforce prejudices and stereotypes based on the families’
socioeconomic condition, in order to encourage mixing. However, along with Andrew Sayer
(2005), I would like to point out the limitations of egalitarianism. As defined in Chapter III,
egalitarianism aims to treat structural differences such as those of class and ethnicity as
morally irrelevant, so everybody has the same chances to be recognised by their individual
virtues and vices. Nevertheless, this may create the illusion that recognition strategies (i.e.,
treating everybody as equals) erase redistributive inequalities, thus rendering these obscure
and contributing to their reproduction (Chapter III).

The risk, then, of the perceived need to be discreet about the working-class families’
disadvantage is to position poverty as a personal deficit rather than as a structural one, that
is, the result of a system that allows people to be poor and struggling. Linked with this, the risk
of assuming that one way of speaking, one mode of appearance, and one particular set of
cultural tastes are the correct ones is that this restricts the possibilities for openness and
appreciation of other subjectivities. This has disciplinary consequences for those who deviate
from the dominant habitus, limiting their expressive possibilities and potentially creating
discontent and malaise. As Reay puts it, “habitus, while highly adaptive and able to develop
‘a feel for the game’ in new fields, is also liable to repression, sublimation and defensive
responses as a result of pressures within these fields” (Reay, 2015a: 20). Drawing on Sennett
and Cobbs’s (1972, cited in Reay, 2015a) idea on ‘the hidden injuries of class’, it has been
argued that these pressures may have a particularly high psychological price for working-class
individuals (e.g., Aarseth, Layton, & Nielsen, 2016; Friedman, 2016; Reay, 2015a). Painful
contradictions and feelings such as discomfort, shame, anxiety, humiliation, and fear of
pretension are likely to emerge due to a lack of recognition and potential conflicts in the habitus
(see Chapter III) involved in adaptation, as well as the emotional work required to reconcile
contradictory sources of identity. As Friedman (2016) warns, such feelings are not necessarily
felt through overt judgements of others but through internal self-doubt, for example, a lack of
entitlement to feel that ‘I belong to this school’ (rather being given the benefit of being there,
which is how the staff at the schools tend to refer to them). The following chapters analysing
the parents’ views on social class mix/mixing will provide more examples on the psychological
and emotional work that working-class individuals put into their schooling experiences.
In addition, I argue that the psychosocial consequences of a denied subjectivity are problematic because they jeopardise social cohesion. Positioning poverty as a personal deficit that obscures working-class families’ cultural capital (besides their adaptability) may not only encourage social discontent and conflict (Honneth, 1996), it may also restrict the chances to institutionally promote symmetrical recognition and mutual understanding rather than one-way exchanges. That is, to promote a scenario where working-class families are not the only ones expected to benefit from inclusion and socioeconomic diversity, but where families occupying different social positions are expected to be open to difference and to be modified by egalitarian mixing. Instead, less affluent families seem to be valued and allowed to mix upwards as long as they show deference and respect to those above them (think of the value given to Emma’s obliging attitude), whilst the more affluent ones are permitted to be condescending and patronising when mixing downwards. Therefore, the (unrecognised) asymmetry between families from different social classes may constrain the realisation of the expected benefits of socioeconomic diversity identified in Chapter V, especially the expansion of all the students’ horizons and development of egalitarian dispositions. More precisely, such asymmetry may restrict the possibilities for the school community to use its diversity to understand the social structure and to aim to challenge it, rather than just aim to integrate particular working-class individuals into middle-class ways of life. In other words, the individualised egalitarian responses to social class diversity (i.e., the acknowledgment that individuals should be recognised as equals) that articulates the schools’ assimilationist institutional habituses may contribute to ignoring persistent patterns of exclusion and to limiting the emergence of more socially oriented egalitarian responses to socioeconomic inequality (i.e., the acknowledgment of the need for equity in a redistributive sense).

5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have analysed the mechanisms articulating what I call an ontology of social class sameness at Rodriguez (RS) and Inti (IS) schools. That is, the staff’s tendency to emphasise the similarities across the families who attend the school and to disregard their social class differences, in order to avoid targeting and discrimination of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. I argue that this ontology is constitutive of both schools’ institutional habitus for approaching school mix and mixing. My analysis allows a more nuanced understanding of their celebratory discourses of social class diversity, also present in their institutional habituses and analysed in Chapter V. The schools’ socioeconomic mix can be understood as a source of pride because such mix is legitimised by means of the families’ homogenisation, that is, a source of pride that is paradoxically both voiced and silenced.
First, in Section 2, I described this ontology of social class sameness through the staff’s accounts of the perceived homogeneity amongst students and their parents, which is thought necessary for their successful inclusion in the schools. In this sense, I argue paradoxically that social class diversity at the schools can be appreciated as valuable only if differences directly attributable to social class are not made explicit. This, in turn, is expressed by emphasising the staff’s attention to the students’ ‘personal attributes’, meaning their abilities and personality, in order to provide them with personalised support. Such underestimation of social class differences is based, on the one hand, on the staff’s emphasis of the students’ and parents’ common humanity, which all share and which renders them equals and, on the other, on the parents’ shared possession of the ‘right attitudes’ (i.e., engagement and commitment to their children’s education), which are seen as facilitating the schools’ job and allowing their basic principles to remain unquestioned. However, I argued that commonalities across families cannot be assumed to be natural and neutral in terms of social class. In fact, the staff’s accounts of the parents’ compatibility with the school field suggest that it is working-class families who seem to make the greater efforts to adjust their behaviours to meet expectations.

In addition, the analysis indicates that the families’ socioeconomic differences need to be managed on a daily basis so their sociocultural similarities prevail in the schools’ everyday routines. I developed this argument in Section 3, where I explored each school’s specific mix/mixing strategies to create social class sameness amongst students, that is, to promote social relationships based on uniform treatment rather than on the daily recognition of their socioeconomic differences. These strategies seem to be particularly strong at RS, where I identified the following:

- **Academic selection** according to the applicants’ grades (Sub-section 3.1.1.), to guarantee the entrance of a majority of students with the ‘right’ academic cultural capital (e.g., academic skills and attitudes towards schooling and studying), so the students’ academic homogeneity predominates over their socioeconomic differences (although academic selection is now completely forbidden by the state in schools receiving public funding).

- **Ensuring a majority of middle-class students** with a habitus considered to be valuable (“safety in numbers”) (Sub-section 3.1.2.), so the *others*—that is, working-class students with embodied dispositions considered to be illegitimate (e.g., aggressive and with “a drawn-out” way of speaking)—can learn ‘more respectable’ uses of the body.

- **Normalisation of the students’ bodies** (Sub-section 3.1.3.) through the mandatory use of the school uniform—to allow a basis of equity for all regardless of their differential consumption capacity—and constant ‘correction’ of certain modes of expression (e.g., rude words), which are deemed unacceptable and are commonly associated with the working class.
- **The spatial delimitation of socioeconomic disadvantage** (Sub-section 3.1.4.) to the office of the Headteacher’s Secretary, where relevant information on the families in order to assign the scholarships is managed discretely so that it does not spread to the rest of the school and staff.

- **Setting symbolic boundaries to socioeconomic disadvantage** (Sub-section 3.1.5.), meaning avoiding highlighting and speaking about the students’ and families’ social class differences unless it is completely necessary to do so in order to provide help through donations, in which case discretion must be guaranteed.

- **Instilling values to live together** (Sub-section 3.1.6.) based on respect, to promote peaceful coexistence amongst students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

At IS, in turn, processes of normalisation seem to be more subtle than at RS, without a clear intentionality of producing similarity across social class differences, which I interpret as a more laissez-faire assimilationist institutional habitus, that is, the assimilation of the working-class students and parents seems to be implicitly expected, although this is not declared to be pushed by the school. However, I identified two strategies for regulating social class mix and mixing at the school, also used at RS:

- **Setting symbolic boundaries to socioeconomic disadvantage** (Sub-section 3.2.1.), meaning avoiding highlighting and speaking about the students and families’ social class differences unless it is completely necessary to do so in order to provide help through donations, in which case discretion must be guaranteed.

- **Instilling values to live together** (Sub-section 3.2.2.) based on respect, to promote peaceful coexistence amongst students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, in Section 4 I emphasise that RS and IS’s efforts to produce inclusion seem to be ultimately oriented to the cultural assimilation of working-class students into a middle-class habitus. Therefore, despite their particularities, both schools’ institutional habituses can be interpreted as celebratory (Chapter V) and assimilationist regarding the existence of social class diversity. In other words, the schools welcome socioeconomic diversity because they expect to overcome it and integrate the working-class ‘other’ into the middle-class ‘us’. Although I positively highlight the schools’ effort to not reinforce prejudices and stereotypes based on the families’ socioeconomic condition, I also point out on the risks involved in individual-oriented egalitarian responses to social class diversity (i.e., the acknowledgment that individuals should be recognised as equals). These responses, I argue, tend to position poverty as a personal deficit rather than as a structural one and may, for example, restrict the possibilities for appreciation of different subjectivities and jeopardise social cohesion.
In the next chapter, I start addressing research question 2 by analysing the parents’ mixophilous dispositions towards social class difference and mixing.
Chapter VII. The parents’ mixophilia: negotiating dispositions towards social class difference and mixing

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the parents’ views about social class differences and mixing in Rodriguez School (RS) and Inti School (IS), by analysing the ways in which they perceive who the others at the school are and how they respond to them. More specifically, I argue that my participants’ openness and their willingness for them and/or their children to engage with people from different social class backgrounds is strongly linked, at both schools, to their perception of the benefits that mix and mixing will bring.

At RS, both working- and middle-class parents understand social class mix as highly beneficial for most disadvantaged students. However, I argue that participating in a middle-class setting presents tensions for working-class families that should be acknowledged. The latter does not only emerge in RS but also in IS, which suggests that negotiating social class mix poses particular challenges for disadvantaged families in IS, since the tensions they experience are not mediated by perceived benefits of such a mix.

In both schools, parents are generally able to identify benefits for all the students described in terms of the expansion of their horizons. This is linked to the development of what I call ‘egalitarian dispositions’ (i.e., values and attitudes towards social class difference and mixing based on the commitment to equality across human beings) and a ‘versatile habitus’ (i.e., a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions and, as such, able to adapt itself to different socially classed fields).

I first present findings about RS (Section 2) and then about IS (Section 3).

2. Rodriguez School

To my surprise, socioeconomic heterogeneity in RS is not presented as a key factor in school choice by the majority of the respondent parents. Moreover, this heterogeneity was not totally evident to them when I first explicitly asked about it during the interviews, despite the parents I talked to clearly identifying a variety of occupations amongst the families at the school, from professionals to domestic workers and gardeners. However, most of them did not consider that RS is particularly socioeconomically diverse. This, because social groupings at the extremes of the social structure are not present. For example, the working-class interviewees
tended to highlight that the middle-class families at the school are not remarkably advantaged compared to other families living in The Hills. “They are like in the middle,” Paula (W/C, RS) observes, comparing the intakes at RS with her employers, a much more socioeconomically privileged family. Only one mother, Ana (M/C, RS), mentioned choosing the school because she considered its social composition to be exceptional.

Nonetheless, during the interviews, social class differences at RS became more noticeable to the participants, who were able to identify the following benefits associated with school mix.

2.1. Perceived benefits for the working classes: mixing to build respectability

Aligned to my argument above, by deploying a Catholic discourse based on the value of charity, most parent participants at RS identified the main benefit of the school’s inclusive approach as being for working-class students who, despite not having enough economic capital, are given the opportunity to attend the school and ‘make something of themselves’. Both working- and middle-class parents valued the school’s inclusive approach rather than its social diversity. This view is, in part, influenced by the better academic results of the school compared to those that the free (state) schools generally attain. Also, the affluence of the locality in which the school is situated has an important role: The Hills itself and its population are considered to be “a good influence” per se for disadvantaged children and young people, in order to avoid problems such as adolescent pregnancy, drugs, and violence. As two mothers who are domestic workers manifest, “it’s a privilege to study in The Hills, at a prestigious school” (Paula, W/C, RS) and “we’re lucky to have our son in a school in The Hills” (Emma, W/C, RS).

In fact, my working-class participants at RS tend to view the school as a safer social space compared to the state schools and/or schools in their localities of origin, meaning an environment that prevents their children from having contact with working-class students alleged to be a ‘bad influence’. In this sense, and aligned with the literature on school choice reviewed in Chapter II (e.g., Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Papapolydorou, 2014; Vowden, 2012), the social composition of the school, specifically, the safety of a middle-class social environment, is perceived by these mothers to be a key aspect of a good education. This is also clear in Sara’s (W/C, RS) account, who positively emphasises the presence of “better students” at RS, compared to her son’s previous school: “as it was a state school, all kinds of people arrived there […]. I prefer him to have a better education, a better environment.”
In particular, these mothers expect that social exchange with middle-class people provides their children with a social capital considered to be valuable in educational and other fields. Networks with their more affluent counterparts may allow them access to experiences that would be otherwise unavailable due to their parents’ lack of economic capital, for example, sumptuous birthday parties at expensive venues, holidays outside the capital, invitations to the swimming pool during the summer, and other events for which the working-class mothers declared themselves to be very grateful.

In a less overt way, a few parents declared an expectation that mixing experiences open up the possibility of developing a sense of place in the working-class students (Bourdieu, 1990b) within more advantaged spaces and, through this, dispositions aligned to middle-class fields (i.e., that work as embodied cultural capital there) that could bring future profits to the children. This is clear in relation to the possible development of a form of multicultural capital (Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011), namely, a cosmopolitan disposition—that is, an ease of engagement with other cultures, places, and people (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016; Snee, 2013)—through the interaction with students who have been able to travel around the world. As Daniela (M/C) says, poorer students “can comment and learn about things that they haven’t seen.” Also, interacting with students for whom going to university is the ‘obvious’ path is seen by both working- and middle-class parents as promoting higher educational and future aspirations in working-class children.

Emma’s (W/C, RS) case illustrates how some working-class parents’ attempts to include themselves and their children in middle-class fields is also reflected in their participation in other middle-class spaces besides RS.

As is the case for all the working-class participants at RS (i.e., domestic workers), Emma and her son’s contact with richer people is provided both by the school and her workplace. She describes her son’s relationship with her employer as familial: “she’s like my son’s grandmother and she introduces him as his oldest grandson,” she says, and her employer has participated in the child’s upbringing (e.g., she decided the child’s name, the school can contact her in case of emergencies, and she participates in the parents’ Whatsapp group). As such, the child—but not Emma—is always invited on holiday with her, her family, and friends, who “are very important people, one of them is the owner of [big Chilean company] and the other of [Chilean bank]” (Emma, W/C, RS). In this context, ‘decent’ use of the body (e.g., a short and tidy haircut, and the absence of tattoos), is seen as a must to be accepted by people at The Hills and, as such, as a powerful cultural capital to fit into a middle-class habitat (Skeggs, 1997, 2004a): “I cut his hair very short, like the military [‘a lo milico’], no earrings or
tattoos at all […] because in The Hills ['aca arriba'] kids with that style are looked down on,” she explains. Emma’s attempts to instil respectability in her son are also visible in the child’s refined manners that she proudly describes: “they [Emma’s relatives] think he’s posh [in a positive way here], too gentlemanly, because he washes his hands before eating and he doesn’t start to eat until the lady of the house sits down… he knows how to use the cutlery, how to sit, how to place his elbows,” Emma says.

Given that her son was born and has grown up in The Hills, Emma also expresses her concern to keep him connected to their social roots as a way to maintain the family’s working-class authenticity: “I want my son to live the real life, his real reality, the world of the ‘nanas’ ['de las nanas de la Plaza Italia para abajo], not only this one here [at The Hills] because I’m not from high society. I only live here because of my job” (Emma, W/C, RS). In this sense, despite living in a middle-class locality and having enrolled her child in a middle-class school, belonging to such middle-class fields is not taken for granted but seen as circumstantial. Thus the need to “take him to the slums so he gets used to both worlds instead of living in a bubble” (Emma, W/C, RS). Echoing the concept of reconciled habitus (Ingram & Abrahams, 2018, see Chapter III), I argue that Emma attempts to reconcile dispositions from two differently classed habituses. However, her liminal belonging to middle-class environments (“I’m not from high society”) despite her extensive participation in them may pose some restrictions to these attempts. The blurred boundaries between belonging and not belonging to her middle-class workplace is crucial to understand this liminal belonging, a shared phenomenon amongst domestic workers in Chile.

Currently, domestic labour represents the third most important economic activity for women in Chile (12% of women) (CASEN, 2015, cited in Fernandez, 2018). As Fernandez states, this is due to “the fact that more middle- and upper-class women are accessing the labour market […] [which] means that paid domestic labour becomes a key strategy for these families” (2018: 51). Historically, domestic workers in Chile have been women coming from poor, indigenous, and rural backgrounds (Stefoni & Fernandez, 2011) who have become a structuring pillar of middle-class families’ daily life, performing a series of roles such as doing the cleaning and taking care of the children. It is common for them to work full-time or even to live in the houses where they work—as is the case of Emma in my study—and, as such, they tend to be seen as completely available for the needs of the families, giving continuity to a colonial culture of servitude where hierarchical subjectivities are constructed (Fernandez, 2018). Such intensity in the daily employer-employee interaction implies a complex mix between professional and emotional dimensions, shaping intimate—sometimes familial—and ambiguous relationships (Fernandez, 2018; Brites, 2014). In this sense, it is not workers but ‘nanas' that are desired:
“[upper-class families’] demand is not only for submissive nanas, but also for an authentic affective performance of obliging devotion […]. The demand for good nanas materialises in the request for affective labour (Gutierrez, 2010) in their everyday activities: cleaning the toilet with a good face, smiling at employers, showing genuine affection for children” (Fernandez, 2018: 57). The same has been found in other Latin American countries such as Brazil, where Brites’ (2014) middle-class participants expected their domestic workers “to clean the house and take care of the children, the elderly, and the family pets […] in a discreet and affectionate manner” (p. 65). This is what Staab and Mahler (2005) define as the nanny or servant problem in their study in Chile, namely, an ambiguous and even familial employer-employee relationship that reproduces social hierarchies by hiding unequal relations of power and obstructing a contractual relationship between legal equals.

In the case of Emma, such an ambiguous position in her workplace is evident, for example, in her use of the house space: she has the smallest room, even smaller than her son’s, but at the same time she is allowed to use the living room for her once-a-month tea with other mothers of the school. Ambiguity is also evident in Emma’s account of her salary, which she considers to be low, but she argues that this is compensated by other benefits given by her employer since her son was born (e.g., taking care of him, giving recommendations of schools, sharing her networks, inviting him on holidays, etc.). In this context, Emma is, in appearance, the one who is benefiting the most in the employer-employee relationship due to her employer’s benevolence by sharing her capitals: economic, for example, by inviting the child for holidays and buying special food for him; social, for example, by sharing her networks within the Catholic church (the child was baptised by a renowned Jesuit priest) and the police (she knows the chief of the investigative police, who she asked to investigate the child’s father, who had left and did not recognise his son); cultural, for example, as Emma is illiterate, her employer supports her, for instance, by reading the school letters; and symbolic, in that all the above nurtures a sense of entitlement in Emma in relation to other parents at the school: “the parents here say that I’m unique, that I’m popular because of the high level of my son’s baptism,” Emma tells. In terms of French classic sociologist Marcel Mauss (1966), such an asymmetry places Emma in a relationship of reciprocity where the exchanged favours create an asymmetry and a debt, in this case, her debt towards her employer. Thus, she accepts her salary as fair, despite thinking it is low.

This way, Emma's mixophilous attempts to include herself and her son in middle-class contexts cannot be assumed as unproblematic. Despite valued as beneficial for the child, engaging with more affluent people entails an important amount of effort and negotiation on her part: given her lower symbolic capital (remember also the Behaviour Lead’s contemptuous
description of her in Chapter VI) and more disadvantaged positioning in middle-class fields, encouraging her child’s adaptation to these while maintaining a connection to the working classes does not seem to be an easy task. Thus, benefiting from social class mix is likely to involve some level of acculturation and abandonment of the family’s habitus of origin (Ingram & Abrahams, 2018).

Paula (W/C, RS) and Julio, her husband, also exemplify the tensions that working-class parents might encounter when participating in the more socially advantaged context of the school. The anxieties they had when first enrolled their daughter at RS are expressed in the following quotation, where they describe their anticipation of the potentially more refined or posh manners of the rest of the parents:

(Julio) I’ll tell you something funny. When we had our first parents’ meeting here at the school, we were worried about how to dress: ‘I’ll dress in a suit’, I said, ‘because I imagine there’s going to be very well-dressed people’. So we chose our best outfits, with a tie and everything. And when we arrived, I realised it wasn’t like I thought [both laugh]

(Paula) It was so funny! ‘You look like you’re going to a wedding’, my colleague said. I brushed and straightened my hair, ironed our jackets… We were perfectly dressed up, ['nos arreglamos aquí de punta y taco'], with my high heels ['poco menos teníamos que sacarnos los zapatos porque el dolor de los pies…']. But then we realised that the effort wasn’t necessary so now we just dress casually ['con ropa de calle']

(Paula and Julio, W/C, RS)

This situation reveals these parents’ initial difficulties in ‘reading’ the ‘rules of the game’ and to identify what ‘respectable bodies’ (Skeggs, 1997, 2004a) at RS look like: they did not have previous experiences of a parents’ meeting at a middle-class school so assumed that a smart dress code was the most appropriate. Even though they told me this while laughing, as if it were a joke, the humorous way of narrating their misfit may be interpreted as a response to mask or redirect the embarrassment that they possibly felt that day (Ingram & Abrahams, 2018), although my data does not allow me to go beyond hypothesis here.

Overall, the cases of Emma (W/C, RS) and Paula and Julio (W/C, RS) illustrate the work involved in developing and/or instilling in their children an embodied cultural capital (e.g., short hair, the right clothes) that allow themselves/their children to participate in (middle-class) fields that would otherwise be restricted to them.
2.2. Perceived benefits for all: Mixing to expand the students’ horizons

As signalled by almost all my interviewees at RS, regardless of their social background, providing their children with a variety of social environments is crucial to allow them to have a broad picture of social realities and be able to appreciate people without regard to their social position. Therefore, instilling an open disposition to social class differences and mixing in the children is expected to actually overcome the relevance of such differences and to ‘transcend’ socioeconomic segregation, at least in the interactional level of conviviality (see Chapter II).

*I didn’t want my children to be raised in a bubble, I wanted them to see other realities […]. Chile is too elitist so they have to know that there are people living in different ways […]. There are neighbourhoods for rich people, for poor people, and usually people don’t mix […] people discriminate too much [‘se hace mucho la diferencia’]. In this life, there is everything and they have to learn to respect everybody* (Sofia, M/C, RS)

Interestingly, interacting and making friends with more disadvantaged students tends to be declared as equally valuable to maintaining bonds with more privileged students:

*[I want my child] to know different realities because in the same way that we have few resources, others have more, but he doesn’t have to discriminate people by what they have, never, nor feel envy towards those who have more… each one has what they have, that’s how it is […] and we have to accept everybody as equals* (Sara, W/C, RS)

The kids learn to not discriminate […] it’s good for them to know that they can’t have everything […], to know that there are kids that have less than them and kids having more than them but they are all equals in the end […]. They have to learn to socialise with everybody […]. I always say to my son, ‘you have to be respectful with everyone, say ‘hello’ to the one sweeping the street and the one that you might feel is more important, even if you don’t know them, because they are people the same as you […]. My son plays tennis at La Catolica [a prestigious sports centre] and at the beginning he felt uncomfortable but I said ‘you don’t have to feel bad: they [affluent children] have more money but they are the same as you. They eat like you do, they sleep like you do, they fight like you do. The only difference is their income’ […]. Children have to be able to meet children with no resources and children who have more, so they can see that life is the same for everybody […] [They have to] always support the poorest ones, the weakest, but also the advantaged ones that tomorrow may have a problem.*
They have to be a good human being, to **be able to help everybody the same way** (Victoria, M/C, RS)

In Chile, the education is so segmented... and I think **that gap has to change** [...]. I think it's good to see everything ['ver de todo'] [...] I think it's good that kids see that one is in a certain **position** because this is what we can have ['es lo que nos alcanza'], what we can do, and there are others who have much less than us, and others that have more [...]. It's good that they **enrich** themselves from these different realities [...] when one remains **distant** both from the ones who have less and the ones who have more, one generates **resentment**. If one learns to live with people who will **always** have more resources and people who have more difficulties, one learns to be more **sympathetic** with the one that doesn’t have too much, but at the same time not to be so **resentful** (Ana, M/C)

In this sense, as in studies on white middle classes in the UK (e.g., Neal & Vincent, 2013; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a), these mothers voice a collective moral stance based on their awareness that social inequalities should not exist and that all human beings should be treated the same. Thus, the importance of inculcating in their children an openness to social class difference and mixing (e.g., respect) or, in other words, ‘egalitarian dispositions’ (Chapter III). These parents’ egalitarian moral stance, I argue, is mediated by Catholicism at the core of RS’s institutional habitus and the importance of charity as a value that does not discriminate by social class (refer back to Chapter V).

The aim of developing in the children a broader view of the social world not only articulates with a collective moral stance (egalitarianism), but with a more individualistic interest associated with the child learning to relate to a variety of people. In this sense, similarly to arguments on multicultural capital (Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011), expanding the children’s worldviews is seen by some parents as a way to enhance their mental and practical flexibility to navigate different social contexts:

*They have to feel in their own flesh that there are different things from one’s own [...]*. As a **formative learning**, it’ll be **useful** for their whole life because having a broad **perspective** of what is around, they can have **their own opinions**. If one lives too **cloistered**, living only one reality and thinking that everybody lives the same reality, they will come to a point when they are older in which they will find **different angles** and they **might be shocked like ‘oh, I never thought it was like this’** (Sara, W/C, RS)
They [children] need to expand their minds, be more plastic, because when one has more tools it's easier to move through different environments, not to be so closed (Ana, M/C, RS).

The search for plasticity is particularly clear in some middle-class parents' accounts, which illustrate the efforts they put into this search in and beyond their children’s school.

In the case of Ana (M/C, RS), providing a variety of social contexts for their children was associated with a more general discourse about the importance of becoming ‘complete’ subjects’, that is, children and future adults who master a range of skills necessary to freely move in a diverse and complex world. Thus, Ana and her husband justify their choice of RS and other out-of-school activities (e.g., English, sports, and music lessons) so that the children could meet a diverse range of people of their age, both from socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds:

My husband had good salary so we could have chosen other kinds of schools […] but we wanted a school with different families, a diverse environment ['un entorno multiple'] […]. I'm interested in them [children] being in more spaces than the school, in having a social circle beyond the school. For example, they play tennis at Providencia Club [a quite wealthy area], and I try to promote friendship with other children going there […] who go to private schools […]. And it’s good that my kids relate to them the same way they do it at the school, that don’t make any difference. For them it's exactly the same thing to play with a kid studying in Jesus school [elite school nearby] as playing with one from RS, or with a kid from a state school [usually poorer] […]. I think it’s good for them to get out of their place and look at things from the outside, from a different perspective (Ana, M/C, RS)

For Sofia (M/C, RS) and her husband Cristian, the pursuit of social diversity is mainly thought to be in the disadvantaged state schools in La Pintana (an extremely poor locality in Santiago), where they work as teachers and sometimes take their children. They appreciate this as a way “to show the poor students at these schools that their reality is not the only one, that they can get out of it” (Sofia, M/C, RS). In exchange, they expect their children to develop an understanding about the differences between their realities. For example, Sofia highlights how her children are now more able to identify and judge ‘bad’ behaviours such as dropping rubbish on the streets, using rude words and being illiterate at 9: “he [son] always asks ‘why are people here are so dirty?’, or on our way there he says ‘mum, look at all that garbage’, and at the
school he’s sometimes surprised by all the rude words that kids say, ‘mum, this kid is very rude [‘ordinario’] [...] or ‘mum, this kid is my age and he doesn’t know how to read’." These parents do not express the fear of contagion of these perceived bad manners, such as their students’ way of speaking, but feel their children are secure in their own (classed) behaviours. "Our students think our children speak weirdly, because they speak well," Cristian says. They do not either fear them being abused or bullied—which is a common middle-class fear regarding very poor (‘flaite’) people—as “the students take good care of them because they know they are the teachers’ children” (Sofia, M/C, RS).

In this regard, going to La Pintana allows their children to interact with and meet poorer children in order to learn to live together with different people, but that does not mean that this learning is supposed to change the children’s own behaviour by means of imitation. In other words, knowing about other realities, in this case, a more disadvantaged one, is supposed to influence the development of a particular disposition, which is the ability to engage with a range of people and to move through different fields, although this is not expected to affect those dispositions already inculcated at home. The parents do not challenge or offer explanations about the ‘othering’ of the poor children (i.e., as rude, dirty, and illiterate) done by their children; they seem to instead share their views and take them for granted. Therefore, the dispositions being developed by ‘the encounter with difference’ are anticipated as being framed within a hierarchy of dispositions where the ruling one—the family habitus—is unchallenged. Knowing the socially disadvantaged ‘others’ seems to be associated then with a charity discourse (i.e., to help them), as well as with the aim of reinforcing their own middle-class family dispositions. In other words, rather than empathy, a sense of superiority is being instilled. In habitus interruptions typology, instilling versatility in these children’s habitus resonates with Ingram and Abrahams’ (2018, see Chapter III) definition of a ‘re-confirmed habitus’, that is, a habitus that rejects the new field (i.e., the very poor schools in La Pintana) so its structures are not internalised.

The fact that the subjectivity of the students in La Pintana is not expected to be internalised might find its roots in the asymmetric relationship that Sofia and Cristian’s children establish with these students. In their role of children of the teachers (who are respected in their respective workplaces) they are representatives of the field of power (Atkinson, 2011; Bourdieu, 1994, see Chapter III) and may have more advantaged positions in that school field. In this context, even friendship with children with ‘bad’ behaviour is seen as possible as long as their children do not develop the same attitudes, that is, as long as they have a habitus formed at home strong enough to be immune from the contagion of adverse dispositions:
“[son] was friend of a kid that used a lot of rude words, but then he realised that he could be his friend without following his game or doing everything he said” (Sofia, M/C, RS).

I argue that, by bringing their children to the aforementioned (socially classed) spaces and producing narratives around who ‘the others’ and ‘us’ are, these parents expect to build flexible and adaptable individuals, that is, what I call a ‘versatile habitus’ in their children.

Echoing understandings of habitus as plural or multi-layered habitus (e.g., Decoteau, 2016; Farrugia & Woodman, 2015; Lahire, 2003; Mouzelis, 2008; Reay 2004 - see Chapter III), I define a versatile habitus as one composed of a variety of coexisting dispositions that enable the individuals to adapt to a broad range of fields. More precisely, it is a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions and, as such, able to adapt itself to different socially classed fields. Such adaptability can hence be understood as a species of cultural capital: not only is the ability of engaging with socioeconomically diverse ‘others’ a moral duty, as argued above, but also a resource that benefits those who possess it by being better ‘players’ in the social space.

The concept of versatile habitus resonates with the ones of ‘reconciled or ‘chameleon’ habitus posed by Nicola Ingram and Jessica Abrahams (Abrahams & Ingram, 2013; Ingram & Abrahams, 2018 - see Chapter III). These refer to an empowering rearticulation of a habitus that has been divided by habitus/field mismatches by understanding the individual as negotiating the structures of different and even contradictory fields, and successfully navigating them (i.e., without misfits or discomfort). I preferred not to adopt these concepts here though, since my data emphasise the role of heterogeneous social encounters (rather than habitus/field mismatch) in structuring the capacity to negotiate different fields. Additionally, the parents’ accounts do not suggest they are envisaging potentially conflicting or painful situations such as the ones that cause a divided habitus.

The interest of these middle-class parents’ at RS in building a versatile habitus in their children resonates with Jackson and Butler’s (2014) research on white middle classes and their strategies of elective belonging, that is, of developing and expressing an attachment to the places they inhabit (see Chapter II). By both avoiding and going to places usually dominated by certain ‘others’, the middle classes in their study were able to both retain their middle-class identity and cultivate a sort of ‘diversity identity’ that distinguishes them from more mainstream middle classes, who only participate in socioeconomically homogeneous spaces.
Aligned with this and other studies (e.g., Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011 - see Chapter II), the cases of Ana and particularly Sofia suggest the existence of middle-class fractions that distinguish themselves in part through their appreciation of the experience of social diversity. In the case of Ana, this also entails horizontally distinguishing from other middle-class people, given the family’s exceptional school choice:

*My husband worked at Universidad de los Andes [university] and I work at Clinica Las Condes [hospital, both workplaces frequented by affluent people], and one of the first things that people ask is which school our children attend […]. When I tell them, nobody knows it […] and they look at me with pity. So it’s a difficult gamble ['apuesta dificil'] as we have the possibility of going to another [private] school, but I really think that has to change […]. My friends tell me ‘you could pay for a better school’ […]. People think that if you don’t study at top [private] schools […] you’re not going to have any opportunities later […]. I don’t think so […]. We are weird amongst our friends* (Ana, M/C, RS)

In Chapter I, I argued that research on the middle classes in Chile supports the existence of middle-class fractions, for instance, according to the localities in which they live (Mac-Lure, Barozet, & Maturana, 2014). Mendez (2008) also identifies differences amongst middle-class fractions in terms of trajectories, identities, projects of the self, and versions of authenticity ('being true to oneself or to one’s origins') which operate as ways of establishing horizontal boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ within the middle-class. I argue that in the cases of Sofia and Ana (M/C, RS) at RS we see that the expectations of developing a versatile habitus link with processes of self-reinforcement (Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005), that is, develop an egalitarian disposition and be open to difference and mixing, without losing the children’s social advantage.

A merely celebratory or romantic portrait of these middle-class parents should be avoided then. As in Reay, Crozier and James’s (2011) study in the UK, these Chilean middle-class families’ egalitarian discourse intersects with a more private interest in which an open and egalitarian attitude to others is also conceived as a means for enriching the self. As Skeggs comments, “the entitlement and access to the resources of making a self with value are central to how the middle class is formed: they have access to others’ culture as a resource in their own self-making” (2004a: 177). This resonates with Reay and colleagues’ (2011) argument around the concept of ‘multicultural capital’ (see Chapter II) in that ‘others’ (here, socially classed others) become a source to accrue value for themselves.
Thus, engaging in diverse social relationships is expected by my parent respondents to enable their children to freely move in a highly differentiated society, so that their participation in different fields is mostly moulded by their individual preferences and choices, rather than by structural conditionings. In this sense, these middle-class parents’ accounts suggest their acceptance of current inequalities rather than an attempt to challenge them. Therefore, developing a versatile habitus may be interpreted as a subtle mechanism of social reproduction. Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) already argued that, in late capitalism, “not one but two species of capital now give access to positions of power, define the structure of social space, and govern the life chances and trajectories of groups and individuals: economic capital and cultural capital” (foreword: x). I would add to this: not only is an institutionalised cultural capital necessary, but also an embodied one: neither the possession of economic capital nor the acquisition of educational credentials seem to be enough on their own to secure a favourable social position. And this is something these middle-class parents seem to acknowledge.

Moreover, Sara’s (W/C, RS), Victoria’s (M/C, RS) and Ana’s (M/C, RS) quotes at the beginning of this section suggest the lack of problematisation about the social conditions of inequality: these seem to be rather taken for granted, as if necessity were “the result of a capricious fortune of the times that people were forced to live […] the result of fate” (Tiramonti & Ziegler, 2008: 131, my translation). According to this view, “people in need, rather than the bearer of rights, become recipients of social assistance” (Tiramonti & Ziegler, 2008: 131, my translation), revealing a non-relational understanding of society, as the positions of the ‘others’ (the working classes) are not seen as related to the position of ‘us’ (the middle classes). Therefore, affluence is not problematised. In other words, the working on the maintenance of their own advantage is not regarded as contradictory to transcending disadvantage (see Section 2.1). The latter is instead conceived as a private responsibility to help disadvantaged individuals with whom one has direct contact, instead of a public duty to transcend segregation and privilege (a personal trouble instead of a public issue, in Wright Mills’ words (1967)). In this sense, even though there is criticism of social segregation, transcending it seems to be located only on an interactional level, which is not necessarily expected to resonate in changes to the wider social structure.

3. Inti School

3.1. Perceived benefits for the working classes?
Unlike RS, my parent participants at IS do not explicitly identify benefits of social class mix as especially for working-class students, which I argue is related to the fact that socioeconomic disadvantage is not clear to most of them, given the perception of a similarity in this sense. Jessica (W/C, IS) maintains that “I don’t see many socioeconomic differences” and Gabriel (W/C, IS) that “I think they [parents] are all the same… there’s no difference in terms of one having more money than the other.” Amongst middle-class participants, Nicolas (M/C, IS) says that “there aren’t low-income people” and David (M/C, IS) notes “I haven’t seen people from slums and I haven’t seen the other extreme at the top either.” Linked with the last quote, some middle-class interviewees tend to identify the whole school’s population as middle class. For example:

> One does a quick reading of their behaviours, their cars […]. And one feels one is in a lower middle position [‘mediana baja’] and that the others are the same. The environment is homogenous (Samuel, M/C, IS)

> I don’t think that [social differences] are very evident […]. They aren’t visible, or at least I don’t pay attention […]. I don’t see much of that diversity daily, for example, by the clothes people wear. In general, the children are dressed very simply [‘sencillo’] […], the parents don’t send them with latest generation phones… Maybe it’s me who is too enclosed in my group but… I think everybody lives in The Heath [locality where IS is] or Santiago Centro [nearby locality]. We’re all kind of middle class, but there might be people who have more or less money, or who are having some economic constraints at the moment [‘pasando por un mal momento’] (Monica, M/C, IS)

These statements suggest, then, that as long as the two stereotypical social class extremes are not present at the school—the ‘flaite’ (see Chapter V) at the bottom and the ‘cuico’ (Chilean slang term similar to posh) at the top—the interviewees tend to perceive its population as broadly homogeneous. This is aligned to the Chileans’ tendency to self-define as middle class as noted in Chapter I, and suggests not only a certain unawareness of the social composition of the school (possibly due to its relatively recent foundation), but also of the country’s social stratification. It is also important to consider that what the parents declare might be influenced by what they feel able to express, and the possible awkwardness they feel about identifying socioeconomic differences (Sayer, 2005). For example, like Monica (M/C, IS) above, David (M/C, IS) says: “I’ve never been concerned with noticing the kind of car the children arrive in or the clothes they are wearing.” Possibly, there is a desirability of not admitting to noticing material or embodied differences in terms of social class, as if this were an indicator of discriminatory attitudes, which may be interpreted as discursive work to present themselves
as egalitarians. As in Vincent and colleagues’ (2008) study in the UK, my middle-class participants generally wished to be unsurprised by difference.

However, there are very distinctive characteristics that these middle-class parents identify as valuable about themselves and which not only reveal subtle social class distinctions, but also an assumed socially classed hierarchy of worth (Amin, 2013), with the most advantaged families’ cultural capital bearing the most value. This is aligned to the positive views expressed by IS’s members of staff regarding the ‘alternative’ (middle-class) families at the school (Chapter VI).

For instance, Samuel (M/C, IS), despite speaking about himself as a low-income musician, articulates a set of unique middle-class tastes that distinguish his family from other families at the school, who are more similar to “most of the population”:

*I can tell there are different lifestyles amongst families at the school. An example is to do with food. We usually bring fruits and natural stuff to the kids’ gatherings, while others bring crisps and soft drinks [...]. Also, we don’t watch TV. We’ve only got it for watching movies [...]. We also follow an anthroposophical medicine, similar to homeopathy, which is very expensive but luckily my daughter is very healthy [...]. These are just details but they make a difference [...]. Most of the population watch TV, go to McDonalds (Samuel, M/C, IS)*

Thus, the food they eat (vegan), the kind of medicine they use (anthroposophy), and limited use of the television (“only for movies”) are examples of how the way the family embodies a particular middle-class habitus by accessing particular services and goods that, in Chile, are not only unusual but restricted to socially advantaged people. For example, despite veganism becoming trendy in Chile, it is still mostly restricted to the middle classes, in that vegan products tend to be much more expensive and less likely to be found in ordinary shops. In this sense, veganism in the country constitutes a strong marker of high embodied cultural capital and social class privilege (O’Connell, 2010; Vincent et, al., 2012b; Bourdieu, 1984a). Following Mendez and Gayo, I contend that Samuel’s case illustrates how middle-class reproduction is not limited “to the accumulation of economic resources” but is also shaped by the accumulation of “various resources, in the long run and in everyday life” (2018: 2), such as the cultivation of these very distinctive habits.

Therefore, despite the absence of overt accounts on the benefits of school mix for working-class students (and their parents), the existence of a (middle-class) hierarchy of worth
suggests that both the staff (Chapter V) and parent participants assume that more disadvantaged families should adopt those habits considered to be of worth.

The conflicting situation recounted by Jessica (W/C, RS) below illustrates that this asymmetry and the process of adaptation to a mostly middle-class field is not exempt from discomfort. Moreover, she explains the mismatch between her family’s eating habits and those of the majority of the families at IS by referring to age differences rather than to social class patterns, illustrating that such discomfort is felt as emotionally conflicting, and difficult to transcend (“it’s a problem,” “I don’t know what to bring”):

_I don’t understand this vegan thing very well [...]. Everybody here is vegan, but my children eat whatever you give them ['come de todo'] [...]. They [other parents] are all too young, I’m the oldest there [45] [...]. They bring things that are new to me, for example, humus, and I don’t know what it is [...]. So for me bringing food for gatherings is a problem 'cause... I’d bring biscuits but not all of the kids eat those [...] so sometimes I don’t know what to bring. Not all of them drink juice or soft drinks either [...] which is what one is used to. Now the youth is used to natural juices and that kind of stuff (Jessica, W/C, IS)_

The fact that Jessica does not seem to notice that so-called healthy eating habits of the other families are not individual tastes but social dispositions anchored in a positional advantage creates her sense that there might be something wrong with her (as an individual) and her food preferences. This is a phenomenon already explained by Bourdieu: “because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, [cultural capital] is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, that is, to be unrecognised as capital recognised as legitimate competence” (1986: 18, see Chapter III). Therefore, it is not surprising that the challenges and discomfort engendered by Jessica’s lower economic capital are more easily accepted as a structural barrier and, as such, articulated as something beyond her control (“It’s not always possible to contribute”):

_The kids like to bring their stuff, show that they have higher spending power… phones, the latest technology. And there are parents who can’t afford that, like me. My daughter wants a phone but I don’t want her to have one yet, and I can’t afford it [...]. My daughter’s classmate acts as if she [classmate] were from a higher social class ['es muy estirada'] [...] she’s always fashionable [...] but I can’t dress [my daughter] with the latest fashion [...]. I dress the children with second-hand clothes, I can’t afford new clothes [...]. And the mother of this girl is a social climber ['estirada']. When we have to_
buy toiletries for the school tasks she’s like “we have to buy this brand,” and creates conflicts with other parents because of that [...]. I think all products are useful, not because of their brand [...]. Conviviality [‘convivencia’] amongst parents is complicated [...]. Now they are arguing because they say that not all the parents contribute the same when there are these school activities. But it’s not always possible to contribute, not because one doesn’t want to, it’s just that sometimes it’s not possible, due to budget restrictions (Jessica, W/C, IS)

3.2. Perceived benefits for all: Mixing to expand the students’ horizons

All the parent participants at IS express strong views on the value of the school’s inclusion of students diagnosed with SEN, seeing it as important that their children learn to respect them and engage with others in a natural way: “My children have learnt to relate to their classmates with Asperger syndrome, to play with them,” Jessica (W/C, IS) says, while Rosa (M/C, IS) states that “for my son, inclusion is something very normal.” Socioeconomic differences, in turn, appear to be appreciated in a more general way, as a less concrete and visible element but also important, along with other kinds of diversity (i.e., family composition), to illustrate the non-elitist condition of the school. In particular, interviewees at IS, like those at RS, tend to expect that engaging with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds will enable their children to accept others as equals and not discriminate: “we’re all equals, the ones who have more money and the ones who have less” (Gabriel, W/C, IS), so “we have to accept people without discriminating” (Maria, M/C, IS). School mix, then, is seen by these parents as a way to develop egalitarian dispositions (see Section 2.2. above) that enable the students to learn to live in a broader social world, composed of a heterogeneity of people.

I believe that the world is diverse, so the school gives the children the possibility to relate to a diverse micro-world, as a preparation for the diverse macro-world in the future. It’s an excellent life learning in terms of tolerance, adaptation, companionship/togetherness [‘compañerismo’], and support [...]. For him [son], diversity is naturalised (Monica, M/C, IS)

This observation is aligned with the literature on multiculturalism and social encounters (Amin, 2002; Wilson, 2012 - see Chapter II), according to which the school might be an important source of social engagement and conviviality amongst different people. In fact, IS is regarded, particularly by the middle-class parents—who tend to provide more details about this—as a key valuable public space, providing contact with different people beyond the private space of the home. As Rosa (M/C, IS) says:
Here the children live the reality [...] they learn that by learning about the other. For this, there have to be spaces where we are all together... spaces for the community. We have to live that and don’t be like ‘ah, these people are this way’ without even meeting them (Rosa, M/C, IS)

The role of schools as public spaces to learn to engage with diversity seems to be especially relevant given the increasing privatisation of public life in Santiago, as suggested by Maria: “When the children are in very private schools, they don’t see the reality of their environment. In the past, one played in the streets but now the kids don’t go out, they mostly play at home or at the school with their friends” (Maria, M/C, IS). In this sense, as Samuel (M/C, IS) suggests, it is important to expand the children’s horizons by pushing them to go beyond their comfort zone and experience discomfort in social interactions (also in Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a): “If it were up to me, I’d prefer she [daughter] had classmates more like her, my friends’ sons and daughters, for example. But it’s also important that she sees the other side of life” (Samuel, M/C, IS).

As at RS, the parent respondents at IS not only express a collective moral drive in relation to instilling in their children an egalitarian openness to social class difference and mixing. As Monica’s (M/C, IS) quote above indicates, these parents also recognise that such openness is a skill to be cultivated in the children so they can be a better ‘players’ in the social space. Thus, having the capacity to engage with diverse people is considered to be a tool to successfully live in current society:

When you educate your children to meet different people from when they are little, then they grow up not being narrow-minded (Nicolas, M/C, IS)

The school integrates kids from different economic and social groups, or with different illnesses [...]. And that’s what I like: that the children interact with different sorts of kids so when they are older they can deal with different types of people (Jessica, W/C, IS)

These parents’ attempt to expand their children’s horizons is linked with the value they attribute to IS’s holistic education, that is, to an understanding of education as wider than training academic knowledge and skills in the areas assessed by the national standardised test. This appreciation of holistic education is particularly clear in my middle-class interviewees, who emphasise that they want their children to become rounded subjects, meaning children and
future adults who master a range of tools necessary to freely move in a diverse and complex world according to their interests. For example, Monica (M/C, IS) states that:

*At this school, the children are understood as a whole, as complete human beings. They’re both physical bodies but intellectual beings [...]. That’s important because I want him [son] to know that his voice counts; that he has the capacity to do whatever he wants, that there are infinite things he can do with his body, his brain, his hands* (Monica, M/C, IS)

In this scenario, openness to the existing diversity of people, along with the development of the actual ability to relate to such diversity, is conceived as one amongst other aspects of a holistic education. Rosa’s quote below illustrates this very clearly, pointing to the link between the children’s enrichment with a variety of life skills and their self-confidence to freely move through different world settings. In this sense, openness to difference and mixing is framed in a broader ideal of openness to ‘the real world’ and the assumption that this empowers individuals:

*In other schools the education is way too basic [...] too focused on learning Maths and Language [...]. I believe the most helpful tools for the kids’ future are the ones that help them to be open to the real world. At the school, they have to have different kinds of activities [...]. They have to learn to relate to other kinds of people. They need tools to develop confidence and know how to relate and know what’s going on in your world. It’s not good to be enclosed [...] [so] his world is open to everything, so he does whatever he wants and doesn’t feel that if he has low marks he can’t get into university [...]. In other schools, kids are very repressed, so they aren’t prepared for that freedom and get out of control when they have it [*se desborda todo*]“* (Rosa, M/C, IS)

Thus, equipping her son with skills and knowledge to access university is perceived by Rosa as only one possibility amongst others. Similarly, coexisting with others and understanding that the world is socially stratified in more or less advantaged positions, is signified, in David’s (M/C) account, as beneficial to inculcate in his son a sense of what he wants to achieve:

*[Having friends from different socioeconomic backgrounds] can help my son to see the horizon, to see the extremes [in society] [...]. It’s important that he has a notion of existing differences [...]. It’s necessary to relate to people in extreme economic*
situations [...] and it’s good that he knows that society is made up this way [...]. From this, he can decide what he wants to do in the future (David, M/C, IS)

These parents’ accounts suggest, then, that the expected openness and egalitarian disposition towards difference and mixing is not only valued in itself, as a moral imperative with collective considerations, that is, contributing to conviviality. Such a disposition is also valued as potentially contributing to the development in the children of a versatile habitus (see previous section) that works as an embodied cultural capital (i.e., the ability to relate to diversity). Having a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions may allow them to gain favourable positions in whatever field they choose to participate in (e.g., university). Rosa (M/C, IS) is especially clear in expressing how such diverse experiences, when embodied, equip the children for exercising liberty and the sovereignty of the self, with the school being an important ally in building skilful individuals able to be whatever they want to be. That is, to be agents in the construction of their personhood. This follows the idea of the ‘reflexive self’, that is, an individual who is not free or able to escape structural conditionings, but who can decide how to relate to them by experiencing the diversity of social relations and reflecting upon the risks that surround the self (Beck, 1992).

The value attributed to such freedom for the children to successfully move through different fields is particularly noticeable amongst middle-class participants. For Jessica (W/C, IS) and Gabriel (W/C, IS), instead, it was subordinated to the more urgent needs, specifically, the children’s access to higher education, understood as the most important guarantee for having a more favourable socioeconomic situation. For example, Jessica expresses that she wants her children:

[…] to do whatever they want but after having a profession. That’s the only thing I ask them. I’ve always told them, ‘I don’t want you to be short of money [‘que anden al 3 y al 4’] like I am’. I don’t want them to be unable to have what they need [‘no quiero que les falte nada’] […]. I don’t mind what they study but they have to have a profession to protect themselves [‘defenderse’] […]. For that reason, I opened a savings account for them, so they can then study at university (Jessica, W/C, IS)

These findings need to be interpreted in the broader context of the study. The provision of holistic education in Chile is restricted to a reduced number of alternative private schools (e.g., Warldorf and Montessori, which are not recognised by the state), which are located in wealthy localities of Santiago, such as The Hills (where RS is), and charge very expensive fees. Thus, these schools can only be accessed by wealthy members of an alternative middle class who
are “not posh ['cuico'] but are better positioned and earn more than 1 million pesos \(<$1,000,000>\) a month” as (Rosa, M/C, IS). In this context, IS is an affordable option to my low-income middle-class participants: “We had a very complicated choice because we don’t have the economic resources for paying a Waldorf or Montessori education, but the rest of the educational offer was very homogeneous. Luckily, we found this school,” Samuel (M/C, IS) says. Similarly, Rosa defines the school as “the oasis of The Heath” meaning that, despite its alternative educational project, “it is not private nor elitist” as “there are many artists, actors… people who are in a more culturally open stance, who have a wider social awareness, but don’t have much money to spend.”

In this sense, as Rosa’s following quote illustrates very clearly, I argue that IS allows the materialisation of some middle-class parents’ attempt to horizontally distinguish themselves from a middle-class fraction that is situated very close to them—that is, in Rosa’s own family—but from which they trace a distance, not only in terms of economic capital but also politically:

\[
\text{If this school were private it would be elitist, since we wouldn’t be able to pay [...]}. \\
\text{Personally, I won’t pay it because I believe I don’t have to pay for my child to be educated and because I don’t have another alternative [...]}. \text{So other people will arrive [...]}. \text{For example, my mum works at the Ministry of Culture ['Consejo de la Cultura'], where I usually go to sell bread, and there are two colleagues of hers who have been trying to enrol their children here for two years. And they don’t earn $500,000, they earn much more} \ (Rosa, M/C, IS)
\]

As at RS, I argue that the intersection between collective and private interests around the children’s development of egalitarian dispositions warns of the need to avoid a romanticised interpretation of egalitarian middle-class parents as pushing towards overcoming social inequalities. However, at IS these parents’ criticism of the Chilean social structure is more evident than at RS, particularly in Rosa’s and David’s accounts. They tend to highlight the role played by the elite or more advantaged middle class—from which they distance themselves—in maintaining such inequality. In this sense, there is a clearer relational view of social segregation compared to RS, supported in the delegitimisation of wealth and the ideal of social change towards a more egalitarian society:

---
88 Equivalent to 1,000 pounds, approximately. According to CASEN (see Glossary), the average individual job income in Chile is, $516,892 monthly and only the highest decile of the population earns more than $1,000,000 ($1,532,768). The decile immediately below earns $665,727 per month on average (CASEN, 2017). In: http://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/casen-multidimensional/casen/docs/Resultados_trabajo_Casen_2017.pdf
Sadly, Chile is a very classist country [...] mostly depending on your income [...] your cultural capital doesn’t really define whether you’ll be saved or not, if you are or not [‘eres o no eres’] [...] . So people want to have an expensive car, or live in a better neighbourhood so they can be seen, treated better [‘tener major trato que si vives en Cerro Navia’] [...] . I feel very angry when people, the media, don’t know how to interpret social protests such as the student protests [...] . They only focus on the problems when they march [i.e., destruction of public and private property by specific anarchist groups] [...] . But nobody asks them why they’re doing that, what the students think about the system [...] . The established economic system has to change because it’s too competitive, that’s how our children are being raised: to compete [...] . And it’s really sad to see how many parents get huge debts and end up almost going into bankruptcy [see Chapter I] to pay their children’s university, thinking that that would allow them to have a good life, but the truth is that it’s not enough to go to any university, whether an elite institution or not [‘la universidad Juan Pérez o Don Lucho no son lo mismo que la Universidad de Chile o Católica’] (David, M/C, IS)

The situation in this country is dramatic, it’s really sad [...] . This world is upside down, there’s almost no equity [...] . I don’t understand how it can be expected that we raise good people [‘personas de bien’] when the parents can’t spend time with their children because they work too much and earn too little [...] . In this country, if you’re not a professional, you don’t have a good job… and not only a professional, you have to have studied at Universidad Católica or Universidad de Chile [the two most prestigious universities in Chile] [...] . And if your family has money, you’ll have more opportunities to go to university [...] . Some parents pay even three times for their children’s universities [when they change programmes] [...] . And I feel really sad that my son gets that idea but he has to understand that, if you have less money, you’ll have to put in more effort, be more patient to achieve what you want [...] . The system will change in the future [‘en algun momento esta huevá va a cambiar’ [...] . The ideal would be that we all earned an amount that allow us to live well [...] . We all have the right to be educated, the right to health [...] . But in the meantime he [son] has to understand that this is the way the system works: you finish school and you have a mark and you have to take the PSU [university admission test] [...] . If at some point he tells me that he wants to go to university, I’ll try to enrol him in an academically-oriented secondary school [Liceo de Aplicaciones] (Rosa, M/C, IS)
The last lines of Rosa’s extract of interview evince—as in that of Ana at RS—the limits for radical criticism of social inequality, namely, the reasonable (Bourdieu, 1990b) acknowledgement that her son’s future happiness depends on having the ‘right’ dispositions and capitals—particularly an academically-oriented cultural capital—to successfully engage with the rules of a competitive educational market. The same is expressed by Monica in relation to the role of a more standard education (M/C):

*If he [son] tells me that he wants to be an engineer, or that he wants to go to university, OK, I'll think of a school more focused on academic performance and scores. I'd feel sad if in the future he doesn't have the tools for what he wants to do because he studied in a school that was too alternative* (Monica, M/C, IS)

4. Ambivalent mixophilia

To sum up, the findings in this chapter suggest that there is ambivalence in the parents’ dispositions towards social class difference and mixing. First, in sections 2.1. and 3.1., I showed that the mixophilia expressed by some working-class parents at RS and IS is entangled with tensions and felt pressures linked with the fact of mixing with socially advantaged people. This, since they have to somehow adapt their embodied cultural capital to access the benefits of a middle-class field.

As argued by Bourdieu (e.g. Bourdieu, 1994; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, 1990), it is not only the working-class families’ lack of economic capital that explains their educational failure, but also their possession of cultural capitals that are different from the dominant (middle-class) ones, that is, the ones taken for granted as valuable in the educational fields: familiarity with the curriculum content being assessed, showing ‘appropriate’ behaviours in the classroom, having books at home, and parents who have succeeded in the educational system (and know how to encourage their children do so) are just a few examples of the dominant culture. As Diane Reay states, “[w]ithin the educational system all the authority remains vested in the middle classes. Not only do they run the system, the system itself is one which valorises middle- rather than working-class cultural capital” (2001: 334). The meritocratic discourse underpinning education in neoliberal countries such as Chile presents the acquisition of formal cultural capital (i.e., educational credentials) as if it were an objective mechanism (i.e., based on unbiased tests) that allows the legitimate allocation of people to differential social positions as a result of their talent and effort. However, there is another sort of cultural capital, one anchored in social class, that is required to succeed on the educational path, namely, the embodied dispositions that allow the classification of a person as one of ‘us’ (Bourdieu, 1996).
The alleged problematic relationship between working-class cultural capital and academic success has been understood by sociological research (e.g., Ingram, 2014; Lawler, 2000; Reay, 2001, 2017, 2018; Skeggs, 2004a; Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008) as shaped by the well-established representation of ‘working-class’ as a pathological and deficient identity. Thus, educational achievement and social mobility require escape from such identity: “the poor [are seen] only as a measure of what they lack” (Reay, 2001: 335). For example, in her study in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Ingram argues that those working-class boys “who have experienced ‘failure’ often internalise a culture of resistance to schooling as a means of maintaining their local identity, whereas the academically successful boys often become ambivalent to or resist the local identity as a means of promoting success” (2009: 422). Therefore, in order to gain favourable positions in the school field, Ingram argues that this academically successful group of students have gone through a process of acculturation that involves the repression of their working-class habitus. Applying Bourdieu’s terms, Ingram interprets this phenomenon as ‘symbolic violence’: “[it is] an example of pedagogic action validating middle-class norms and simultaneously invalidating the norms of the working class […] through discourse on ‘appropriate’ language, behaviour and taste” (2009: 431-432) (see also Kulz, 2017).

Such a portrait is aligned with a usual representation of the working-class as divided into two fractions: the rough/hard-living/undeserving and the respectable/settled/deserving ones (Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008). Drawing on a ‘social hierarchy of worth’ (Amin, 2013), people within the first category are pictured as outsiders to mainstream society and as rejecting commonly accepted values. They are usually understood as passive, poor ‘others’: “seen as morally culpable, choosing, either passively or actively, to behave in ways that promote poverty and disorder, of having a deficit culture which does not emphasise self-reliance, the work ethic, or responsibility to either self or society” (Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008: 64). In contrast, ‘the respectable poor’ are seen as “aspirational, hardworking, and law abiding” (p. 64) and, as a result, compatible with a meritocratic discourse and suitable for attracting social recognition (symbolic capital) within the (middle-classed) public life (that is, the field of power). According to Lawler (2005), this working-class fraction can be understood as capable of being

---

89 In order to acknowledge the social, economic and material conditions of living at the basis of these stereotyped behaviours, Vincent, Ball, and Braun (2008) prefer, respectively, the distinction between ‘struggling to cope’ and ‘managing to cope’ working classes, the first “using all their agency in dealing with the demands of daily life” (p. 71) and the second being relatively secure and able to exercise agency strategically, although not always successful in moving beyond their structural constraints.
absorbed into the middle classes, which, in Castillo and colleagues’ words, affects the possibilities for transforming the whole social structure into a more equitable one:

“the mobiliser potential associated with belonging to a social class is affected by the individuals’ capacity for recognising their position in the social structure. Thus, people of low status who overestimate their social position may have less potential to undertake or support redistributive initiatives, which is particularly important in very unequal societies” (Castillo, Miranda, & Cabib, 2013: 156)

In sections 2.2. and 3.2. I analysed findings revealing a second kind of ambivalence in the parents’ dispositions towards social class difference and mixing, namely, the combination of collective and private interests involved in their willingness for their children to mix. This combination of interests suggests a subjectivity that is not only informed by arguments about the desperate search for positional advantage and the fear of falling (as in Aarseth’s (2018) financial middle-class’ parents). Instead, such subjectivity is also informed by an interest in their children’s emotional development and wellbeing (e.g., feeling comfortable with different people, spaces, and activities) and their constitution as subjects with values. This emphasis is aligned with previous research in Chile where happiness and cultural enrichment of the children appear to be a priority for the upper-middle class since it would “allow them to be successful in the field in which they decide to participate. Success is understood here as the freedom to decide their own project of life” (Gubbins, 2014: 1081, my translation).

Moreover, amongst my middle-class participants, being open to diversity is signified as drawing boundaries between themselves and others within the same broad class grouping. Specifically, such boundary drawing contributes to a sense of identity (i.e., I am like this and not like that) shaped by the value of feeling at ease in contexts of diversity, which distinguishes them from more mainstream middle-class fractions who do not feel at ease surrounded by ‘others’ (Reay, Crozier, James, Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson & Beedell, 2008). However, cases such as those of Ana (M/C) at RS, and Rosa (M/C) at IS illustrate that these middle-class parents—like their ‘mainstream’ counterparts—are also individualistically playing the educational market and, in that context, they are creating the conditions for the children to invest in their self-development.

This analysis warns of the need to avoid a romanticised interpretation of these egalitarian middle-class parents as overcoming social inequalities: as neoliberal subjects, these parents are effective players in the educational field, identifying the rules of the (competitive) educational game (e.g., good performance in national standardised tests) and aiming to
provide their children with the right tools to make the most of them and reproduce their middle classness (Ball, 2003; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005).

The existence of a double-sided discourse amongst these middle-class parents resonates with Mendez (2008) and Reay and colleagues’ (2011) arguments on the ambivalence of White middle-class identities in a neoliberal age: both a transformative and a reproductive drive in relation to social inequalities cohabitate within my interviewees’ egalitarian discourse. Reay and colleagues describe their participants as Janus middle-classes as they were “looking both ways; defensively inwards, to varying degrees deploying strategies for protecting their investments of capital and their children’s futures, but also looking outwards, towards otherness, tentatively recognising a value in difference that is more than just tokenistic” (2011: 165). In other words, these families expressed, “on the one hand, an appropriating desire for control and advantage, and on the other an open receptivity that promises greater equality and valuing” (Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011: 164).

There are some particularities though in the ways in which such ambivalent or double-sided discourse is played out by the parents at each school. Social inequalities and the existence of advantaged groups are more clearly criticised amongst middle-class parents at IS than at RS. Rosa (M/C, IS) and David’s (M/C, IS) accounts are good examples of this, which I argue is related to the alternative approach of the school and the middle-class parents’ expression of progressive political views, that is, an inclination towards social change based on social justice (see Chapter IV). At RS, in contrast, accounts such as those of Victoria (M/C, RS) and Ana (M/C, RS) (and also Sara, a working-class mother) suggest the lack of problematisation of the social conditions of inequality and a non-relational understanding of this: the existence of social advantage is not regarded as a cause of disadvantage. Thus, as commented by Ana, resentment towards wealthy people is not seen as legitimate. I argue that this view is supported by these parents’ Catholic beliefs and the importance they attribute to the value of charity, as an imperative to ‘love one’s neighbour’ (see Chapter IV).

In the end, however, all parents at both schools express neoliberal attitudes, acknowledging the restrictions for a radical criticism of social inequality and the educational market, and their moral duty to provide their children with the conditions to live as best as possible in an unequal world. This is also expressed by my working-class respondents, whose attempts to build respectability for their children and themselves through school mix were oriented to be better equipped to ‘play the game’. I understand neoliberalism “as a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are organised around a certain imagination of the ‘market’ as a basis for ‘the universalisation of market-based social relations”
Thus, neoliberalism entails particular relations between the state and the economy; it also entails the construction of particular subjectivities, which are usually described by the literature as highly moulded by self-development and enterprise, and the ability to adapt to rapid changes in the markets (e.g., Türken, Nafstad, Blakar, & Roen, 2016; Walkerdine, 2003). As described by Türken and colleagues, the neoliberal subject

“is increasingly construed as a free, autonomous, individualized, self-regulating actor understood as a source of capital; as human capital […] Within this conceptualization, the neoliberal subject is expected to act to increase her value […] [N]eoliberalism demands a constant reworking of the self (Walkerdine, 2006) through ‘lifelong learning’; a continual self-improvement to fit the demands of the advanced liberal society, often in terms of a flexible and unstable market (Olssen, 2006)” (Türken, Nafstad, Blakar, & Roen, 2016: 34)

I argue, then, that these middle-class participants’ egalitarian dispositions to social class difference and mixing can be understood as articulated, in IS, as a progressive neoliberalism, meaning the inclination towards social justice and overcoming social inequalities—supported by these families’ progressive political views (Chapter IV)—along with the acceptance of these inequalities and a strategic positioning within them. At RS, in turn, the middle-class participants’ egalitarian dispositions articulate with a charitable neoliberalism, that is, the willingness to love and help ‘one’s neighbour’ regardless of their social origin—supported by these families’ Catholic beliefs and the importance attributed to the value of charity (Chapter IV)—along with the acceptance of these inequalities and a strategic positioning within them. These findings, then, suggest interesting nuances to understand the meanings of neoliberal subjectivities in the Chilean school context, by uncovering the way in which collective and private interests intertwine in the parents’ openness to social class mix and mixing.

The findings also suggest nuances to the understandings of the links between school mix and social inequalities, relativising that social diversity within the schools will necessarily contribute to social cohesion, an idea assumed by the Inclusion Law (see Chapter I). Thus, the data presented here reinforce those in Chapter VI, warning of the importance of not naively assuming the transformative potential of egalitarianism, particularly amongst egalitarian middle classes. In fact, my middle-class participants express having a high sense of entitlement and being less challenged and open to be changed by difference and mixing processes, consequently being able to retain their ‘authenticity’. In contrast, for my working-class participants, being changed by difference is an imperative. Benefiting from school mix
and accruing value from the ‘other’, then, is a process that requires more visible efforts and adaptation. As Reay puts it:

“The dialectical confrontation’, which Bourdieu describes between habitus and field, leads, for the middle classes in multiethnic working class fields, to a reinforcement of originary habitus while for working class students in the middle class field of higher education habitus is ‘being restructured, transformed in its makeup by the pressure of the objectives structures’ (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 47). Both the white middle class families and the working class students have incorporated the principles of vision and division constitutive of the dominant social order (Bourdieu, 2000), and as a consequence the middle classes feel they have little if anything to learn from the working classes” (Reay, 2015b: 175)

5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have argued that the parent participants’ mixophilous attitudes towards social class difference and mixing are supported by two kinds of expected benefits from school mix.

First (section 2.1.), I showed that there is a common belief across the working- and middle-class parents I interviewed at RS regarding the benefits of school mix with middle-class families for the most disadvantaged students, in order to improve their social and cultural capital and thus open up better future opportunities. Nevertheless, the accounts of Emma and Paula (working-class mothers) suggest nuances to these expected benefits, by illustrating that participating in middle-class fields involves important challenges requiring them to adapt their/their children’s dispositions and develop the ‘right’ embodied cultural capital (e.g., haircuts and ways of dressing).

The perception of school mix as having particular benefits for disadvantaged students is not present amongst my interviewees at IS (Section 3.1.). However, the account of Jessica (working-class mother who struggles with the other families’ eating habits, amongst other issues) is aligned with those of Emma and Paula at RS regarding the pressures she experienced given her lower economic capital and undervalued cultural capital, compared to the middle-class majority at the school. Moreover, the tensions Jessica experiences in relation to her cultural capital seem to be even stronger and more conflicting.

In sections 2.2. and 3.2. I showed that the parent respondents at both schools are generally able to identify benefits of social mix for all the students, regardless of their social class. These
benefits refer to the expansion of their horizons given the encounter with a multiplicity of people, which is valued in order to develop ‘egalitarian dispositions’. I understand egalitarian dispositions as defining values and attitudes towards social class difference and mixing based on the commitment to equality across human beings (e.g., mutual respect). Egalitarian dispositions are also regarded as leading to the development of what I interpret as a ‘versatile habitus’, that is, a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions and, as such, able to adapt itself to different socially classed fields. Therefore, developing egalitarian dispositions in the children is appreciated by the respondent parents in an apparently contradictory way: on the one hand, from a collective moral and public stance (ethical dispositions, in terms of Sayer (2010), see Chapter III), due to the value of these dispositions for promoting conviviality and an appreciation of equality amongst human beings and, on the other, as an individual and valuable cultural capital to better adapt to the world, revealing a more private and individualist stance, which I interpret as expressing neoliberal attitudes (i.e., to provide their children with the conditions to live as best as possible in an unequal world).

In Section 4, I interpret previous findings in the chapter as revealing ambivalent dispositions towards social class difference and mixing, which link with the constitution of particular social class fractions. First, the working-class parents’ accounts suggest that the possible benefits of school mix and mixing are mediated by tensions and the emotional labour involved in adapting to mostly middle-class fields and building themselves as a ‘respectable’ working class. Second, the respondents’ dispositions towards social class difference and mixing reveal both collective and private (which I interpret as neoliberal) interests associated with their children’s engagement with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The way this ambivalence is manifested amongst middle-class parents in each school presents some particularities. At IS, the participants were inclined towards social justice and overcoming social inequalities, as well as towards the acceptance of these inequalities and a strategic positioning within them (‘progressive neoliberalism’). At RS, the respondents express the willingness to ‘help one’s neighbour’ regardless of their social origin, as well as the acceptance of these inequalities and a strategic positioning within them (‘charitable neoliberalism’).

In the next Chapter (VIII), I add more nuances to the parent respondents’ mixophilous dispositions by exploring their perceptions regarding who the ‘others’ at the school are and how they respond to them.
Chapter VIII. The parents’ boundaries for social class difference and mixing

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the boundaries to social class difference and mixing that mediate the parents’ mixophilia presented in the previous chapter. More specifically, I explore how the parents at Rodriguez School (RS, in Section 2) and Inti School (IS, in Section 3) define whether social class difference and mixing is valuable or not.

I argue that notwithstanding their appreciation of the encounter with social class difference, my participants’ openness to it is not unconditional. Instead, they express clear criteria to identify the ‘others’ they want to mix with and distinguish them from the ones they want to avoid. Doing so based on an evaluation of their behaviours and attitudes is seen as a more legitimate way than making judgements based on their economic capital and educational credentials, and, as such, remains compatible with the moral duty of openness.

Findings in both schools are strongly aligned in this regard and reveal my interviewees' fears of certain ‘others’, including both students and parents. One the one hand, fear of physical or psychological aggression (e.g., bullying) and, on the other, fear of contagion, that is, that their children adopt manners considered to be detrimental (e.g., rude words). Whereas the former is more strongly emphasised at IS, at RS the respondents tend to refer to the latter.

Although at a declarative level these parents avoid associating those ‘others’ perceived as a risk with particular social classes, their accounts suggest the opposite. Here, the quintessential ‘undesired other’ is the ‘flaite’ (similar to chavs, see Chapter V), and this is particularly so amongst working-class participants.

The findings also show that undesired ‘others’ are usually thought to be somewhere else, not at the school, where the respondents think there are mostly people with similar and appropriate attitudes. The latter is considered by my participants at RS to be a minimum condition that the schools should guarantee.

These findings, I argue, suggests that these parents’ mixophilia is mediated by homophily, that is, ‘socioeconomic others’ can be accepted as long as they are socioculturally similar.
2. Rodriguez School

As the quotes below illustrate, parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds at RS manifest an awareness of the inappropriateness of discriminating against people based on their social class, reasserting the importance of distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' people regardless of their economic and educational situation. Indicators of such categories refer, mostly, to ways of using the body (i.e., speaking, dressing, moving, etc.):

*What matters is the humanitarian part because having money doesn’t mean that kids aren’t rude [‘que no sean atrevidos’] […] [there are people I wouldn’t relate to] not because they have or don’t have money, because of their status, but simply because of their manners, their ways of treating others, their ways of acting […]. It’s beyond the fact of being poor, of not having a bigger house, it’s simply because of their conduct and values* (Victoria, M/C, RS)

*People’s worthiness doesn’t come from what they have or don’t have but from how people are […]. Not everything has to do with money, there are other more important things* (Sara, W/C, RS)

*For me, the most important thing is that people are good, it’s not necessary to be an engineer or a lawyer, that doesn’t make the person, it doesn’t render you a better person […]. The children have to know everything so when they are adults they know how to discriminate and say ‘this is a good person, I’m going to mingle with this one’* (Cristian, M/C, RS)

*There are a couple of parents that I couldn’t be close [‘cercana’] to because they behave in a totally different way from me […]. It’s not to do with the fact of them having or not having money, or the segment they belong to, or if they are professionals or not. It has to do with the way they act, the way they speak […]. They are very conflictive people, but it’s not to do with a social issue* (Ana, M/C, RS)

As in other studies in Europe and Chile (e.g., Boterman, 2013; Bellei, Canales, Orellana & Contreras, 2016; Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2015; Cordoba, 2014; Rojas, 2009; Skeggs, 1997; Vowden, 2012), two main fears appear to be at the basis of these preferences, both amongst working and middle-class parents at RS. First, the fear of physical aggression, this is, risks to the children’s safety due to potentially aggressive “students who might come to school with knives” (Paula, W/C, RS) and who could “hurt those children who had a different
opinion” (Sara, W/C, RS). Both middle- and working-class parents, but particularly the latter, were concerned with instilling their children with the need to avoid those more aggressive students (e.g., that have attacked them) and restricting their visits to certain homes. In this latter scenario, the focus of preoccupation is the parents’ behaviour (e.g., excessive consumption of alcohol and physical aggression).

Secondly, there is a common fear of infection or contagion of so-called bad habits and the consequent ‘derailment’ from the ‘right’ behaviours being promoted at home. Here, the school is expected to be an ally, not only through the pedagogic processes taking place there but also through the social interactions that the children have with other students and the values that are being inculcated: “my ideal friends for my children are the ones who share similar values, strong values […], kids that are similar to mine,” Sofia (M/C, RS) says. Catholicism plays a key role here since most parents attributed high importance to RS’s focus on Catholic values and the parents’ adherence to these, which is appreciated as an indicator of their ‘good values’ and their capacity to act according to the school’s discipline codes. There, RS’s institutional habitus, strongly shaped by Catholicism, is linked to the perceived homogeneity of values and attitudes across its members, which is expressed by several parents to be more important than the possible differences between them (refer to Chapter VI, on the creation of community in Catholic schools).

The case of Sofia shows the importance of affinity of values across families: “I feel that the families here are very similar in terms of their values because the school is Catholic, so everybody knows that they have to follow certain rules and norms,” states Sofia (M/C, RS). Thus, when she and her husband, Cristian, compare the reality of their eldest son (who attends RS) with the youngest one (who attends a state school nearby), they are clear in stating that, as the latter is not Catholic, they have less in common with the rest of the parents. In this regard, the religious/non-religious condition of the schools seems to be having a direct influence on the friendships their sons are making, which are almost restricted to RS’s networks: despite their sons attending different schools, Sofia and Cristian are prioritising affinity with Catholic values when building a certain social capital, mainly for their children but also for themselves.

Among these values, respect is one that is highly appreciated, understood in terms of showing proper ways of expression and manners: “they mustn’t say rude words ['ser groseros'], be insolent ['patudo']; they must respect, obey instructions, understand that there are things that they can do and others they can’t” (Cristian, M/C, RS). Emma (W/C, RS) specifies that being respectful means, for example, not laughing at others because of their appearance and
listening to the teachers, and Daniela (M/C, RS) adds that “they must be ‘home children’ [‘niños de casa’, as opposite to street children].” As mentioned by Daniela and Emma, this is considered as being even more important than having a high academic performance: friendship with children that use bad language and have conflictive manners must be avoided in order to prevent their children from acquiring the same behaviours. This view is expressed by several parents from different social classes:

Those kids make the others similar, ‘if they fight, I have the right to fight too’, the kids say (Victoria, M/C, RS)

Sometimes I see behaviours in my children that I’m sure they didn’t learn at home, such as saying rude words, because we don’t say them at all, so it’s like ‘where did you learn this from?’” (Ana, M/C, RS)

I don’t want other children to induce [daughter] to do stupid things (Julio, W/C, RS)

There are kids who are too insolent, too rude, and that’s not a good example for the other kids (Sara, W/C, RS)

Kids are like sponges, they absorb everything they see, both the good and the bad […]. So I tell her ‘if you continue speaking to me so insolently you won’t meet with [friend] again […]. It’s important to distance those children that are a bad influence […]. Even if she [daughter] just meets [friend] from time to time, she kinds of intoxicates herself immediately with her [friend’s] negative influences (Daniela, M/C, RS)

In contrast, my participants declare that they value that RS is mostly composed of parents highly engaged in their children’s education and in inculcating them an embodied cultural capital aligned with the school’s principles. Aligned with the staff’s views presented in Chapter VI, some middle-class mothers expressed a view that some working-class parents at the school were particularly dedicated to their children, ‘even’ when compared to other middle-class parents: “there are many mothers who are ‘nanas’ and many of them are the most dedicated to their children […] while there are other parents who may have a better condition but their children are left by themselves [‘dan bote’]” (Ana, M/C, RS). As in Vincent and colleagues’ study (2012a), Ana’s quote suggests a hint of surprise in realising that working-class mothers’ lack of economic capital does not translate into ‘inappropriate’ mothering. The mothering practices of the working-class mothers were instead seen as highly compatible with
RS’s rules and expectations, particularly given the perceived high levels of commitment and interaction required by the staff.

In relation to this, there was an important narrative around a shared meritocratic attitude amongst the parents, that is, the perception that the majority of the families understand that working hard in order to attain their goals is hugely important. These efforts are seen as linked with the parents’ engagement with the school to support their children to achieve the best they can and to guarantee a safe future for them. Like Ana’s (M/C, RS) accent on the strong engagement of working-class parents, some working-class mothers emphasise how hardworking is not a characteristic of disadvantaged families but one shared extensively. As Emma (W/C, RS) states, “here there are very good and hardworking people, people of endeavour [‘gente de esfuerzo’],” while Sara (W/C, RS) points out that “at this school we all expect that the children will have a stable future, that they have a profession.”

Despite the parents declaring that there is no relationship between these desired/undesired manners and social class, clear associations between both elements were made by working-class mothers: avoiding physical harm and the contagion of certain values/manners implies, primarily, avoiding ‘slum people’. Although ‘undesired others’ are not restricted from this profile, the ‘real’ other, the one that is completely excluded from the very possibility of being part of the ‘us’, corresponds to a stereotypical and identifiable classed subject: the so-called ‘flaite’:

_We had the opportunity to access this school and I’m happy that other people like us can get in too [due to the Inclusion Law], but not people who are going to be a problem, because a rotten apple will spoil the whole barrel, and that would be terrible. People from the slums [‘poblaciones’], for example, people with bad habits because ‘tell me who you talk to and I’ll tell who you are’. I mean, it depends on who you spend time with, and if they have bad habits, the kids could start doing bad things […]. People from slums have bad vocabulary, they are insolent [‘choros’] with the teachers, they speak ‘flaite’._

(Paula, W/C, RS)

---

90 For instance, Paula explains that she does not allow her daughter to go to two (middle-class) friends’ homes as, although they live close to her and she has no problem with the children’s friendship, she is worried about the excessive consumption of alcohol in one case and about situations of physical aggression in the other. In her account, Paula was not associating such undesired dispositions with social class, but pointing to specific cases within her middle-class network without generalising the whole group.
It doesn’t matter which slum you come from, but if you’re given the opportunity to be in a good neighbourhood, a good school [like RS], you have to behave. But if they continue behaving as if they were in the slum environment, being insolent, saying bad words [...] The problem is that ‘flaite’ people will continue being ‘flaite’ even if they change their neighbourhood (Emma, W/C, RS)

The case of Daniela (M/C, RS) is interesting. As I mentioned in Chapter IV, I classified this mother as lower middle class given her more precarious socioeconomic situation than other middle-class parents, as well as because her accounts tend to suggest a higher concern to distinguish herself from working-class people whom she considers to be a bad influence. The following extract illustrates the latter point, which I interpret as being related to her original proximity to those ‘undesired others’:

I’ve seen very poor parents whose kids are very good students, very disciplined, right, they can study for free here. But there should be a filter for the ones that aren’t that way. Their parents are drug dealers. It could be that they bring guns, that they bring drugs [...] I come from those places. There were several schools just opposite our house, and my dad wanted us [Daniela and her brother] to study there since it was close. But my mom insisted that she wanted us to study in The Hills, where she worked, and she said ‘no, I don’t want them to be in this world’, because you could see little girls who were already pregnant or things like that (Daniela, M/C, RS)

In fact, for working-class parents the stereotype of the ‘undesirable other’ seems to be clearly situated at the bottom of the social structure. However, as Paula (W/C, RS) says, “I have contact with slum people, I’ve worked at the market with them,” evincing their proximity in terms of social position. In this regard, the line my working-class interviewees draw between them—in their views, families who are decent and have good manners—and these other ‘undeserving’ poor people reveals their attempt to increase the distance in the social structure with this not too distant group. I argue that this sense of proximity for the working-class respondents increases the sense of ‘danger’ from the inappropriate working-class fraction. The boundaries these families draw also indicate how vulnerable their attempts to produce distance are to breaches: physical distance is not guaranteed by the school field. Contact with these undesirable students is signified as jeopardising a project of person that the parents have for their children, either through the imitation of “bad” behaviours and values or direct aggression. This finding is aligned with research supporting the existence of perceived class fractions within the working-class: the rough/hard-living/undeserving and the respectable/settled/deserving ones (e.g., Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008). Here, as in Cordoba’s
(2014) study in Chile, the ‘respectable’ working classes seems to be highly driven by the search for students who do not represent a bad influence or danger, more than the search of students with a higher socioeconomic status to gain social distinction. Together with findings in Chapter VII (Section 2.1.), this suggests that my working-class participants’ attempts to build a versatile habitus in their children by accruing a ‘respectable’ embodied cultural capital is mostly oriented to distinguishing them from people they situate as ‘below’ themselves.

An interesting nuance is presented by Emma (W/C, RS), who manifests her preference to avoid a school mostly composed of people at the top of the social structure: due to her employer’s connections, she thinks she could have enrolled her son in a private (non-subsidised) and more prestigious school in the locality but opted for RS “because I want my son to live the real life and here there are people from different situations [‘viene de todo un poco’], not only people arriving in their Mercedes Benz” (Emma, W/C, RS). Thus, she declares that she prefers RS because it does not have a majority composed from too socially distant groups, but by a range of socioeconomic strata.

In this context, both amongst working-class and middle-class parents, the expected role of the school is to restrict the number of ‘undesirable others’ in that “it’s difficult for the children to be educated when there are families that are so difficult” (Ana, M/C, RS). In this regard, the most important thing is guaranteeing the continuity of the school’s code of values and manners so “those [undesirable] kids have two options: to adapt or leave,” Cristian (M/C, RS) says. Victoria (M/C, RS) uses the metaphor of illness and deviation—they have to “recover,” “get out of their state,” “be regenerated” and “corrected”—referring to the need of these children to overcome their current (rough working-class) attitudes:

The school has to receive everybody, it shouldn’t discriminate, but there should be a guideline to evaluate whether the aggressive students have changed their behaviour [...] because unfortunately the experiences of the others are spoiled [‘se echan a perder’] because they copy [...]. Or they can even kill another child in a rage attack [...]. So I believe that those kinds of children have to be in another place to rehabilitate [...]. A place where they can be corrected every day [...]. But they aren’t going to be changed by the school if they don’t have a good example at home [...]. The Ministry of Education should also have a guideline so the school knows where to send a child to regenerate him, to improve them [...]. For these kids it’s difficult to get out of their state because they go to the school but then they come back home and step back [...]. Then the inclusion doesn’t work (Victoria, M/C, RS)
A key issue defining the strength of the desired attitudes against the undesired ones seems to be the value attributed to the former in the school field, that is, the extent to which such attitudes work as embodied cultural capital fitting in with and valued within the field (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). In this regard, as in the staff’s views (see Chapter VI), there is a clear confidence in ‘safety in numbers’ (Vowden, 2012) provided by a majority of families possessing values congruent with the Catholic identity of the school: as long as this majority is maintained, new parents/students with those undesired attitudes (which do not work effectively as valued forms of cultural capital in the field) will have to adapt and assimilate the dominant cultural capital:

Those students would need to adapt because they will realise that they are different […] because there are more people with good values, well behaved. So maybe someone arrives being messier, speaking different, and they themselves will start realising that, I don’t know, from 40 students in the class, 30 will look at him strangely […]. The kids themselves start to say ‘hey, no, the teacher will get angry with you if you say this word or if you act this way’ […]. That would be beneficial for the people who arrive (Sofia, M/C, RS)

If there’s no selective admission at all, a rotten apple arrives and it starts to rot the whole barrel […] yeah, they have the right to come but not to invade us everywhere (Daniela, M/C, RS)

I think that if they [students perceived as aggressive] arrive young, they can get better, have another kind of behaviour. Kids can change. During adolescence it’s more complicated […] because they are already socialised, they have their own ideas. If they want to continue being themselves and don’t change (Victoria, M/C, RS)

3. Inti School

At IS, as at RS, the value attributed to the children’s exposure to diversity is articulated in relation to boundaries regarding the kind of behaviours they are willing or not to accept. In other words, the parents tend to classify the ‘others’ at the school according to their behaviours rather than in relation to their differing amounts of economic capital. In this sense, social class is not seen as linked to those behaviours. For example, Samuel (M/C, IS) says that “I can be friends with anybody and I’m actually friends with people with good and bad social positions. The important thing is not your economic status but what you’re like as a person. Your money doesn’t make you a better or worse person.” In turn, Monica (M/C, IS) expresses: “the ideal
friend for my son? To be honest, I have to get along with his mother, we have to have similar upbringing and behavioural criteria [...] Social strata is not relevant to me [‘sea de La Pintana o de Lo Barnechea, me da exactamente lo mismo’]."

The ‘delimitation of the other’ at IS is moulded by specific fears that, despite not being shaped by Catholic principles, are quite aligned with the ones at RS: the kinds of attitudes and values the parents want to avoid are very similar at both schools. The one highlighted most is the fear of psychological and physical aggression. In this framework, it is crucial for the parents to prevent their children from being exposed to contact with people who do not possess the ability to relate to others respectfully and as equals. Rosa (M/C, IS) expresses that “I don’t mind who my son is friends with, if they have money or not, as the fundamental thing is respect and love […] basic things for conviviality [‘convivencia’] […] Because it’s good that he knows there are differences but not that he feels affected by those differences.” While Monica (M/C, IS) states that “they [son and friends] have to treat each other as equals, in a horizontal relationship, not taking advantage of each other.” This involves the avoidance of violent behaviours, which, although the parents are unwilling to apply social class distinctions, is usually linked to a particular stereotype within the working-class, the same ‘quintessential other’ as at RS, but this time also identified by middle-class parents: the ‘flaite’. Monica (M/C, IS) is very clear in describing it:

I’ve got apprehensions towards violence in the lower social strata. For sure there’s violence in the upper sectors, but the ‘flaite choro’, the thief, the underclass who take advantage of you and have this violent way of speaking. They intimidate me. It’s something that scares me so I’d prefer my son not to relate with someone like that (Monica, M/C, IS)

However, both middle-class and working-class parents at IS tend to also associate the lack of respectful attitudes with those who feel superior and discriminate against others who they feel to be below them: “I wouldn’t like my daughter to be friends with a person who discriminates against people of other ethnicities or social strata,” Samuel (M/C, IS) explains. As the quotes below show, this undesirable other is usually associated with a specific social class fraction within the middle-class: the posh one [‘cuico/estirado/agrandado’]:

There’s nothing wrong [about being friends with someone from another social class] as long as they are not too posh [‘estirados’]. They have to treat me as equal and don’t look down at me [‘no que me miren asi por debajo’]. They have to have an egalitarian way of relating [‘trato igualitario’] (Jessica, W/C, IS)
I don’t like the people who look at you as if you were lesser [‘te miran en menos’] because of the way you dress, the way you speak […] [people] who feel superior because they have money or a better social position (Nicolas, M/C, IS)

The previous school of my daughter was too posh [‘cuica’] […]. The parents and the kids themselves were too posh [‘cuicos’], they looked down and I didn’t like that […]. I wouldn’t like my daughter’s friends to be ‘cuicos’, arrogant [‘agrandados’] (Maria, M/C, IS)

Something that I don’t tolerate from someone posher [‘de arriba’] is that they assess you by what you’re wearing, like ‘no, with that jacket bought at Lider [supermarket] you can’t come to my house’ […]. And if my son started to say ‘buy me this’, ‘I don’t want to wear this because it’s too tacky [‘picante’]’ […]. Or someone who says ‘how do you live here? This neighbourhood is full of immigrants’ (Monica, M/C, IS)

As at RS, a second feature of the perceived ‘undesirable other’ at IS has to do with the fear of contagion by certain attitudes, that is, the acquisition of the so-called ‘bad’ habits (i.e., use of rude words and consumption of drugs and alcohol). However, unlike RS, at IS this fear is much less relevant in the parents’ accounts and seems to be mostly limited to the working-class respondents. For instance, Jessica (W/C, IS) states that “I don’t like people using rude words [‘la groseria, que sean garabateros, choros’],” whilst Gabriel (W/C, IS) specifies that “I wouldn’t like it if he [grandson] starts meeting with people with bad habits, and starts meeting just to get high in the square.” Despite their avoidance of establishing social class associations, in both parents’ (mother and grandfather, respectively) accounts this imaginary of speaking with rude words and consuming alcohol and drugs in public spaces such as squares and streets tends to be associated with a subject located at the bottom of the working-class, ‘the flaite’, who is defined by those stereotypes.

These views reveal the parents’ notions around different fractions within the working (i.e., ‘flaite’) and middle classes (the extreme at the top, as signalled by Emma), clearly identifying those families from who they wish to keep a distance. As a hypothesis, and similarly to RS, the clearer presence of this discourse amongst working-class parents may have to do with their positional proximity to the ‘undeserving’ working class (e.g., Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008). Therefore, as at RS, the flaite represents more tangible risks than for middle-class parents, thus the need to elaborate strategies to maintain social and symbolic distance to distinguish themselves (Cordoba, 2014; Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2010). Otherwise, their attempts to
socialise their children into the ‘deserving’ working-class (see Chapter VII) and, consequently, obtain better future opportunities, could be jeopardised.

4. Conclusion

This chapter added nuances to the parent respondents’ mixophilia (Chapter VII) by revealing both openness and boundaries in their responses to certain others: love towards others is not unconditional. Instead, the possibility of encouraging openness to social class difference and mixing in the children seems to be conditioned by these parents’ delineation of desired and undesired others.

I have argued that expressing discriminatory views based on an evaluation of particular behaviours and attitudes is seen as more legitimate than making judgements based on their economic capital and educational credentials. In this sense, the parents were clear in expressing that their preferences had nothing to do with social class inscriptions, but with individual characteristics (e.g., ways of speaking). As such, having a ‘restricted mixophilia’ is perceived to be compatible with the collective moral duty of openness. This is a pattern also observed in other studies in Chile (e.g., Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2015), despite the correlation that such individual characteristics tend to have with social conditions.

In particular, the limits on openness to difference and mixing are based on the legitimation of fear of and discrimination against certain others, resulting from the parents’ decoding of some ‘rules of the [parenting] game’ that assign them the moral duty to act as the main guarantors of their children’s wellbeing. On the one hand, fear of physical or psychological aggression (e.g., bullying), on the other, fear of contagion, that is, that their children adopt manners considered to be detrimental (e.g., swearing). The findings at RS (Section 2) and IS (Section 3) are tightly aligned, although the former fear is more strongly emphasised at IS while the latter has more preponderance at RS.

I argue that the legitimation of these fears seems to be facilitated by their discursive articulation. This articulation disentangles inclusivity from social class issues; by this I refer to the way in which understandings of social class frequently disassociate dispositions (e.g., ways of speaking) and position (i.e., more or less disadvantaged). It can be hypothesised that this disassociation is enabled by the meritocratic discourse, which emphasises that every person has a chance of taking advantage of the opportunities provided institutionally as long as they enact particular attitudes. However, more subtle associations between attitudes and social class can be identified. Here, the quintessential ‘undesired other’ is the ‘flaite’ (similar
to chavs, see Chapter V), particularly amongst working-class participants, who in my study set more boundaries on this stereotype, due to their proximity in the social space and the need to keep a distance in order to maintain their respectability (i.e., ensure an embodied cultural capital considered to be valuable in middle-class fields, see Chapter VII).

Arguments on the geographies and politics of emotions (e.g., Ahmed, 2014; Shirlow & Pain, 2003; Skeggs, 2000, 2004a) might be helpful to understand how fear and intolerance of difference take place. In this framework, fear is constructed around ‘the other’ who is signalled as being worthy of fear, usually following stereotypes associated with patterns of marginalisation and exclusion: “it is often poverty and marginalisation which fuels fear where it is experienced” (Shirlow & Pain, 2003: 20). This is framed around a series of moral panics, namely, a feeling of fear based on the perception that some members of society are ‘not us’ and endanger what is ‘ours’ (Ahmed, 2014), thereby threatening the well-being, basic values, and interests of ‘our’ society:

The sentiment generated or stirred up by this threat or supposed threat is much like a fever: heightened emotion, fear, dread, anxiety, hostility, and a strong feeling of righteousness [...]. These perpetrators or supposed perpetrators come to be regarded as the enemy—or an enemy—of society, “folk devils” (Cohen, 1972; 2002), deviants, outsiders, the “Other,” legitimate and deserving targets of self-righteous anger, hostility, and punishment (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009: 35)

Hence, there is an attribution of moral value and the consequent legitimation of particular practices (e.g., speaking ‘properly’ and not swearing) in the making-up of the self (Skeggs, 2004a, 2004b), in relation to which deviant dispositions and groups are defined. Fear should not be understood, then, as an irrational response to a non-existent threat (Shirlow & Pain, 2003); it is a cultural phenomenon, directly linked to its socio-political context. This means that the lived experience of diversity is linked to particular policies and techniques of regulation that direct the ways we feel about and treat others (Skeggs, 2004a, 2004b).

In the Chilean context, the extended presence across both schools of fears of physical threat to the children and of contagion of ‘dangerous dispositions’ and their majoritarian association with subjects placed within the working-classes might be interpreted in relation to the country’s social inequality and the centrality of meritocracy as a legitimated mechanism to distribute such unequal positions. In a highly risky social structure, with an almost completely closed elite and a diversified, more precarious, and unstable middle class (see Chapter I), any attempts to succeed—meaning reproduce or reach a middle-class position—must avoid any
possible deviations from the right track. In the public discourse, this ‘right track’ is mostly understood in terms of educational achievements and credentials, attending university being at the top, particularly certain prestigious ones and certain prestigious programmes. In this scenario, the ‘flaite’ represents the archetypal ‘undeserving working class’, the subject with no value in society, the embodiment of the deviation from that educational path bestowed with the promise of a better (for the working-class) or at least not worse (for the middle-classes) future. His/her (but especially ‘his’) lack of symbolic capital is sustained not only in his socioeconomic poverty but mostly in a moral attribution of ‘dispositional poverty’, that is, their lack of the right attitudes required to transcend socioeconomic poverty, such as being hardworking and having expectations to access higher education and ‘better themselves’. More importantly, the ‘flaite’ is signified as having dispositions that work against such a path and that can even destroy the path of others, for example, consuming drugs and alcohol on the streets, being violent, robbing, having sex at a young age, and using informal and rude language. Therefore, besides the family and home space, the school is felt by my respondents as a crucial space where much is at stake; a space not only for educating the children, but also for generating a social capital that ensures closure against those ‘dangerous others’.

The findings also show that ‘undesired others’ are usually thought not to be present (or at least not in a large number) at the schools, partly because of the perceived absence of socioeconomic extremes such as the ‘flaite’ at the bottom—and also of people who are too wealthy, as expressed by Emma (W/C, RS)—Instead, the respondents tend to think that the schools are mostly composed of people who show similar and appropriate attitudes. Here, affinity between parents is considered to be crucial. Moreover, having the ‘right’ attitudes is considered by participants at RS to be a minimum condition that should be guaranteed institutionally, for example, by expelling those who do not agree to the required conviviality values (see Chapter VI).

Overall, I argue that the value attributed to this observed homogeneity in terms of attitudes, suggests the intertwined workings of mixophilous and homophilous attitudes, since the former seems to be mediated by the latter. In other words, ‘socioeconomic others’ can be accepted as long as they are socioculturally similar. This is aligned with the evidence on ambivalent mixophilous attitudes referred to in Chapter II—for example, ‘safety in numbers’, as Vowden (2012) puts it. It could be hypothesised that a basis of sociocultural homogeneity amongst families and the constitution of a school community that is perceived to enable this might be necessary conditions that allow the parents to accept the socioeconomic diversity at the schools. In other words, it is reasonable to think that the appreciation of social class differences and mixing is circumscribed by certain minimums of homophily.
PART III: FINAL DISCUSSION
Chapter IX. Conclusions

1. Introduction

The focus of this thesis has been on parents’ and teachers’ dispositions towards social class difference and mixing at schools with exceptional levels of socioeconomic diversity in Chile, a key country given that it has one of the highest levels of socioeconomic segregation in education. One of the main assumptions of the so-called Inclusion Law is that having more socially diverse student compositions in schools will contribute to strengthening democratic values such as tolerance and respect of difference and, through this, enhance the country’s social cohesion. However, the analysis I conducted in Chilean schools that already had high levels of social class diversity before the implementation of the Inclusion Law suggests that such expected benefits cannot be taken for granted. In this sense, exploring how the schools’ social diversity (school mix) is lived and potentially translated into interactions between people from different backgrounds (school mixing) is crucial to inform considerations of the role that schools may have in promoting mutual understanding and, ultimately, more cohesive societies.

I approached this topic by conducting a qualitative case study in two Chilean schools with distinctive characteristics: Rodriguez School (RS), which I mainly define as having a traditional and Catholic institutional habitus; and Inti School (IS), with a largely alternative and holistic institutional habitus. Both schools possess exceptional levels of social-class diversity compared to the Chilean average and explicitly attribute importance to social inclusion. The research questions (RQs) I attempted to address are the following:

RQ1: How do the staff of two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of the children?

RQ2: How do parents in two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their children’s school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of their children?

Below, I discuss how the research findings answer these questions and I present general remarks by way of conclusion (Section 2). I also state the implications and possible
contributions of this thesis (Section 3), and propose future lines of enquiry based on these contributions, as well as on the limitations of my study (Section 4).

2. Addressing the research questions

In this section, I revisit the research questions in order to discuss how the analysis responds to them. First, I focus on chapters V and VI, which analyse the institutional views of RS and IS on social class mix and processes of mixing (RQ1). Then I approach chapters VII and VIII, which address the parents’ views on social class mix and processes of mixing (RQ2).

2.1. Research question 1

RQ 1: How do the staff of two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of the children?

In Chapter V, I argued that a key element of the institutional habitus of RS and IS is their celebration of socioeconomic diversity and inclusive approach, which is acknowledged as producing several benefits for the students. First, staff believe that inclusion and diversity gives socioeconomically disadvantaged students the opportunity to access a supposed ‘good’ education (institutionalised cultural capital) and networks (social capital) that could be useful to, for example, develop an embodied cultural capital (i.e., behaviours perceived as valuable, such as eating healthily). Second, school mix is celebrated for the benefits that it could provide to the whole corpus of students, since coexisting with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds is thought to contribute to a particular learning: the development of egalitarian dispositions and a broader view of the social structure, ways of thinking, doing, and acting in relation to social class ‘others’ based on the commitment to equality across human beings (e.g., attitudes based on the value of respect). A minority of the staff at both schools mention that this learning is particularly relevant for the most affluent students in order for them to develop greater awareness of their privileges and exercise solidarity and charity towards those who are in more disadvantaged positions.

Overall, these identified benefits suggest that the celebration of diversity is established, both at RS and IS, pre-eminently through a lens of solidarity to address the (unnamed) dilemma about how to respond to poverty. The findings, I argue, suggest that RS and IS’s institutional dispositions to social class difference and mixing are based on an understanding of social justice as focused on ‘the poor’ (i.e., overcoming poverty) rather than on the whole social
structure. In turn, socioeconomic privilege remains almost completely unquestioned in the staff’s accounts, revealing a lack of problematisation of the potential contributions of school mix/mixing to, for example, critiquing privilege and redistributing wealth.

In Chapter VI, I argue that celebration of socioeconomic diversity articulates with an apparently contradictory logic, which is the schools’ egalitarian attempts to render social class diversity irrelevant. I contend that, rather than a contradiction, these logics are part of a coherent narrative where social class school mix is valued precisely because it is not made explicit. As emphasising social class differences is seen as illegitimate, they are supposedly acknowledged only in order to guarantee equitable access to the school (in terms of the variable payments made by the parents), but not for shaping the school routines, so as to prevent socioeconomically disadvantaged students from being the target of discrimination. In other words, at both schools, their institutional habitus situates the value of social class heterogeneity on the level of *school mix*, but not on that of *school mixing*, since interactions between students are expected to be class-neutral and based on shared interests. This is what I have referred to as a celebratory discourse of diversity based on an ontology of social-class sameness.

There are some particularities regarding the way each school enacts such an ontology by managing the families’ socioeconomic differences on a daily basis, which is very striking in the case of RS and more subtle in IS. In fact, in the former I identified six institutional strategies to promote social relationships based on uniform treatment rather than on the daily recognition of their socioeconomic differences (e.g., by using the school uniform and by sanctioning certain behaviours). In turn, at IS I identified only two strategies and the staff’s accounts did not generally suggest a clear intentionality to produce similarity across social class differences, which I interpret as a more laissez-faire assimilationist institutional habitus, that is, the assimilation of the working-class students and parents seems to be implicitly expected, although this is not declared to be promoted by the school. Thus, even though the sites in the schooling field that I have analysed are exceptional in promoting social class mixture, they share a largely assimilationist institutional habitus that fosters the inculcation of a middle-class habitus amongst working-class students.

In this sense, I argue that the process of homogenising social class differences is not neutral (i.e., disregarding *all* of those differences) since it reveals preferences in terms of which is the valid social class. I have shown that the staff tend to perceive that, although there are existing socioeconomic differences between families, there is a prevalent sociocultural similarity, which is positively appreciated for being compatible with the schools’ priorities and rules (i.e.,
parents’ attitudes and values support the educational labour of the school). These purported similar dispositions are not ‘natural’, though, but socially constructed through power relations taking place in the field of schooling. The staff’s narratives suggest that there is an assumption about the more ‘worthy’ nature (more symbolic capital) of the schools’ middle-class majority, which gives them a positional advantage in the school field, whilst aspects of the working-classes’ cultural capital appear to be within the domain of the unspeakable or less worthy. An example of the latter is the Behaviour Lead’s contemptuous account on Emma, at RS, which is not only based on a characterisation of her in socioeconomic terms (i.e. low educational level) but also in relation to her body constitution (i.e. short and fat), which, I argued, suggests links between discourses of class and discourses of race: being fat and short are features sometimes used by the dominant classes to refer to the working classes’ inadequate bodies’, which are thought as linked with a more indigenous ethnic background, although this is not necessarily always true (see Chapter I).

Therefore, the ‘decent’ working-class families present at the schools (with dispositions considered to be legitimate in the field of schooling) are valued because the parents show an effort and a willingness to improve their children’s future life conditions and, as such, to overcome their working-class status (Skeggs, 1997, 2004a, 2004b; Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008). In other words, even those families who are thought to deviate from the norm at the schools (i.e., the working-class minority) seem to have adapted to the desired code of practice to participate appropriately in the school field by adopting dispositions that possess high symbolic capital in that field and which, as such, act as cultural capital (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014).

Altogether, these findings support the existence of a celebratory and assimilationist institutional habitus regarding social class diversity at RS and IS. Far from being contradictory, both celebrating and disregarding social class differences are, in this case, two dimensions of a consistent institutional habitus. The schools welcome socioeconomic diversity precisely because they expect to overcome it and produce a particular kind of mixing by integrating the working-class ‘other’ into the middle-class ‘us’. I have argued that this involves issues of social justice by reaffirming the dilemma between redistribution and recognition. Recognition strategies address cultural or symbolic injustice such as non-recognised or disrespected identities or groups, the remedies for which would promote group differentiation. However, redistribution addresses socioeconomic injustice such as exploitation and economic deprivation, the remedies for which would undermine group differentiation (Fraser, 1995). In the context of the schools in my study, social class differences are seen as not requiring cultural recognition, but rather only economic redistribution strategies that lead to overcoming
socioeconomic disadvantage (i.e., scholarships). In this sense, there is a preeminent egalitarian view in the schools about the illegitimacy of identifying disadvantaged students and families as a socially classed group.

I agree with my interviewees that it is the schools’ moral duty to not reinforce prejudices and stereotypes based on the families’ socioeconomic condition and that mixing processes require such a baseline of respect. However, I would like to point out the possible limitations of the egalitarianism at the basis of the schools’ efforts to disregard social class differences. As I argue in Chapter III, treating everybody as if there were no socioeconomic differences may (unintentionally) contribute to reproducing social inequalities by producing the illusion that they do not exist (Sayer, 2005). The risk, then, of the perceived need to be discreet about the working-class families’ disadvantage is to position poverty as a personal deficit rather than as a structural one. In addition, assuming certain (socially classed) behaviours as the legitimate ones in the context of the school restricts openness and appreciation of other subjectivities amongst parents and children. Therefore, I argue that the possible limitations of the egalitarian dispositions expressed by the staff (and of their expectation of developing egalitarian dispositions in the children) arise from an insufficient or distorted egalitarianism. In other words, what is problematic is the fact that the supposed egalitarianism is pre-orientated towards the reproduction of middle-class subjectivities and of the existing social hierarchy. This raises at least two issues in relation to the kind of mixing that is being promoted in these socioeconomically mixed schools.

First, such distorted egalitarianism puts pressure on working-class families to identify themselves with the dominant middle-class habitus. This may create discontent and malaise in individuals (e.g., Aarseth, Layton, & Nielsen, 2016; Friedman, 2016; Reay, 2015a). Painful contradictions and feelings such as discomfort, shame, anxiety, humiliation, and fear of pretension are likely to emerge due to a lack of recognition and potential conflicts in the individual whose habitus seemingly requires adaptation.

A second problem is that the emotional consequences of a denied subjectivity may also have consequences at the society level by jeopardising social cohesion. Positioning poverty as a personal deficit that obscures the worth of working-class families’ cultural capital (as well as their adaptability) may not only encourage social discontent and conflict (Honneth, 1996). It may also restrict the chances to institutionally promote symmetrical recognition and mutual understanding rather than one-way exchanges (i.e., working-class families are always positioned as the main beneficiaries of their encounters with middle-class people).
2.2. Research question 2

RQ 2: *How do parents in two socioeconomically diverse schools understand social class mix and processes of mixing in their children’s school? What do they see as the possibilities and limitations of social class mix and mixing in terms of the development of their children?*

In Chapter VII, I argue that the parents’ openness and willingness for them and/or their children to mix with people from different social class backgrounds is strongly linked, in both schools, to the benefits that such mixing is claimed to bring.

In RS, an important benefit of socioeconomic diversity at the school was said by parents to be the possibility for working-class students to improve their social and embodied cultural capital (e.g., a sense of place in middle-class fields) and thus have better future opportunities. This is mentioned by both working-class and middle-class parents. However, I argue that participating in a middle-class setting presents tensions for working-class families, since adapting to middle-class contexts involves considerable efforts of adaptation. These efforts are illustrated by the parent respondents at both RS and IS.

The respondent parents at both schools were generally also able to identify benefits of the social mix for members of the different social classes. Engaging with different people was perceived as encouraging the expansion of the children's horizons and the potential development of what I interpret as 'egalitarian dispositions', that is, values and attitudes towards social class difference and mixing based on the commitment to equality across human beings, such as respect. In this regard, egalitarian dispositions are ethical dispositions, in the sense argued by Sayer (2010), that is, a sensibility regarding social injustice. This finding emerges across social classes. I have argued that a collective moral interest in relating to everyone as equals links to another moral, but individualistically shaped viewpoint: possessing egalitarian dispositions that enable one to easily relate to everybody regardless of their background is observed as equipping the children with what I call a 'versatile habitus': a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions and, as such, able to adapt itself to different socially classed fields. I interpret this habitus as an embodied cultural capital (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014), since having an adaptable self is considered necessary to adapt to the world’s diverse social fields and successfully position oneself within them.

Altogether, these findings reveal different mixophilia logics for each social class, that is, positive views of difference and diversity (Bauman, 2003). Amongst the working-class participants in my study, building a versatile habitus in the children appears to be empowering,
but having high costs. In particular, mixing with more socially advantaged people and having access to relevant capitals entail constraints on the parents’ original subjectivity, in order to strengthen a ‘respectable’ one (Skeggs, 1997, 2004a, 2004b; Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008). This suggests a tendency for the family habitus to be abandoned (Ingram & Abrahams, 2018) in favour of the assimilation of middle-class dispositions. Thus, even if working-class parents are willing to inculcate in their children dispositions to move through different social contexts, they tend to find it difficult to also inhabit their original cultural capital once they enter a middle-class field aligned to the rules of the field of power. This is because in our society the working-class habitus is imbued with little symbolic capital.

Amongst middle-class parents, participating in a range of socially classed settings and mixing with a diversity of people seems to be oriented to expanding the children’s freedom and, as the case of Sofia (M/C, RS) illustrates, to reconfirm their own family habitus. Being open to diversity is signified as drawing boundaries between themselves and those who are within the same broad class grouping, but they do not feel at ease surrounded by ‘others’. In other words, these parents’ dispositions to social class difference and mixing might be interpreted as connected with processes of horizontal distinction and the formation of social class fractions within the middle classes. However, like their ‘mainstream’ counterparts, I argue that these parents express neoliberal attitudes by individualistically playing the educational market and, in that sense, they are creating the conditions for the children to invest in themselves and reproduce their middle classness.

The way these middle-class parents’ neoliberal attitudes are manifested in each school presents some particularities. At RS, the respondents express the willingness to ‘help the person beside them’ regardless of their social origin, as well as the acceptance of these inequalities and a strategic positioning within them (‘charitable neoliberalism’). At IS, the parent participants were inclined towards social justice and overcoming social inequalities, as well as towards the acceptance of these inequalities and a strategic positioning within them (‘progressive neoliberalism’). Therefore, I argue that the egalitarian dispositions of these middle-class participants to social class difference and mixing can be understood as being articulated with charitable neoliberalism (RS) and progressive neoliberalism (IS).

In the end, though, in both cases it is clearer how openness towards social class difference and the development of egalitarian dispositions to mix with others are expected by these parents to have private consequences (for the children), rather than being expected to have societal effects such as, for example, to use Nancy Fraser’s terms (Fraser, 1995; Fraser & Honneth, 2003), a cultural (e.g., recognition of the working-class’s habitus as valuable) or
economic change (e.g., redistribution of social opportunities). As such, mixophilia and the willingness to mix with people from a different social class on an egalitarian basis seems to be driven by the individual’s potential gains from it. Echoing the findings in other studies (e.g., Ball, 2003; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005), this analysis indicates the need to avoid a romanticised interpretation of these mixophilous and egalitarian middle-class parents as working towards overcoming social inequalities. These data reinforce those in Chapter VI in relation to the staff’s views, where I argue that it is important to avoid naively assuming the transformative potential of egalitarianism, particularly amongst the so-called egalitarian middle classes.

Chapter VIII adds more nuances to the parent respondents’ mixophilous attitudes. I argue that the parents’ openness to social class difference and mixing is conditional and delimited by their preferences for certain ‘others’ and closure to ‘other others’. This is a common finding in both schools, where those preferences are shaped in terms of desirable/undesirable attitudes. The participants express clear criteria to identify the ‘others’ with whom they want to mix and distinguish them from the ones they want to avoid. Also, in both schools, these attitudes are seen as individually moulded rather than rooted in social positions. Avoiding certain families based on their behaviour, then, is seen by the parents as a legitimate form of discrimination, much more so than one based on the differential possession of economic and formal cultural capital, which leads them to implement concrete strategies to regulate their own mixing practices and those of their children.

The perception of such desirable/undesirable attitudes is based on at least two kinds of fears: of physical/psychological threats (e.g., bullying), more present amongst the participants at IS, and the contagion of unwanted attitudes, more present amongst participants at RS. Regarding the latter, being aggressive and disrespectful, as well as swearing and being involved in drugs, are some of the main attitudes to be avoided in order to avoid derailing the project of person that the parents have for their children. At RS, in addition, parents expect the school to regulate the numbers of those undesirable children/parents by limiting their access or expelling children when there is trouble. These measures will then maintain a majority of families with attitudes congruent with the school’s institutional habitus (particularly its Catholic identity, see Chapter IV), which, in turn, is understood to promote the internalisation of such a habitus amongst those parents/students identified as having undesirable attitudes.

Despite the parents’ avoidance of making associations between undesirable attitudes and particular social classes, the ‘quintessential other’ embodying their fears is the ‘flaite’ (a Chilean slang term roughly equivalent to the British term chav, see Chapter V), which they
position at the bottom of the social structure. The fear of the flaite is particularly clear amongst working-class respondents. This, I argue, is linked to their positional proximity to this stereotype. Producing distance from this subject can be interpreted in terms of these parents acting to distinguish themselves from those ‘dangerous’ others, who present a high risk to working-class parents as they share the same or adjacent social space.

Overall, the value attributed by parents in my study to the families’ homogeneity of attitudes, I argue, suggests the intertwined workings of mixophilia and homophily, since the former seems to be mediated by the latter. In other words, ‘socioeconomic others’ can be accepted as long as they are socioculturally similar (Boterman, 2013; Vowden, 2012). In this sense, even amongst these ‘exceptionally open’ parents, their open dispositions to social class difference and mixing are bounded by possible tensions in their subjectivity (very clear in the accounts of some working-class participants) and ultimately restricted by the perceived and socially structured risks involved in being ‘more open’. In this regard, these parents might be characterised as expressing a nuanced or soft mixophilia, in that their positive views towards difference and diversity seem to be far from a “strong attraction for difference, a desire to merge with the diverse because it is interesting or fascinating” (Arruda, 2008: 474, cited in Bianchi, 2018: 123) that leads to the “confrontation of life policies that undermine the bonding to the Other” (Bianchi, 2018: 123).

2.3. General concluding remarks

To sum up, the findings addressing RQ1 and RQ2 are generally aligned and suggest that social class mix and mixing at RS and IS cannot be assumed to be a straightforward phenomenon, but as entailing ambivalence on the part of the schools/staff and the parents. In fact, dispositions to social class difference involve both celebrating it (Chapter V) as well as disregarding it (VI), openness (VII) as well as tensions (VII) and boundaries (VIII), and collective as well as private interests (VII).

Therefore, the analysis alerts us to the importance of avoiding naively assuming either the transformative potential of an open disposition to social class difference and mixing or of egalitarian attitudes, either on the part of the teachers or the parents (particularly the middle-class ones), towards promoting more egalitarian societies that are open to diversity (in a redistributive sense). This is because egalitarian attitudes may create the illusion that structural inequalities are not relevant, contributing to their perpetuation (see Chapter III).
However, I would like to point out some optimistic considerations in order to avoid ‘reproducing the reproduction hypothesis’. I argue that the subjective experience of class and, more precisely, the dispositions towards social class difference and mixing are not only important due to the changes in discourses, attitudes, and behaviours per se; they are also important because they may translate into actions that promote a redistributive change in the social structure. Here, I am mostly thinking of the middle classes, given their advantaged position to affect ‘the rules of the game’ in the field of power (see Chapter III). In this sense, I agree with Vincent and colleagues (2018a) on how fundamental the basic step of being (ambivalently) open to social class difference is, especially in offering possibilities that are denied by its counterpart, that is, complete social closure (Parkin, 1979).

Here, I would like to refer to some reflections based on my own personal experience, highly shaped by growing up in a very homogeneous and advantaged social environment until I left school, which affected my views on my positioning in society. Compared to my classmates, I felt I was poor and I was ashamed of that. I even avoided inviting them to my home because, to me, it seemed inferior, although I lived in a high-income locality (The Hills). Further experiences transiting different fields and meeting people from different social classes have been very valuable because they have provided me with a more complex understanding of society and made me realise how short-sighted I was. The shame I felt by comparing myself with people within the same broad social class, but with slight differences in terms of economic capital did not permit me to visualise my privilege and even encouraged me to want to be more privileged. This is an attitude I often notice amongst middle-class people in Chile: the doctor who already belongs to the wealthiest 5%, but feels disadvantaged because his friends working in the private sector earn more than him; the social scientist about to finish her PhD who worries about the mediocre salaries she would have if she worked in academia (although academic wages of around £2,000 a month are above the highest decile in Chile), because some acquaintances earn more; the child who attends the most expensive school in Chile and complains that they have nothing to wear because they have not been bought any new clothes in the last week; and so on. I can relate to these sentiments because I have felt them myself; however, I believe they should not be acceptable given the macro effects that these micro actions have in the reproduction of unequal access to economic capital and basic services (e.g., by moving jobs from a public hospital to a private one, which is a tendency in Chile and which has, amongst other factors, contributed to the shrinking of the public health system). Moreover, the lack of questioning of privilege, actively fed by those in powerful positions who have influence in public opinion, has perpetuated a resigned acceptance of inequalities amongst the disadvantaged, whose best possibilities are presented as aspiring to social mobility. However, I would like to highlight the potentialities for changing these patterns.
I agree with Aarseth (2018) about the inadequacy of the ‘fear of falling’ thesis, that is, that middle-class parents are mostly moved by “an anxiety-driven urge to optimise life chances” (p. 1188) of their children, in order to ensure their class reproduction and social advantage. She argues that it is also important to “grasp dynamics that might produce resistance to a more pervasive competitive individualism” (p. 1188). As Wise (2016) and Vincent and colleagues (2018a) put it, we should remain alert to the conditions for developing ‘cosmopolitan practices of sociability’ and ‘convivial dispositions’, respectively. Therefore, despite these parent-respondents playing within the rules of the market, it should not be assumed that they are reproducing the rules of the educational field in the same way as the middle-classes in socially homogeneous schools (the majority in Chile). In other words, given the neoliberal and segregated Chilean context, these agents cannot entirely escape the subjectivity offered by such a social configuration, but they still play the school choice game in an unusual way. Therefore, I emphasise these individuals’ attempts to create a coherent biography in a fractured and risky world (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991), in order to capture “small resistances to the well-documented pull of homophily” (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a: 225).

In particular, I argue that a disproportionate pursuit of advantage amongst affluent people is less likely to emerge if we have not only a wider perspective of our position in a highly unequal society, but also if we have contact on a somewhat symmetrical basis with people from different backgrounds. That is, not a relationship of servitude (e.g., as I explain in Chapter VII, the middle classes usually hire full-time domestic workers), but one in which you see the ‘other’ as yourself. Echoing arguments on multiculturalism and social encounters (e.g., Amin, 2002; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a; Wilson, 2012), I argue that schools are a crucial site for promoting the latter, given their potentialities for stimulating habitual engagement and mandatory interactions. As argued by Vincent and colleagues, “the sharing of a school by families different in class, ethnicity and in multiple other indicators (language, religion, etc.) presents a site where a recognition of the ‘other’ and the other’s legitimate interest and investment in the school reflects a basic but fundamental acceptance” (Vincent, Ball, & Braun, 2008: 224). I have also illustrated, though, the limitations and risks of egalitarianism, both expressed by the staff and the parents in the context of the two schools studied. This leads me to the next section, where I outline some suggestions for the schools to preclude those risks.

3. Contributions and implications
3.1. Applied contributions

There has been a tendency to identify and blame Chileans’ exclusionary dispositions for being a crucial barrier to socially inclusive initiatives (e.g., for integrative urban and educational projects - see Sabatini, Rasse, Mora, & Brain, 2012). My thesis adds nuances to this statement by providing evidence on schools that had exceptional levels of socioeconomic diversity prior to the implementation of the Inclusion Law, an educational reform that attempts to generate significant consequences in raising the levels of inclusion and diversity in establishments receiving public funding. I have shown that even in these two schools that are exceptionally socioeconomically diverse compared with the average in Chile, and where members of staff and parents express an exceptionally open disposition to social class difference and mixing, this disposition is not unrestricted nor free from tensions. These findings warn of the importance for public policy to avoid a simplistic and romanticised appreciation of school mix.

I have argued, however, that it is important to interpret my respondents’ restricted openness to social class difference and mixing as reasonable (Bourdieu, 1990b), that is, as a logical response to the social context, both from the parents and the schools. In relation to the parents, there is a reasonable response given the ‘states of being’ (Lazarrato, 2009) of neoliberalism (macro-dimension of neoliberalism) and the normalisation of social and educational insecurity (Slater, 2018) and the need to self-manage their children’s future (micro-dimension of neoliberalism). In particular, my parent respondents seem to be effective players in a social field that requires them to individually protect their children, since the state in Chile does not fully act as a guarantor of everybody’s access to so-called social rights.

This approach allows an understanding of these parents’ restricted openness to social class difference and mixing through the use of a more transformative lens. Despite the multiple incentives in the social and political environment for subjectivity to be moulded by social closure and segregation, these parents play the neoliberal game in a rather unconventional way. This way, they enact particular neoliberal subjectivities that cannot be reduced to the homo economicus model and the mere instrumental search for individual benefits (refer to Chapter I). Thus, if we wanted to pose a transformative hypothesis, we should highlight these parents’ degrees of openness to difference and mixing, despite the ‘every man for himself’ characteristics of the wider social scenario.

Even if my parent respondents did not generally choose their schools due to their socioeconomic diversity, I argue that the reflexivity sparked by being involved in heterogeneous encounters and interactions is relevant in itself. Specifically, the possibilities
that schools such as Rodriguez and Inti provide for reflecting about who the ‘others’ are and who the parents themselves are in relation to those others, suggest some hope regarding policies aimed at increasing the schools’ social heterogeneity and their chances of promoting more open dispositions to social class difference and mixing. In this sense, for the children and their parents to not only have an idea about social inequalities, but also experience them through direct contact with others and their social worlds seems to be a ‘basic but fundamental step’ (Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a) towards recognition and the problematisation of such inequalities. Such problematisation might then open up the possibilities to eventually undertake actions oriented towards redistribution (e.g., equity considerations for choosing a school for their children; political participation to push for decent salaries for all).

Therefore, I argue that it is crucial that public policy, on a general level, and schools, more specifically, strengthen this basic but fundamental step—experiencing social inequalities through direct contact with others and their social worlds—, in order to contribute to the promotion of social justice. In this sense, educational reforms have a key role to stimulate socioeconomic diversity in schools and encourage school communities to go beyond the reasonable restricted openness to social class difference and mixing. The Inclusion Law seems to be in the right direction then although we still do not know much about its effects. As I explained in Chapter I, this law started to be gradually applied in 2016 and was finally implemented in the whole country in 2019, but not in every educational year group yet. Preliminary evidence on the impact of the regulation of the admission processes involved in the law suggests that, despite the reduction of arbitrary discrimination, old patterns of inequality persist (Carrasco & Honey, 2019; Sillard, Garay, & Troncoso, 2018). Thus, socioeconomically disadvantaged students continue being concentrated in the least prestigious schools, possibly due to the recent implementation of the new system. In an ideal scenario where school desegregation is reached and social heterogeneity within schools is strengthened, I argue that the Inclusion Law and public policy more broadly should also consider the limitations of simply ensuring school mix and the need for safeguarding certain minimum conditions for the schools to promote mixing and conviviality (Amin, 2003; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Vincent, Neal, & Iqbal, 2018a; Wise & Noble, 2016).

The National Policy of Conviviality, created in 2015 (see Glossary), is a relevant initiative in this regard. Like the Inclusion Law, this policy has been developed over the years and currently proposes an ethical horizon of conviviality ['convivencia'] as based on respect, inclusion, democratic participation, and peaceful and dialogic resolution of conflicts. It also defines the guidelines for the schools to manage conviviality ['gestión de la convivencia'], which are the following: a) developing institutional contexts for learning for conviviality (e.g. ensure safety
within the school); b) developing pedagogic contexts for learning for conviviality (e.g. interactions within the classroom); c) design and implementation of protocols and procedures to solve conflicts; and d) participation in local networks of conviviality (i.e. collaboration). However, I argue that this policy is insufficient due to the structural barriers that schools encounter for successfully enacting inclusion and conviviality. These barriers include the following:

- **Principles:** As I argue in Chapter VI, the dissociation of redistribution strategies (i.e., including disadvantaged students in middle-class schools to improve their future opportunities) from issues of recognition should be, at the least, a matter of concern for Chilean education policy. In this sense, while forbidding stigmatisation and discrimination against certain students, educational policy should also promote a particular egalitarianism in schools; one that does not render socioeconomic differences invisible, but that acknowledges them as a result of structural inequalities rather than individual features. Tentatively, this can be understood as a socialist egalitarianism, which attempts to overcome a stratification structure shaped by unequal access to goods and resources, as opposed to a meritocratic egalitarianism, which attempts to guarantee equality of opportunities so everyone can have the opportunity to access goods and resources, despite their original background.

- **Contradictory policies:** Something that arose from the interviews was the difficulties of addressing issues pertaining to students’ social diversity given the high stakes testing and accountability system in Chile. This uses SIMCE (the national standardised test) to assign resources to the schools, define their status, and even close them, pushing them to focus on standardisation and academic performance, and to disregard issues of conviviality. Therefore, I would like to argue for the need for the Inclusion Law to articulate with the broader policy context to prevent schools from encountering contradictory forces in relation to inclusion and diversity.

- **Material and pedagogical conditions:** School mix entails particular challenges and tensions for teachers (Rojas, 2018). Thus, promoting not only peaceful coexistence but also the active negotiation of social class difference requires appropriate economic and professional resources (e.g., specialists trained in strategies for dealing with socioeconomic diversity, and not only with diversity in terms of the inclusion of students diagnosed with special educational needs [SEN]). It is also necessary for public policy to allow higher degrees of flexibility than at present in order for schools to make the
necessary adaptations according to the populations with which they work (e.g., spaces in the curriculum and the schools’ timetables).

In this context, a school’s focus on issues of conviviality should translate into an institutional habitus that promotes a negotiated togetherness to achieve mutual understanding across social class. That is, an institutional habitus that creates togetherness, acknowledging that this requires intentional efforts due to the existence of persistent patterns of exclusion surrounding social class. Thus, instead of promoting the assimilation of working-class students/parents into the middle classes, I would suggest schools be more open and encourage the possibility for everyone (both working- and middle-class families) to be challenged and changed by social class difference. I argue that a crucial aspect of an institutional habitus that fosters two-way exchanges entails having no fear of awkwardness and possible conflicts that socioeconomic diversity may cause; for example, in situations such as that described by the History Teacher at RS (Chapter V), when he overtly asked the students to reveal the socioeconomic situations of their families. These possible tensions, however, need to be institutionally managed with the help of professional support, in order to guarantee the moral and physical safety of the whole community (i.e., their moral standing as subjects that deserve respect equally). As mentioned above in this section, this requires special resources and conditions safeguarded by the educational policy.

3.2. Analytical contributions

On an analytical level, this thesis contributes to the field of sociology of education by shedding light on the teachers’ and parents’ dispositions to social class differences and the ways in which these relate to their expectations for the children. More broadly, my study provides data and analytical distinctions for an agenda of enquiry on the cultural aspects of the social and the subjective experience of social class (Bottero, 2004; Espinoza & Barozet, 2009; Mendez & Gayo, 2018; Sayer, 2005). It also provides relevant data for the field of moral economics, which studies the relationships between economic practices and organisations, and ethical sentiments “regarding the responsibilities and rights of individuals and institutions with respect to others” (Sayer, 2000: 79).

In particular, by focusing on the school context, I have added to the macro sociological discussion on the reproduction of the social structure and its possibilities for change through addressing micro-processes (i.e., the dynamics within a community and the individuals’ subjectivity) shaping social distance and proximity in socioeconomically diverse schools. I argue that an emphasis on these micro-processes is important to address questions on the
relationship between cultural and social changes. More specifically, I argue that social projects intended to contribute to a more equal and cohesive society need a cultural basis that allows such structural changes. An example of this is the project of the ENU or Escuela Nacional Unificada (Unified National School) in Chile. This was a reform proposed by former socialist president Salvador Allende (1970-1973) to create a unified school system, one of its main goals being to create schools understood as sites of conviviality by bringing together people from different backgrounds. However, this project and the social mix it involved faced strong resistance, so it never saw the light of day.

Conceptually, I propose the concept of ‘versatile habitus’ to shed light on the reflexive aspects of the habitus, an area usually overlooked in Bourdieu’s writings and expanded by further research (e.g., Bottero, 2009; Decoteau, 2016; Ingram & Abrahams, 2018; Lahire, 2003; Reay, 2015a; Sweetman, 2003—see Chapter III). I define this concept as a habitus shaped by flexible and open dispositions and, as such, able to adapt itself to different socially classed fields. I argue that such adaptability is perceived by my parent respondents as being facilitated by the experience of social class difference and, more precisely, by a particular ethical disposition (Sayer, 2010): an egalitarian disposition towards social class difference, that is, values and attitudes towards social class difference based on an assumed equality of respect across human beings. In turn, I reveal ambivalences constituting such a disposition amongst the staff and parent interviewees, which would not be possible to account for without a focus on the reflexive (Reay, 2015b; Skeggs, 2004b): the schools’ celebratory and assimilationist institutional habituses in relation to socioeconomic differences (chapters V and VI), and the parents’ complex combination of openness and restriction to these differences, as well as collective and private motivations (chapters VII and VIII).

In addition, I have identified links between the parents’ dispositions to social class difference and their views on the social structure and their positioning within it. In this sense, my thesis contributes to shedding light on the mechanisms through which school mix is associated with the production of particular social class fractions. On the one hand, within the working classes (i.e., school mix to build themselves as being respectable and distinguish themselves from those at the bottom) and, on the other hand, within the middle classes (i.e., school mix to build themselves as being charitable (RS) and progressive (IS)). The common element across parents is a neoliberal drive, which I define by their expectation of producing the conditions for the children to invest in themselves. Thus, these findings expand the literature on the relationship between schooling and the constitution of class fractions (e.g., Mendez, 2008; Mendez & Gayo, 2018). In addition, these findings suggest interesting nuances to understanding the meanings of neoliberal subjectivities in the Chilean school context by
uncovering the intertwinement of collective and private interests in parents' openness to social class mix and mixing. This is consistent with definitions of neoliberalism as generative and adaptive (neoliberalisms, in plural, instead of neoliberalism), and as articulating different rationalities which are not always coherent (Ball, 2012; Shamir, 2008).

4. Limitations of my study and future lines of enquiry

My research design presents methodological limitations that must be acknowledged given their conceptual and applied implications:

- I conducted one interview with each parent: Conducting repeated interviews with parents could have provided more subtle details about their ambivalences in relation to 'others' at the school, as well as about other aspects of their background and habitus relevant to understanding their dispositions to social class difference (e.g., their family’s socioeconomic conditions and their own mixing experiences). Future studies may benefit from carrying out a more intensive methodological design including repeat interviews and conversations with parents, in order to establish a more solid bond of trust to speak about the range of sensitive topics I addressed (i.e., perceptions about 'others') and thus capture more nuances in their accounts. Such an intensive approach may, for example, facilitate a deeper understanding of the tensions involved in the working classes’ adaptation to mostly middle-class fields (see Chapter VII), as well as possible tensions that school mix entails for the middle classes.

- I restricted the analysis of the families’ accounts to the parents: Along with schools, parents are a key actor in the children’s socialisation. For this reason, exploring their dispositions towards social class difference is crucial to visualise the possibilities for such dispositions to be shaped in the children (Chapter III). However, including the students in future research is relevant to understand their views and/or direct experiences of school mix and school mixing, which will not necessarily match the perceptions of their parents.

- I only applied one method: Even though in-depth semi-structured interviews provided me with valuable information about the reflexive processes involved in the participants’ dispositions to social class difference, I acknowledge that a wider range of strategies could possibly have shed light on further nuances in the analysis (e.g., differences between declared and observed friendship preferences). For example, observations could have provided information about the actual interactions between parents/children.
taking place at the schools. Also, shadowing parents could have provided an understanding of their dispositions to social class difference, not only in the school field but also in other contexts, which could provide a richer understanding of the way in which structures from different contexts are articulated in the habitus.

- Possible self-selection of participants: I acknowledge that my findings may be biased by self-selection, that is, that those parents who agreed to participate in my study did so because they have a particular interest in the topic researched (e.g., particularly egalitarian dispositions towards social class difference). This imposes restrictions on extrapolating my findings to all the parents at the two schools in my sample.

- A restricted longitudinal perspective: Using a case study approach meant concentrating my activities in short periods of fieldwork at each school (one and a half months at each school), which partly explains the limitations already mentioned. Moreover, conducting relatively short fieldwork implies that I was not able to witness the actual development of particular dispositions to social class difference and possible changes in these dispositions. Longer periods of fieldwork could provide more opportunities to explore these processes of subjectivity construction, as well as to understand how different activities that take place in the schools throughout the year reveal or foster certain institutional and individual dispositions to difference.

To sum up, a first future line of enquiry I identify is methodological and is related to the limitations mentioned above. I argue that most of these limitations can be successfully addressed by employing an ethnographic approach that entails longer periods of fieldwork and a wider array of participants and methods. In addition, the findings I have exposed could be used in statistical and mixed methods research aimed at identifying general trends in socioeconomically diverse schools in Chile or other contexts (e.g., the degree to which assimilationist institutional habituses are disseminated in schools, which could reveal more contextual stimuli).

A second line of enquiry, linked with the above, is conceptual. My thesis has shed light on the reflexive aspects of the habitus by providing evidence of the participants’ ethical dispositions, that is, their attitudes towards others who are different in terms of their social class. I argue that moving towards a comprehensive approach to dispositions to social class difference is necessary. This means, for example, addressing how the dispositions towards social class difference are displayed in other spaces and how they potentially become habituated in the habitus (see Chapter III). A comprehensive approach may also entail analysing the ways in
which dispositions towards social class difference articulate with other dispositions of the habitus and with the individuals’ habitus as a whole (e.g., in relation to their personal history). Finally, such an approach may explore processes of construction and change in the dispositions towards social class difference.

At a more applied level, by addressing the reflexive aspects of the habitus, my thesis has revealed the promotion of highly problematic claims of sameness within the schools that obscure real differences of interest between families from different backgrounds. Despite the parents valuing school mix and mixing (Chapter VII), they express strong individualistic expectations for their children in relation to engaging in socioeconomically diverse relationships (Chapter VII and VIII). And despite celebrating their socioeconomically heterogeneous student composition and having different institutional habituses (Chapter V), at both schools the staff expect working-class families to adjust their ways of feeling, thinking, and doing to those of the middle classes (Chapter VI). However, I have pointed to nuances in an interpretation of this finding as merely suggesting the reproduction of social inequalities: there is ambivalence in the respondents’ accounts, and ambivalence opens up possibilities for reflexivity and change (Chapter III). These issues give rise to a third line of enquiry, which involves critically weighting the pros and cons of school mix and mixing in terms of their contribution to social change and justice. For example, given that adaptation appears to involve a significant amount of labour for most disadvantaged parents, the study of the possible subjective costs that such labour entails is crucial to evaluate how beneficial school mix may be for these families. In addition, since claims of sameness restrict the possibilities for symmetrical engagements across social classes and for mutual benefits to emerge, exploring exceptional school settings in which such engagements take place (‘naturally’ or due to action-research studies) would make a great contribution to the understanding of the conditions for transcending an ontology of sameness in relation to social class school mix.
References


Fundación Chile. (2013). Análisis de la implementación de los programas de integración escolar (PIE) en establecimientos que han incorporado estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales transitorias (NEET). Retrieved from
Gaínza, Á. (2006). La entrevista en profundidad individual. In M. Canales (Ed.), *Metodologías de la investigación social. Introducción a los oficios* (pp. 219–263). Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=rOwS3Rj29bQC&pg=PA219&lpg=PA219&dq=La+entrevista+en+profundidad+individual+Gainza&source=bl&ots=kfRuCHhHi4&sig=-rDCqRB1__ANvdiyqSTOCsS82HY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi0voqskekXKXOAhWCchQKHHeTA8wQ6AEIHjAA#v=onepage&q=La+entrevista


262


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality Handbook ('Manual de Convivencia')</td>
<td>It defines the norms regulating social relationships and conviviality in the schools, as part of the National Policy of Conviviality ('Política Nacional de Convivencia'). This policy was created in 2015 as part of several educational reforms being implemented by the government. The aim of this policy is “to raise the formative goal of education and promote spaces for dialogue and democratic participation that foster critical and reflexive thinking, which are key elements for education in and for conviviality [‘convivencia’]” (Mineduc, 2015b, p. 4, my translation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Improvement Plan ('Plan de Mejoramiento Educativo')</td>
<td>It is a strategic planning tool for the school to organise its goals and actions. It is oriented to the constant improvement of the school’s institutional and pedagogical practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Educational Project ('Proyecto Educativo Institucional')</td>
<td>It defines the main guidelines giving order and sense to the educational labour of a school (Mineduc, 2014, 2015). Circumscribed by the limits defined by the Ministry of Education in the General Law of Education ('Ley General de Educación') (Mineduc, 2009) – i.e. the principles of autonomy, diversity and flexibility-, an Institutional Educational Project is defined by each school in order to “orient its activities and processes, giving the school actors a sense of attainment of the improvement goals and organising the institutional, curricular and pedagogic management in the medium and long term” (Mineduc, 2014, p. 5, my translation). There is no fixed structure for it, but it generally includes the vision or approach of the school (a sense of future), its mission (what it aims for), its values and principles, the pedagogic approach and a consideration of the social context in which the school operates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Rules of Procedure ('Reglamento Interno')</td>
<td>It specifies the norms regulating the functioning of a school, such as: duties and rights of the school community, as well as regulations regarding the admission and expelling processes, and the use of school uniform, amongst others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Inti School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaite</td>
<td>‘Flaite’ (singular) or ‘flaites’ (plural) is a Chilean idiom with a similar meaning to <em>chavs</em> in the UK. It does not have a strict definition, but is generally used to refer to poor young people (usually men but it also includes women) in the margins of society, e.g. street guys consuming drugs, with no aspirations of studying and/or having a stable job. For more information on the common prejudices associated with this stereotype, see: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaite">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaite</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana</td>
<td>‘Nana’ (singular) or ‘nanas’ (plural) is the informal word used by both middle- and working-class people in Chile to refer to women employed as domestic workers (it is only a feminine word).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>Rodriguez School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special education needs (e.g., disabilities or language disorder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN Programme</td>
<td>In Spanish, ‘Programa de Integracion Escolar’. It focuses on providing additional economic subsidies to schools according to their number of students diagnosed with SEN, so that they could offer pertinent human and material resources (e.g. educational psychopedagogy experts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMCE</td>
<td>SIMCE is the Chilean national test (National System of Measurement of the Education Quality, Sistema Nacional de Medición de la Calidad Educativa), which has the declared aim of measuring the students’ knowledge in different areas, such as Maths, Language and Sciences. Until 2015, it was applied to all the national schools in different levels (for example, five levels in 2015, from 7-year-old to 16-year-old students). Since 2016, the number of tests is reduced, some of them being applied just to a sample of schools, but all students aged 9 and 16 continue having to take the test every year. SIMCE’s scores are measured in a scale from 230 to 350 and it is administered by the Agency for Quality Education - Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación-. More information in <a href="http://www.simce.cl">www.simce.cl</a> and <a href="http://www.agenciaeducacion.cl">www.agenciaeducacion.cl</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Interview Schedules (translated from Spanish)

Parents:

General perceptions about the school and its socioeconomic diversity:

1. Why did you choose this school? Were there other schools that you discarded? Why?
2. How would you define this school? Which are its main characteristics?
3. Are you happy with this school? Which aspects do you like and which not?
4. How would you define the families attending the school, both students and parents? Can you describe them?
5. What are the main differences between them? And their similarities?
6. Do you identify groups of students/parents? How are these groups?
7. Do you consider this is a socially diverse school? Why?

Perceived benefits and/or challenges of school mix:

8. What do you consider are the benefits of being in a school with a socially diverse population? (ask for specific situations)
9. What do you consider are the challenges of being in a school with a socially diverse population? (ask for specific situations)
10. How do you think the institution’s installations, curriculum and other institutional features and strategies are connected (or not) to the topic of diversity within the school?
11. Would you be happy if more people from a different socioeconomic background arrives to this school? (ask for details about those people) Why?

Mixing preferences:

12. Are there people you or your child meet more often than other? How are your child’s friends? Where do they play? (Only in the school?) What do they usually do? Can you describe a typical activity between your child and his/her friends?
13. How would you describe the parents of your child’s friends? Are they similar/different to yourself (ask for house rules, tastes, expectations about their children, etc.)? In which ways?
14. Are you friend of other parents? If not, why? If yes, how are they? When and where do you usually meet each other? What do you usually do?
15. Are there children you would not like your child to be friend of? If yes, why? How are they? Do you feel the same with other parents? Why?

(If it still has not emerged) What do you think about being friend of people from other social class or ethnic background? Do you think it is possible to do it in this school? Would you like your child to be friend of children from other background? In which cases would you like it? In
which cases you would prefer to avoid it? Is it the same for you as an adult, in relation to other parents? In which cases would you be happy to be friend of other person from a different background? Can you think in any particular person or situation?

School staff

General perceptions about the school and its socioeconomic diversity:

1. How would you define this school? Which are its main characteristics?

2. Are you happy with this school? Which aspects do you like and which not?

3. How would you define the families attending the school, both students and parents? Can you describe them?

4. What are the main differences between families at the school? And their similarities?

5. Do you identify groups of students/parents? How are these groups?

6. Do you consider this is a socially diverse school? Why?

Perceived benefits and/or challenges of school mix:

7. What do you consider are the benefits of the school’s social diversity? (ask for specific situations)

8. What do you consider are the challenges of the school’s social diversity? (ask for specific situations)

9. How do you think the institution’s installations, curriculum and other institutional features and strategies are connected (or not) to the topic of diversity within the school?

10. How do the students at the school relate each other? Are there groups? If yes, how would you describe these? Are there conflicts?

11. How do the parents at the school relate each other? Are there groups? If yes, how would you describe these? Are there conflicts?

12. What are the parents’ preferences in terms of their children’s friendship?

(If it still has not emerged) What do you think about being friend of people from other social class or ethnic background? Do you think it is possible to do it in this school? Do you think the students/parents have friendship preferences based on social class? In which cases parents or students would be open to be friends of someone else? In which cases parents or students would not be open to be friends of someone else? (ask for examples)
Appendix 3. Information Sheets and Consent Forms (translated from Spanish)

Information sheet for headteacher

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Manuela Mendoza and I am inviting you to take part in my research project, ‘Social mixing and negotiating subjectivity in socially diverse schools. An ethnographically oriented case study in a Chilean school’. This research is part of my thesis as a PhD student at the University College London - Institute of Education (UCL-IoE), London. This study has the support of the Chilean Government through its graduate scholarship programme ‘Becas Chile’.

I am hoping to explore how it is for the principal, deputy principals, teachers and parents to be in an exceptionally socially diverse school, attempting to find out –for example- what they consider to be challenging and beneficial of this situation.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the project, but please don’t hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why is this research being conducted?

The questions I expect to answer with this research are: a) what are the processes shaping interactions between families socially diverse? And b) how do the families experience the social diversity of the school? I consider these questions are important due to the lack of social diversity in the Chilean schools and because we, researchers, barely know about those exceptionally diverse schools, as this school is. Now, the government is implementing reforms attempting to increase such diversity in schools thus it is important to consider how current socially diverse schools live such a diversity.

Why am I being invited to take part?

You are invited to take part of the study because, as the principal, you have in-depth knowledge about the children studying in this school and the ways they relate to each other. Therefore, your perceptions about the challenges and benefits associated with the students’ social diversity are particularly relevant for this study. Teachers (5), deputy principals (2), and parents (6) are also expected to participate.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

Taking part in the study considers your participation in one audio-recorded interview conducted in person in the school or another place of your preference, in a suitable moment for you. It is expected to last 45 minutes; arrangements can be made depending on your willingness to talk and availability of time (e.g. a longer interview or two 20-minutes interviews). Some of the questions that I would ask you are: How would you describe the school’s population? What do you consider are the challenges and benefits of a socially diverse school like this?

Taking part in the study also implies that you are allowing me to access the school to contact other potential participants to be interviewed (two deputy principals, five teachers and six parents). The fieldwork is expected to last three months.
Will anyone know I have been involved?

All the information you provide will be confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. It will not be disclosed to other participants in the research or people external to the study; only I and the UCL-IoE staff supervising my research will access to the transcription of your interview. All the data possibly to lead to identify you –as your name, the school and the immediate locality- will be anonymised when communicating the findings of this thesis (for example, using pseudonyms).

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There should not be any problem for you due to your participation. However, if you feel it may be risky or uncomfortable –for example, if you do not like the questions I pose- you are entitled to stop at any point.

What will happen to the results of the research?

All the material produced by the research (e.g. interviews) will be stored in password secured computers, in order to protect the participants’ confidentiality. The results of the research will be disseminated in academic spaces such as scientific reviews and conferences, where your details, as those of all other participants, will be anonymised with pseudonyms.

I also expect to communicate general findings with the principal and deputy principals, emphasising trends that could be useful for the school to be aware of in order to take decisions about the way social diversity is faced. In so doing, I will pay particular attention at avoiding any information that could lead to conflicts and protecting the anonymity of the participants.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part in the study. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. It is important to make clear that, if you choose not to take part, there will be no negative repercussion for you, your employment and your school.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at manuela.mendoza@gmail.com or [telephone].

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee.
**Consent form for headteacher**

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form:

I have read and understood the information leaflet 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 assure anonymity 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 Manuela Mendoza at any time

I understand that the results will be shared with University College London – Institute of Education (UCL-IoE)

Name _______________________

Signed _______________________

Date ____________________

Researcher’s name ______________

Signed _______________________

Yes    No

272
Information sheet for teachers and deputy principals

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Manuela Mendoza and I am inviting you to take part in my research project, ‘Social mixing and negotiating subjectivity in socially diverse schools. An ethnographically oriented case study in a Chilean school’. This research is part of my thesis as a PhD student at the University College London - Institute of Education (UCL-IoE), London. This study has the support of the Chilean Government through its graduate scholarship programme ‘Becas Chile’.

I am hoping to explore how it is for the principal, deputy principals, teachers, and parents to be in an exceptionally socially diverse school, attempting to find out –for example- what they consider to be challenging and beneficial of this situation.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the project, but please don’t hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why is this research being conducted?

The questions I expect to answer with this research are: a) what are the processes shaping interactions between families socially diverse? And b) how do the families experience the social diversity of the school? I consider these questions important due to the lack of social diversity in the Chilean schools and because we, researchers, barely know about those exceptionally diverse schools, as this school is. Now, the government is implementing reforms attempting to increase such diversity in schools thus it is important to consider how current socially diverse schools live such a diversity.

Why am I being invited to take part?

You are invited to take part of the study because, due to your role in the school, you have in-depth knowledge about the children studying here and the ways they relate to each other. Therefore, your perceptions about the challenges and benefits associated with the students’ social diversity are particularly relevant for this study. Other teachers and deputy principals, as well as the principal and parents (6) are also participating.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

Taking part in the study considers your participation in one audio-recorded interview conducted in person in the school or another place of your preference, in a suitable moment for you. It is expected to last 45 minutes; arrangements can be made depending on your willingness to talk and availability of time (e.g. a longer interview or two 20-minutes interviews). Some of the questions that I would ask you are: How would you describe the school’s population What do you consider are the challenges and benefits of a socially diverse school like this?

Will anyone know I have been involved?

All the information you provide will be confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. It will not be disclosed to other participants in the research or people external to the study; only I and the UCL-IoE staff supervising my research will access to the transcription of your interview. All the data possibly to lead to identify you –as your name, the school and the
immediate locality- will be anonymised when communicating the findings of this thesis (for example, using pseudonyms).

**Could there be problems for me if I take part?**

There should not be any problem for you due to your participation. However, if you feel it may be risky or uncomfortable – for example, if you do not like the questions I pose- you are entitled to stop at any point.

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

All the material produced by the research (e.g. interviews) will be stored in password secured computers, in order to protect the participants’ confidentiality. The results of the research will be disseminated in academic spaces such as scientific reviews and conferences, where your details, as those of all other participants, will be anonymised with pseudonyms.

I also expect to communicate general findings with the principal and deputy principals, emphasising trends that could be useful for the school to be aware of in order to take decisions about the way social diversity is faced. In so doing, I will pay particular attention at avoiding any information that could lead to conflicts and protecting the anonymity of the participants.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part in the study. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. It is important to make clear that, if you choose not to take part, there will be no negative repercussion for you, your employment and your school.

**Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.**

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at manuela.mendoza@gmail.com or [telephone].

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee.
Consent form for teachers and deputy principals

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form:

I have read and understood the information leaflet 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 assure anonymity 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 Manuela Mendoza at any time
I understand that the results will be shared with University College London – Institute of Education (UCL-IoE)

Name _______________________
Signed _____________________ Date __________________

Researcher’s name _______________ Signed ______________
Information sheet for parents

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Manuela Mendoza and I am inviting you to take part in my research project, ‘Social mixing and negotiating subjectivity in socially diverse schools. An ethnographically oriented case study in a Chilean school’. This research is part of my thesis as a PhD student at the University College London - Institute of Education (UCL-IoE), London. This study has the support of the Chilean Government through its graduate scholarship programme ‘Becas Chile’.

I am hoping to explore how it is for the principal, deputy principals, teachers, and parents to be in an exceptionally socially diverse school, attempting to find out –for example- what they consider to be challenging and beneficial of this situation.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the project, but please don’t hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why is this research being conducted?

The questions I expect to answer with this research are: a) what are the processes shaping interactions between families socially diverse? And b) how do the families experience the social diversity of the school? I consider these questions are important due to the lack of social diversity in the Chilean schools and because we, researchers, barely know about those exceptionally diverse schools, as this school is. Now, the government is implementing reforms attempting to increase such diversity in schools thus it is important to consider how current socially diverse schools live such a diversity.

Why am I being invited to take part?

You are invited to take part of the study because of your in-depth knowledge about your child, the school dynamics and the social relationships between students and parents in the school. Therefore, your perceptions about the challenges and benefits associated with the students’ social diversity are particularly relevant for this study. Other parents (5), teachers (5), principal and deputy principals (2) are also participating.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

Taking part in the study considers your participation in conversations and two audio-recorded interviews conducted in person in a place of your preference, in a suitable moment for you. Each interview is expected to last one hour but arrangements can be made depending on your willingness to talk and availability of time. Some of the questions that I would like to ask you are: How would you describe the school’s population? What do you consider are the challenges and benefits of a socially diverse school like this?

Will anyone know I have been involved?

All the information you provide will be confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. It will not be disclosed to other participants in the research or people external to the study; only I and the UCL-IoE staff supervising my research will access to the transcriptions of our conversations. All the data possibly to lead to identify you –as your name, the school and the immediate locality- will be anonymised when communicating the findings of this thesis (for example, using pseudonyms).
Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There should not be any problem for you due to your participation. However, if you feel it may be risky or uncomfortable –for example, if you do not like the questions I pose- you are entitled to stop at any point.

What will happen to the results of the research?

All the material produced by the research (e.g. interviews) will be stored in password secured computers, in order to protect the participants’ confidentiality. The results of the research will be disseminated in academic spaces such as scientific reviews and conferences, where your details, as those of all other participants, will be anonymised with pseudonyms.

I also expect to communicate general findings with the principal and deputy principals, emphasising trends that could be useful for the school to be aware of in order to take decisions about the way social diversity is faced. In so doing, I will pay particular attention at avoiding any information that could lead to conflicts and protecting the anonymity of the participants.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part in the study. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. It is important to make clear that, if you choose not to take part, there will be no negative repercussion for you, your employment and your school.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at manuela.mendoza@gmail.com or [telephone].

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee
Consent form for parents

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form:

I have read and understood the information leaflet 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
assure anonymity 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 Manuela Mendoza at any time
I understand that the results will be shared with University College
London – Institute of Education (UCL-IoE)
I have discussed the information sheet with my child

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Name _______________________
Signed ______________________ Date ______________________

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Researcher’s name _____________ Signed ______________________
Appendix 4. Links to Dissemination Resources

1. Author of article in peer reviewed European educational journal (2019). Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1474904119830846

2. Co-author of opinion column in Chilean media (24/04/2016). Available at: https://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/opinion/2016/04/24/politicas-migratorias-de-chile-en-el-area-educativa-la-ley-de-inclusion/