

**Choosing By Habitus: Multi-Case Study of Families & Schools in the
Context of School Choice**

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Romina Madrid Miranda

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Professor Karen Seashore Louis, Faculty Advisor

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all families, teachers, and principals from the commune that participated in the study, who do the best they can for their children and students. It is also dedicated to my family, specifically who have had an influence on me: my great grandmother Rosa Amelia Jerez Jerez, my great uncle Alberto Moreno Jerez, and my uncle Raul Madrid Devia. Finally, it is dedicate to my son, Victor, the most important project that I have had, for all the time I have lost with you because of this work, but also for all the things I have learn during this process that I hope will influence you in the best way.

Abstract

This qualitative multi-case study explores the dynamics among schools and families during the process of choosing a school through a social class lens and includes narrative data gathered from families and school professionals in four schools within one local commune of Chile. Findings illustrate that families and schools enacted social class through their habitus, Bourdieu's concept of socialized norms or tendencies (and values) that guide behavior and thinking (Bourdieu, 1977). Three types of habitus emerge: historical, aspirational, and survival. In the case of families, habitus is expressed in the process of choosing a school. In the case of schools, staff members activate elements of their habitus in the ways they perceive and face the process of enrollment and recruitment of students. The study illuminates the ways in which social class moderates school choice by affecting not only families but also schools. Because schools have preferences in the type of families they seek and wish to retain, they reinforce the habitus of the families.

The relationship between institutions and families points to the complex relationships among social class, social capital, identity, and educational institutions in a setting where choosing among different educational options is normative. Conclusions raise questions about; the role of habitus in the process of choosing a school, the influence of social class, through habitus, by impacting the ways families choose schools and schools recruit families; and the contribution of schools in social reproduction.

Keywords: School Choice, Social Class, Habitus, School-Family Relationships.

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Preface

I grew up as middle class girl in a middle size commune in Chile during the eighties. During that time, Chile transitioned from a right-wing dictatorship to a democracy. I spend many of my afternoons at the elementary school in which my mother taught, which enrolled primarily lower-class children. At the time I did not understand why, but I felt different from those children, even when they were my dear friends. My family's house was in a neighborhood that bordered middle class and lower class zones. I always felt that I was in the middle, that in a certain way my social identity was forged in between. I was able to see other people's experiences but from a place of privilege. Privilege came not only from my subjective experience; but it came from my position in the social structure; I was able to navigate a position "in between classes," in a country with one of the highest levels of socioeconomic segregation in the world. I was able to discern different positions of people in my childhood world through the lens of social class and gradually became aware of the implications of it. Looking back I can see how much social class differences forged the way I understood myself and my world, my values and the norms I considered important.... my habitus.

Later, I felt the other side of the coin. My parents made a significant financial effort to pay for a private high school. Most of my classmates were upper-middle class and that was evident from the way they talked to the way they thought. I always was behind academically; there was a substantial gap in knowledge from my previous school, and I remember working hard and searching for extra support outside school during the first months. The differences between my classmates and me were not due to personality or other individual traits but clearly rooted in a collective way of understanding and

perceiving the world. As I again occupied the border between social class groups, differences were about habitus and not just about economic privilege.

Further education and personal experiences, including moving to another big city to pursue my degree and eventually becoming in psychologist modified and of course enriched my experience. In 2011, I had finished my professional degree and worked in a University Center for Education Research. After almost four decades of extreme policies of privatization and marketization in education, the national context started to boil and social discontent was felt. Middle, high, and college students led one of the most important social movements protesting the deep and negative consequences of the design of education system on quality and equity. I was amazed, and hoped for the promising outcomes of such social movement. One positive outcome of extreme inequity was that nobody could avoid looking at it. That was one of the main reasons I decide to follow a postgraduate degree; gaining understanding about the ways social inequality was produced and reproduced in the Chilean education system.

That year, I was awarded with a scholarship to study a Ph.D. in the U.S. I used this remarkable experience to make sense of Chile and of myself in Chile. Again, with that, my habitus has remained constant in some respects but has changed significantly in others. My dissertation illustrates the role of habitus of families and schools in the mutual process of choosing, which implies for families choosing a school, and for schools, recruiting “choosing” families. The next pages compile the story of those who participated in my study, although their impact on my own story is yet to be written.

Chapter One

Linking Schools and Families in the Process of Choosing a School

In every country, families are recognized as a central component in the schooling process. Schools and families are unavoidably connected, as each bears responsibility for children's development. However this connection is not without tensions. Although there is a persistent line of research that emphasizes on the contrasting forces between school and families, by showing the influential role that family backgrounds have in explaining differences in students' achievement (Epstein, 2001),¹ and the efforts that schools made to demonstrate that they are able to moderate such influence,² less is known about the relationship between families and schools in the exploration of specific policies. This study links schools and families through a social class lens with the purpose of gain a better understanding of the process of choosing a school.

Much attention in U.S. research is focused on how the relationship between school and families are affected by race and ethnicity (e.g. Bower & Griffin, 2011; De Gaetano, 2007; Galindo & Medina, 2009; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Another particular aspect in this literature, both in the U.S. and other countries, has been the role of social class as mediating such relationships. The recognition of centrality of the school-family relationships to student success has been accompanied by strong evidence of the role of social class in moderating the type and "quality" of impacts that

¹ Most of the large-scale and technically sound studies on the impact of parental involvement on pupil achievement have been conducted in the USA. They acknowledge that parental involvement has different forms and they are related differentially with student success.

² This literature focused on how schools programs framed within "a culturally relevant approach" might better answer the parental needs of minority populations in order to ensure parental involvement.

family can have over student outcomes (e.g. Coleman et al., 1966, Lareau, 1987; Lee, 2002).

School choice, on the other hand, constitutes a distinct body of literature that has become one of the current cornerstones of educational policy research. School choice policies are often framed in terms of fundamental civic and democratic values, and thus, are situated in the middle of a vigorous debate that centers on the public and private rights and benefits associated with education. Parents have the right to rear their child accordingly with their values –which is coherent with the value of freedom of education – and societies have the right to reproduce the foundational institutions that support democracy, and thus they need to ensure children are prepared for participate according to the values and principles of a democratic society (Levin, 2002).

To the extent that school choice policies have penetrated societies, countries around the world are paying increasing attention to them, both to understand the effects of different forms of choice as well at their impacts over the long run on student achievement, school segregation, and parental satisfaction. An importance subset of the literature on school choice has viewed families and parents as key protagonists; however, it has paid little attention to the dynamic interactions between schools and families in the process of choosing a school. I argue that such dimension constitutes a critical and underexplored piece of the school choice process.

In theory, choice becomes a context in which the school and family interaction should be found. One could expect that the implementation of school choice policies and systems have effects on the local arena, where families and schools are located. However,

studies have not linked schools and families in the process of choosing a school. Such interaction is ripe for theorizing and empirical work. We do not know what happens between school staff and families under the overall context of school choice. This entails knowing not only how families face the process of choosing a school, but also understanding how schools face it, and the dynamics that exist between families and schools in that context. This study aims fulfill that gap.

Before presenting the context of the study, a central definition has to be made. It refers to the concept of “**The Process of Choosing a School**”. The examination of school choice in this study, understands it as a sociocultural process, rather than a particular event, and that decisions/choice persist even after a child matriculates at a particular school. The emphasis on *the process* indicates that choosing a school involves many steps and strategies. This definition also implies that in the process of choosing a school, both, families and schools, are engaging; thus, there is not a process only circumscribed to families.

The Context of the Study: The Chilean Education System

My examination of the link between schools and families through a social class lens in the process of choosing a school will be focused on Chile, a country that offers a particular setting where to address the issue of school choice. Chile has operated with a nationwide voucher system in a market-driven educational system for more than three decades and it represents a unique case to understand market-based reforms in education. This section provides a brief characterization of the education system, a historical

overview of the education system, and some of the main concerns associated with that policy.

General characterization. The Chilean educational system includes 12 years of compulsory education. Primary education is from ages 6 to 13, and secondary education is from ages 14 to 17. In 2000, 99 percent of school-age children were studying at primary schools, and 90 at secondary schools. Both public and private alternatives exist for all educational levels (UNESCO/IBE, 2010). There are four administrative categories for schools: (a) municipal, which are administered by the country's 341 municipal governments and are totally financed through a per-pupil voucher system based on student attendance; (b) private subsidized, which are financed through the same voucher system; (c) corporation schools, vocational high schools funded by the state and managed by business corporation; and (d) private non-subsidized which are fully funded by parents. About 93.5% of the students attend a school receiving state subsidy (García-Huidobro, 2007).

Private schools (subsidized or not) may be organized as either for or non-profit. In order to receive public funding, private schools must reserve 15% of seats in each class to students classified as "vulnerable" (based on family income and mother's level of education). Schools receive extra funding for each "vulnerable" student they enroll.³

The relative sizes of the four administrative categories, in terms of enrolment and trends in the past three decades appear in Table 1. Data shows the diminishing of the

³ Charges allowed (Cobros permitidos, in Spanish), Ministry of Education. Extracted from <https://www.ayudamineduc.cl/Temas/Detalle/07cacab4-052d-e211-8986-00505694af53>

enrolment in public sector (Municipal Education) while the opposite phenomenon is observed in the private subsidized sector (Private, subsidized education).

Table 1. Enrolment by School Administrative Categories, Percentages, Primary and Secondary Education, 1990-2015.

	1990	2002	2015
Municipal Education	58.0	52.1	36.5
Private, subsidized education	32.4	37.8	54.6
Private, paid education	7.7	8.5	7.6
Corporation schools	1.9	1.6	1.3
Total enrolment school system	2,973,752	3,601,214	3,535,835

Source: Cox, 2004; Data Mineduc – Ministry of Education of Chile

School choice in Chile. In Chile, the interest on the nationwide school choice policy, implemented more than three decades ago, has increasing during the last years given the deep crisis of public education, which is partially reflected in the migration of students from the municipal sector to the government-subsidized private sector (see table 1.0). Another source of attention on the school choice policy refers to the higher levels of inequality. Although empirical research on school choice in Chile is discussed in chapter 2, this section presents a brief historical review of the evolution of this policy, highlighting one of the most controversial outcomes of the education system: socioeconomic school segregation. Given the particular context in which school choice operates in Chile, I will review key elements of the design of the choice system.

The miracle of Chile.⁴ The first experience of neo-liberalism implemented in Latin America was the economic program carried out in Chile after the fall of Salvador

⁴ It is how Milton Friedman, in an interview, describes the reorientation of the economy in Chile in the 1980s led by the “Chicago Boys.” Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/shared/minitext/int_miltonfriedman.html#10

Allende under the right-wing military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) (Harvey, 2005; Torres & Schugurensky, 2002). Carnoy and McEwan (2001) highlight that, at the time of the military coup, Chile's education system was one of the most developed in Latin America, and was characterized by a long tradition of administrative and financing centralization, and also, by an important public support of private education. Conversely, Beyer (2000) and Gallegos (2002) point out that there were negative aspects of the education system, specifically, that in the late 60s and 70s there was an over-bureaucratization of the Chilean state. A high administrative centralization (national and regional) created a weak distribution of educational resources and other problems such as rigid curricula that was inflexible and unsuitable for local needs, low community participation in school affairs, low educational quality, and low efficiency (Beyer, 2000).

Although private education developed alongside state education since the beginning of the 19th century, it was not until 1981 that parental choice the strategy to introduce a demand-driven subsidy in a nation-wide voucher system (Falabella, Seppänen, & Raczynski, 2014). Chile underwent a radical restructuring of the financial and management components of its educational system, which was articulated by what was called the educational 1980's Reform. This reform was mainly a structural and was guided by three principles: territorial decentralization, market elements (competition, election), and state subsidiarity (targeting, privatization) (Gallegos, 2002).⁵

⁵ Linked to territorial decentralization, the main changes were in teachers' status and the transference of school' administration from government to municipalities. Public schools started to be administered by two types of organizations: Department of Municipal Education Administration (DAEM) and the Education Corporations. DAEM are dependent of the municipalities and Corporations are not- profit organizations. Related to privatization, there was a change in how schools were financed.

In 1981 a large-scale voucher system was created, where government financed municipal schools and private subsidized schools through monthly payments (vouchers) based on student attendance records. Education was organized since then in a mixed scheme (García-Huidobro, 2007). Although the 1980's Reform introduced a voucher system with the consequent choice mechanisms; the privatization has been a much broader process sustained by democratic governments. For example, a decree called "The Shared Financing Act," which established that private subsidized schools may charge a monthly tuition fee to families (Carnoy & McEwan, 2001), was installed after the return to democracy in 1990. Overall, privatization' efforts reduced the public effort to improve schooling since it relied on the free market to increase achievement.

In this context, students and their parents became economic actors, with the latter being in charge of deciding and selecting the "best" educational offer, within the logic of market. Parents and particularly their ability to choose were declared paramount to the proper performance of the educational "market." Those transformations in the education system were based on the expectation that the private sector would resolve problems detected on the public sector (Beyer, 2000; Gallegos, 2002).

The transformations described contributed to install the belief that *private was always better than public*; and thus, that any service linked to a family's payment would be of stronger quality than any free service. In other words, not only the ability to choose but particularly the ability to pay became the icon associated with quality.

Beyond the success of privatization efforts regarding the installation of an ideological and collective mindset that private is better than public, the long-term

outcomes have not been equally successful. Despite the faith in competition, the rise in student achievement has not occurred. Indeed, in 2011, The Ministry of Education of Chile (Mineduc in Spanish) declared that the remaining tasks of the education system are focused on quality, cost-efficiency, and inequality (Mineduc, 2011). The main concerns regarding equity are described below.

*The Chilean apartheid.*⁶ In Chile, socioeconomic (SES) school segregation is extremely high. This means that students are separated by social class within the educational system. The marked degree of inequality in the distribution of students according to their socioeconomic status has been empirically tested by research (Valenzuela, Bellei, & De los Rios, 2009; 2014). Chile ranks as the second highest of 57 countries in the index of school segregation with a score of 0.50 on this measure (Willms, 2010). This measure reports values between 0 and 1, where a score of 0.6 reflects a situation of hyper segregation; that is, a student's population does not have almost any type of contact with students from different socioeconomic groups (Valenzuela, et al, 2010).

The high level of SES school segregation is corroborated by scores on the Duncan index that represents the distribution of vulnerable students among schools in a given territory. Chile has a score of 0.52 for the bottom 30% of poorest students and a score of 0.60 for the top 30% of wealthy students, that is, in Chile half of students from low SES status and 60% of students from high SES status would have to be moved to another school to ensure diversity. The literature shows that students are more segregated in the private than the public sector, and in subsidized private schools as compared to municipal

⁶ Chile has been compared with the South African policies of racial segregation regarding the highest levels of socioeconomic segregation. Retrieved from <https://edcampsantiago.wordpress.com/2012/08/02/apartheid-en-chile-por-mario-waissbluth/>

(public) schools (Valenzuela, 2008). This is critical considering that a significant proportion of the Chilean student population (54%) attends private subsidized schools (Table 1).

Current debates in Chile about the state of elementary and secondary education have emphasized these consequences. As the title of this subsection indicates, this phenomenon has been portrayed as, “The Chilean Apartheid” because of the high levels of segregation. Authors have also emphasized that students’ outcomes appears equally distributed; students who attend more expensive schools and the poorest of Santiago de Chile have no more than 20 points of difference in the PISA international test (Waissbluth, 2012).

The structural design. Unlike other voucher systems in the world, Chile’s voucher system offers preferential conditions for private subsidized schools. It allows for-profit organizations, pupil selection mechanisms, and the collection of fees from families. These policy mechanisms are key components of the structural design of the education system, and thus, modulate the ways in which school choice is implemented at national level. Those mechanisms affect deeply the ways in which families and schools perceived and face the process of choosing a school.

Pupils’ selection. Regulations regarding school admission criteria have been ambiguous. Theoretically, “The General Education Law” (LGE) (2009) prohibits the selection of students through the sixth year of schooling in municipal and subsidized private schools; however, the inconsistencies in its formulation and the nonexistence of

inspection carried with this mandate are not fulfilled in practice. Unlike private subsidized schools, municipal schools are not allowed to select students.

Studies demonstrate that schools segregate by controlling the admission of students, either by academic performance or by the Institutional Educational Project, which encourages a homogeneous (and “better”) population of student (Contreras Sepúlveda & Bustos, 2010; Trevino, Salazar, & Donoso, 2011). Research shows that subsidized private schools compete for students with better academic records, attracting the best students from public institutions (Hsieh & Urquiola, 2003). Scholars claim that the selection of students reinforces the fact that schools are choosing students and families and not the other way around (Trevino et al., 2011).

Moreover, research shows the increasing support (by tolerating) for pupil selection among parents, and the consideration of this mechanism as critical in terms of their children’s educational advantage and future (Fallabella, et al., 2014).

“The Shared Financing Act”. As formerly described, this law requires parents and families adopt a “funding role” by providing extra resources for schools. A recent study (Flores & Carrasco, 2013) develops the idea that parental preferences for schools are restricted by structural aspects of the design of education system: The Shared Financing Act and the inequity in the spatial distribution of schools. Including the “inequity in the local education offer” promoted by the structural design of the system, Flores and Carrasco (2013) argued that segregation not only occurs due to differences on mobilization of capital and resources of families, but also due to the design of the education system.

These studies note that schools, especially private subsidized schools, and families play a central role in the context of school choice. Schools compete for families that will contribute to better outcomes (students' achievement, status, etc.), and families, either individually or collectively, activate exclusionary discourses and practices towards undesirable pupils, who are perceived as threatening their child's learning development and moral formation (Fallabella, et al., 2014)

Although studies in Chile has acknowledged that both families and the characteristics of the structural design of the education system are conflated and have an impact on school choice practices and the levels of socioeconomic school segregation, no study has explored school's approaches to attract parental preferences, beyond focusing on policy mechanisms such as pupil selection or the shared financing act. In Chile, those approaches are dependent on the action of each school without considering the structural restrictions described above. During the processes of recruiting and enrolling students, schools reflect who they wish to be and the families to which they are, thus, oriented.

Education Reform (2014-2015). While this study was developed, Chile was undergoing a significant reform to its education system. The pillars of this reform addressed the structural design of the system and include: the banning of mandatory copayments through the *Shared Financing Act*, the removal of existing *pupil selection* practices, and the conversion of for-profit schools into non-profit organizations. The context of change imposed by the reform permeated the study in the sense that the issues of copayment and pupil selection became more controversial. The perceptions about the reform and the meaning of the changes were purposefully explored during the collection of data.

Using a Social Class Perspective

The theoretical background that motivates the research questions will be further elaborated in Chapter 2. In this section, I describe the rationale for framing the research with a social class approach.

A central concept in this study is social class to the extent that social class appears as a key moderator of the relationship between schools and families, as well as affecting school choice. Many social theorists have written extensively about the concept of social class, ranging from Karl Marx (Marx & Engels, 1848) to mid-century structural functionalists (Collins, 1988). The specificity of the concept and the degree in which conceptual models inform empirical work has been focused of a current debate of scholars working with the topic of social class (see Lareau & Conley, 2008). This study draws, however, primarily on the writing of the influential French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, whose perspectives emphasize the meaning of social class in modern society (Bourdieu 1986, 1990b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Bourdieu's work has been influential in studying the intersection between social class and educational experiences in the U.S., largely through the work of Annette Lareau and James Coleman, who elaborated his ideas of social capital as factors affecting the relationship between schools and families (Coleman, 1988; Lareau 1987). However, in this study, I return to Bourdieu's ideas with a different lens, emphasizing his larger importance in understanding the impact of capital on educational choices and the role of agency in the school choice process. The theoretical perspective follows the work of Stephen Ball and colleagues (Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz 1995, 1996) as well as the work of

Diane Reay (1998a, 1998b) in the U.K. who have developed an array of studies that look at social class and school choice in the context of market forces in education and draw on Bourdieu's formulations (Ball, Davies, David, & Reay, 2002; Reay & Ball, 1997).

Pierre Bourdieu developed a theory of social reproduction that focused on both the activities and structures that maintain social inequality as well as the role of agency as a counterbalance to structure. Within social reproduction theory, social class is not merely an issue about objective differences of capital among people but rather an issue about beliefs, perceptions, and "taste" (Ball, Davies, David, & Reay, 2002) that individuals use to make decisions and to justify those decisions. As Bourdieu notes, "the cognitive structures which social agents implement in their practical knowledge of the social world are internalized, 'embodied' social structures" (Ball et al., 2002, p. 51). In this sense, social class is both a social structure and a way to think and feel that has been internalized. This notion resonates with contemporary theorizations of class, which are less concerned with class as a form of socio-economic classification, a position in the labour market, or as a relationship to means of production, and more concerned with the ways class as an identity is forged and experienced (Dowling 2009, in Reay, Crozier, and James, 2011, p. 11). Understanding social class from a social reproduction frame as applied here relies on main concepts such as capital, habitus, and field, which will be covered in chapter 2.

Bourdieu's perspective of capital is very comprehensive; capital encompasses everything about an individual that differentiates his or her participation in social life from that of another. Capital denotes the resources deployed by individuals and groups to get advantage. The most central types of capital involve the resources that people obtain

through their social ties (social capital) and the acquisition and use of knowledge (cultural capital). Here, given its significance through the connection with social class, I focus on the concept of social capital.

Social Capital refers to the power of social connections. In the forms of capital, Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as,

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– which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (p. 23)

Applying Bourdieu to families and schools, research has shown that capital makes a difference when parents choose a school. Stephen Ball and colleagues generated a comprehensive framework around the intersection of choice and social class (Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1995). Such framework postulates that parents’ decisions about choosing a school are connected to their social class identity expressed in differences on cultural capital.

The notion of capital is not only useful to understand parental choices but also to explain schools’ efforts to “choose” families. Here, literature on “creaming” of students has demonstrated that schools display strategies to attract better students (and families) and to eliminate bad students, increasing segregation. Thus, schools also use or display capital in their ways to attract or search for specific types of families.

This body of literature, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, is critical to justify three main assumptions of this study. (1) school-family relationships are moderated by different types of capital that parents are able to mobilize in order to successfully manage the schools' expectations. (2) In the context of school choice, schools systems are actively participating in processes of "choosing" students and families. (3) Parents who have choices will have an intuitive but often unstated social class identity that will lead them to select a school that is consistent with the ideals and values that are connected with that identity. Because most people in complex modern societies do not have a clearly articulated social class identity, determining the way in which it may affect school-family relationships requires learning about the mental schemes that parents but also school staff bring to school choice, or what others have referred as "the cognitive structures of choice" (Ball et al. 2002)

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to come to understand how families and schools enact social class and social capital, during the process of choosing a school. This study focuses on two research questions:

- 1) How do families enact social class during the process of choosing a school?
- 2) How do schools enact social class during the process of choosing a school?

Significance of the Study

In theory, the intersection between schools and families in the context of school choice might be tightly connected as the main social context or space in which the school

and family interaction is located. However, empirical research on this space is almost empty. In a few instances, this space is illuminated when social class is incorporated into an analysis of the choice process and its outcomes because choice, like school-family relationships, is systematically related to social class differences (Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1996, 1997).

Furthermore, the significance of focusing this study within the Chilean education context relies on the possibility to explore the phenomenon of school choice in a well-established setting of privatization and marketization. In such context, literature has explored: how the structure of the system has promoted socioeconomic segregation in schools; and how families use school choice as a tool of social differentiation, which differs among different socioeconomic groups. No research has focused on the intersection between families and schools' perspectives and practices during the process of choosing a school.

This study aims to contribute to add complexity to the issue of school choice from the dynamic between schools and families, understanding that beyond policies and structural characteristics, both schools and families are agents in the process of choosing a school. This is an aspect not studied so far. Given that the levels of inequality and the impact of such on the education system respond to complex and multi-causal phenomenon, this study contributes to the development of a more systematic approach, which is imperative.

Overview of Chapters

In chapter 2, I develop a literature review from both the U.S. and other countries that bears on the intersections between school choice and social class. The bridge between families and school is explored by using a social class perspective, whereas school choice policies and systems are described incorporating an historical perspective, and what is known about its effects on the educational system and the role of parents as protagonists. In chapter 3, I provide a detailed description of the methods I used to undertake this study. By doing so, I describe my own positionality, the research design and methods, sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis strategies: procedures and instruments, and I identify the main study limitations.

Chapter 4 presents findings from this multi-case study of schools and families within one commune of Chile. Findings are centered on similarities and contrasts among schools from families and school staff perspectives and practices. I conclude with a cross-case analysis in which I identify emerging patterns/themes across the cases.

In chapter 5, I summarize the study, answer the research questions, and provide a general discussion of my findings regarding the contribution of the study. Finally I suggest areas for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The primary purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the literature identifying what is known and gaps in existing knowledge related to the intersection between schools and families in the context of school choice. School-family relationships are explored using a social class perspective, whereas school choice policies and systems are described incorporating an historical perspective, and the current public versus private debate. Research on school choice is organized by its effects on the educational system and the role of parents as protagonists in the choice process.

Moreover, the Chilean context is prioritized as a unique environment for studying the intersection between schools and families in the context of school choice. The chapter concludes with a set of themes centered on the place of school-family relationships in the context of privatization policies in education, and research questions oriented to address these topics.

It is divided in the following sections: 1) Theoretical Perspective; 2) School-Family Relationships from a Social Class Perspective; 3) School Choice Policies and Systems; and 4) Conclusion.

Theoretical Perspective

This study draws on Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. In his writing, people are socialized according to their social positions where they get different resources

(capital) that shape the way in which they face the social world (Bourdieu, 1986).

Although typically criticized by determinism for emphasize the role of social structure, this approach is a dynamic one where outcomes can't be planned. Lareau and Horvat (1999) argue that social reproduction is precisely the kind of process that is continually negotiated and re-elaborated by actors.

The follow section defines the main concepts of Bourdieu's theoretical perspective, which are: 1) Capital; 2) Habitus, and 3) Field.

Capital

Extending the Marxist notion of capital in "The forms of Capital," Bourdieu (1986) defines capital as "accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (p. 241). In this view, capital corresponds to material and immaterial things that belong to groups that differentiated their participation in social life. Bourdieu (1986) poses that capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: economic, cultural, and social. He defines,

economic capital, which is convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; *cultural capital*, which convertible, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and *social capital*, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (p. 242) (italics from original).

Current literature has also emphasized the way in which personal and intimate connections, referred to as “emotional capital” (Gillies, 2006; Reay, 2000, 2004), and even the self-construction of identity understood as “psychological capital” (Demerath, Lynch, & Davidson, 2008) operate as resources that people mobilize to obtain social advantages.

Habitus

Along with the concept of Capital, the concept of Habitus is central in Bourdieu’s theory. In “The Logic of Practice,” Bourdieu defines Habitus as,

Systems of durable, 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 (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 77).

Habitus emphasizes the orientation one has toward the use of resources provided by one’s capital, and it emerges from the dynamic interaction between agency and structure.

The concept of Habitus complements Bourdieu’s notion of Capital, allowing the interplay between structure and agency and thus, it reinforces a non-determinist view of social action. The definition of habitus, as dispositions involves the compilation of collective and individual trajectories (Bourdieu 1990 in Reay 2004, p 434). Moreover, Bourdieu posits the need for understanding that habitus not only corresponds to dispositions of individuals but of groups, so, it reflects a collective dimension. It means

not only that habitus is an introjection of the social world, but mostly important, that habitus might be developed collectively, and thus, to be similar across members of one group. At the same time, Bourdieu recognizes that both institutions, families and schools, play a key role in mediating the emergence of a type of habitus in an individual (Bourdieu, 1977; Burke, Emmerich, & Ingram, 2013).

Field

As defined by Bourdieu (2005):

A field is a field of forces within which agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these positions-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field. (p. 30).

Theorists that adhere to a structural perspective of capital stress the importance of individuals' social structural location in shaping their daily lives and the idea that this social location is a critical factor, even when members are not particularly conscious of the existence of it (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau, 1987, 2003). In the context of this study, as Lareau (2003) notes, when families move outside the home into the world of social institutions, they find that these cultural practices are not given equal value, and middle-upper class families are in a more privileged place to respond successfully to schools' expectations and request. As it is expectable, students with more valuable social and cultural capital fare better in schools than do their other comparable peers with less capital.

School-Family Relationships from a Social Class Perspective⁷

Given the extension of the topic in the literature, the school-family relationships can be approached from diverse angles. This literature review will focus on the role of social class as mediating the school-family relationships, with the explicit intention to understand the differences in how families and schools are related. Although studies focused on the parents' and teachers' perceptions of each other are more frequent in the literature (e.g. Delgado – Gaitan, 1991; Lawson, 2003; Miretzky, 2004), there is much less research that takes a social class perspective. I organized this research based on two main approaches. These are: a) studies focused on schools' perspectives and b) studies focused on parents' perspectives. These approaches explore to what extent capital and social class allow understanding how parents engage with schools, as well as how schools interact with parents.

Studies Focused on Schools' Perspectives

Within this body of literature, there is a foundational literature on how school systems are primary sites of social class dynamics. I mention the exemplar work of Bowles and Gintis (2002), which points out school's participation in the process of social reproduction through social class differentiation. By emphasizing the place of social class in the socialization's process in schools, they claimed that the entire process of schooling reproduced stratification in the wider society. Bowles and Gintis argue that schools prepare people for adult work rules through socialization, specifically, by

⁷ I acknowledge and appreciate the enormous amount of research around school-family relationships (e.g. Joyce Epstein & Connors, 1992 - Typology of Parental Involvement). In this section, however, I will present and discuss a topic oriented approach, which is on social class and school-family relationships.

structuring social interactions and individual rewards to replicate the environment of the workplace (Bowles & Gintis, 2002).

Without incorporating class in their analysis, scholars have highlighted that schools have limited capacity for providing support to families and that those are likely to be governed by a school center approach (interest in improving children's academic performance) (Powell, 1991), the ways in which teacher work context impacts parental involvement (Bauch & Goldring, 2000), and the roles and tensions of teachers in understanding families (Casper, 2003). Although dedicated to the involvement of minority families, a literature review developed by Kim (2009) provides available research findings on the school barriers that prevent minority parents' participation in their children's school in the United States. Among these are identified: (a) teachers' perception about the efficacy of minority parents, (b) teachers' perception concerning the capacity of minority parents, (c) teachers' beliefs in the effectiveness of parental involvement and developmental philosophy, (d) teachers' self-efficacy in teaching effectiveness, (e) school friendliness and positive communication, (f) diversity of parental involvement programs, (g) school policies and school leadership.

From a social class perspective, one might cast the idea that the capacity and “efficacy” of schools in establishing a strong tie with families is highly modulated by families' social class. And those families from lower classes find are more adversely affected.

Moreover, in exploring why schools still struggle with how to effectively involve parents of color and low-income families, Bower and Griffin (2011) conducted a case

study of an urban elementary school to assess the effectiveness of the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement in a high-poverty and high-minority school. The authors claimed that schools and teachers were not building effective relationships with parents as they continued to define parental involvement through more traditional methods using strategies geared towards inviting parents to school-based activities, or helping parents become more involved with academics (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

Similarly, focusing on working class parents' perspective on parent-teacher role and relationships, Crozier (1999) contends that among other factors, teachers' logocentric position reinforce parents' perception of teachers as "the experts" as well as fatalistic view of their children's schooling in terms of their own role as passive.

These findings, in particular, pointed out that even despite efforts to increase parental involvement, these strategies for participation failed to adequately cover parental involvement of low-SES families and families of color because school's approach was still very school-centered and it did not respond adequately to family's needs. In general, studies reaffirm Bourdieu's and Passeron's idea that schools operate according to a set of hidden cultural norms that make success of some students more probable than others (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Studies Focused on Families' Perspectives⁸

Most of the literature on school-family relationships from a social class perspective has a marked tendency to focus on parents and families. Scholars recognize,

⁸ Another group of studies related with social class through the concept of socioeconomic status (SES) of families has documented the association between parental SES and children's achievement (e.g. Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), either focusing on the effects of poverty (e.g. Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997) or wealthy on children's development (e.g. Yeung & Conley, 2008).

however, that social class influences more precisely “the nature of parental involvement” that includes both, teacher attitudes about parental involvement and parents' confidence and knowledge about involvement (Crozier, 2001). Such research asserts that school-family relationship has a key role in social reproduction.

The sociologist Annette Lareau has studied the school-family relationships from the perspective of social class and equity. Based on the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Lareau (1987, 2003) and others (Brantlinger, 1993) argue that social class provides parents with unequal resources to comply with teachers' requests for parental participation. Other authors pointed out that social class differences among families result in differences in the relations between schools and parent networks (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003). In this way, elements of family's class status, facilitate compliance with teachers' requests and can be seen as a form of social and cultural capital that shape differences in children's school experiences. Scholars conclude that the greater levels of cultural capital possessed by members of the upper class magnify parental involvement's effect for advantaged students (Crosnoe, 2004; McNeal, 1999).

In the dynamic between structure and agency, and conflating race with social class, a case study of parent' involvement with their third-grade children conducted by Lareau and Horvat (1999) highlighted the contrasting processes of possession and activation of capital. Authors claimed not only social and cultural capital influence individual responses, but that parents choose to activate their capital or not, they vary in the skills, and the role of institutions in accepting or not the activation of capital by families. In the study, they described a black middle-class couple, who were concern with racial discrimination in the school. Their strategy to approach this issue, however, was

focused on monitored their daughter's schooling and they shielded this concern from the teacher, who did not seem to know about their apprehensions. These parents also sought other alternatives to check on the issue of racial discrimination such as stop by to bring their daughter her lunch, to volunteer, etc. This couple decided when and what type of capital activate in order to address their concern with discrimination. Conversely, poor black parents who also had the same concern, did not seek to intervene in the school process. Social class mediates how these families managed racial concerns.

This study acknowledges aspects not addressed by previous empirical work on social reproduction: 1) the value of capital depends on the field (social setting); 2) People choose activate their capital or not; 3) social reproduction is not an automatic process, and is continually negotiated by actors (Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Overall, in those studies, social capital is the key concept to understand how family (socioeconomic) factors generate inequality in students learning but more specifically, to demonstrate that social class plays a key role in parents' involvement by providing parents with unequal resources (cultural capital) to comply with teachers' requests for parental participation . In order words, parents' involvement in schools is a way in which schools institutions contribute to social reproduction. Hence, poor or working class parents are in different (and unequal) conditions to be able to generate a bond of trust and collaboration with school – fundamental aspects in the school and community partnership.

The literature is consistent with the idea that social class introduces differences in the way in which schools and families related each other. Families with more social and

cultural capital have a different relationship with schools than parents who have less. At the same time, there is an agreement in that families with more cultural capital are in a privileged position to establish relationships with school, whereas schools participate in this dynamic by reproducing social hierarchies either to keep a logocentric (school centered) approach and/or to ignore diversity on parental needs according to their class. Crozier (2001) refers to the latter as “the deracialisation of parental involvement,” which represents “the adoption of a ‘one size fits all’ approach to parental involvement” (p. 330). She explains, “The blanket assumption that all parents are the same, with the same needs, and that their children can be treated in the same way is disturbing for all parents and particularly those who are already disadvantaged” (Crozier, 2001, p. 330). Although she claims that ethnicity and race have an independent significance in shaping family–school relationships, there is also the acknowledgement that similar arguments can and need to be made regarding working-class communities.

The literature reviewed shares a set of assumptions aligned with the bulk of this research on school-family relationship from a social class perspective. One of the most important implicit assumptions is about power relationships. It claims that capital prepares unequally middle and upper class parents versus working-class parents to exercise influence over school decisions. Consequently, middle-class parents are the most successful in getting what they want for their children because they are empowered to intervene both actively and successfully (Crozier, 1998; 2000)

On the other hand, schools look at parents under the prism of their social class’ assumptions from which poor or working class parents are seen typically with the prism of deficiencies whereas middle class or high class is seen under the prism of assets.

Another assumption is related with the issue of equity-inequity in the school-family relationship. This aspect incorporates the idea that the opportunities for families to partner with schools are not equitable distribute, and more precisely, are unequally distribute according to the categories of social class.

From a structuralist point of view, the dynamic relationship between schools and parents situate themselves in a position that appears marked by the social class categories, resulting in that schools reinforce at the same time working-class parents' fatalistic view of schooling and their role as passive, and a positive view of middle-class parents and their role as articulated with school requirements.

School Choice Policies and Systems

Currently, there is a return to the debate about whether education should be largely a public enterprise, operated by government, or a private enterprise, organized outside of government auspices. Along this debate, different positions and values around school choice are found in literature. Some argue that privatization will result in higher quality for students and higher levels of school effectiveness by changing the structure of school governance (Chubb & Moe, 1988). Others discusses the effects of market inequalities, arguing that markets will provide the possibility for the pursuit of class advantage and generate a differentiated and stratified system of schooling (Ball, 1993).

School choice encompasses a wide range of policies, programs, and ways to organize schooling, and therefore, it represents an approach that has been aligned with the two sides mentioned above. On one hand, choice is seen as a tenet of a democratic society (Hayek 1944, in Amadae, 2003). Public school choice advocates consider the

right to choose a fundamental pillar of the educational system, reflecting the value of pluralism in diversity of school types, as well as a strategy for developing effective and more equal school communities (Glenn, 2005; Hill, Pierce, & Guthrie, 1997; Kahlenberg, 2003) and increasing local social capital (Schneider, Teske, Marschall, Mintrom, & Roch, 1997). On the other hand, critics of choice argue that schools are not responding to competitive incentives as expected (Lubienski, 2006); therefore, increased quality is empirically unproven (Carnoy, 1998). Furthermore, evidence suggests choice can result in greater inequality of educational opportunities across schools (e.g., Martínez, Godwin, & Kemerer, 1996; Coleman, Schiller, & Schneider, 1993; OECD, 2008).

Because of such dual alignment, school choice is a subject of controversy. The school choice debate has shown to be highly politicized and ideologized due to its connection with opposite values and interests. As Henig (1994) remarks: “The story of choice-in-practice...reminds us that the conflicts that are most compelling and difficult to resolve revolve around questions about the kind of society we wish to become” (p. 116). On one hand, proponents of marketization in education see choice as the way to overcome the weaknesses of bureaucratic structures in the public sector (e.g. Salisbury & Tooley, 2005; Hoxby, 2006).

School Choice Policies and the Public-Private Debate

The controversy around school choice incorporates the underlying debate around the public and private in education. Education is, by definition, a phenomenon that has belonged simultaneously to the public and to the private sphere, resting in the intersection of competing rights—the parents’ right to influence their child’s education, the right of a

democratic society to give people a common schooling experience (Levin, 1990), and the right of people for having community influence and participatory ownership.

Consequently, school choice policies can be associated with broader global tendencies such as privatization, as well as with policies aligned with libertarian efforts⁹ to give more power of decision to local communities and offer alternative ways of schooling.¹⁰

At the same time, people invoke public and private notions according to ideological views (and values) about school choice policies (Wilson, 2012). All these different ways to approach choice policies are also embedded in historical contexts aligned with certain values. Although scholars recognize the value-laden character of the discussion about school choice policies, there is a general lack of explicitness and examination of the assumptions present under each school choice policy design.¹¹ In this context, as Lubienski (2008) notes, analyzing school choice policies through empirical results can be a futile effort because the ideological aspects that affect the comprehension of school choice are usually underestimated.

Moreover, school choice also has influenced the concepts of public and private and therefore, the values associated with what counts as “public education.” In 1968, Clark argued that in order to overcome the weaknesses of the traditional public educational system in the U.S. it would be necessary to develop alternative public school systems. This was one of the first explicit claims oriented to redefining and

⁹ For a critical view of libertarian efforts and the “marketization” of civil rights around school choice see the work of Janet Scott (2013).

¹⁰ In this way, these policies simultaneously have the potential of reducing isolation, promoting innovation, and accountability or, on the contrary, accelerating resegregation of public system, facilitating the avoidance of oversight, etc. (Miron & Welner, 2012).

¹¹ Levin (2002) would argue that in the case of educational voucher system the three design instruments are: finance, regulation, and support services.

problematizing the idea of public education systems based on the public interest.

Accordingly, choice advocates claim that public education can be defined depending of the purpose that is served not of who is funding or managing it, which correspond to a functionalist definition of public (Wilson, 2012). In this view, public education is a matter of public accountability for public outcomes and student achievement is the key aspect, but it is in term of individuals or groups of individuals and not the collective as a whole. This approach, linked to neoliberal tendencies has been criticized because it reifies the belief that standardized test are the measure of public value. As result, other outcomes of public value such as long-term developmental goals or integral approaches have been dismissed (Louis & Felber-Smith, in press). Similarly, others understand public accountability in terms of equality of opportunities, that is, not only concern with the experience of an individual but with the aggregate students' experiences in the school system (e.g. Lubienski, 2001). Labaree (2000) points out the conflictive purposes of education – democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility – seem to be in the root of the debate for defining public education, the latter being which dominates the current discourses.¹² Emerging from this debate, the question is how the values in which choice is framed modulate the public goals and private interests. In addressing that, a historical perspective is needed.

School Choice in a Historical Perspective

Historically, school choice has been seen as an icon of the privatization trends in education. Despite its strong influence in the current context, the concept of privatization

¹² This is understood as “a private good designed to improve an individual position in a competitive marketplace” (Wilson, 2012, p. 23).

is relatively new and did not gain wide circulation in politics until the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the rise of conservative governments in Great Britain, the United States, and France. Privatization refers to any shift of the production of goods and services from the public (state) to the private sector (Starr, 1988). Lauder and Hughes (1999) point out that the new right intellectuals saw the bureaucratic educational systems as an expression of the state-induced dependence, and thus the solution in order to revitalize economy of countries was the liberation of education from state. In the United States, the work of Milton Friedman (1955) was especially important in inspiring scholars with the belief that,

By providing families with funds to cover expenses at their choice of a government-approved, privately operated school, the state could generate healthy competition between schools that would increase and improve the schools available to families (Loeb, Valant & Kasman, 2011, p. 141-142).

Similarly, John Chubb and Terry Moe (1988, 1990) developed for-privatization efforts in education under the premise that the private sector would offer the best opportunities for students, and particularly for disadvantaged students, given the strong capacity of the private sector to overcome the problems of bureaucracy and to bypass the conflicting interests facing public schools. In their view, the introduction of choice through the market logic was an alternative to decrease inequality in the educational system.¹³

¹³ This process is called marketization and refers to the process that enables the state-owned enterprises act like market-oriented firms through reduction of state subsidies. The last 40 years, in the U.S., marketization has been a strong and influent approach in public education (Bartlett et al., 2002).

An important assumption within the market model in education is that competition is inherent to human nature, and thus students' learning and school improvement are stimulated by competition forces (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). School choice was precisely the mechanism by which competition was introduced in educational systems. Given that scenario, scholars have emphasized the necessity to distinguish and to organize the different modalities of choice in two main systems of choice: market and public choice (André-Bechely, 2005; Levin, 1990). In the first group are educational vouchers and tuition tax credits, which incorporate marketplace ideals and strategies (Levin, 1990). By its part, public choice systems include the provision of choice, either schools or curriculums, within public schools. In this group it is possible to find Open enrollment, Magnet schools, Charter schools, and Home schooling (Levin, 1990).

After almost three decades of implementing school choice policies around the world, the empirical evidence is controversial. Choice advocates charge that choice will improve access to quality schools for disadvantaged minority students (Chubb & Moe, 1988, 1990) and will empower parents by holding schools accountable and will reenergize democratic participation in public education (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Schneider, et al., 1997). Critics of marketization have claimed that choice and vouchers as well as standardized testing have inserted a neoliberal understanding of education introducing a remarkable cultural change in the perception of school's purpose (Bartlett, Frederick, Gulbrandsen, & Murillo, 2002; Lubienski, 2001). Bartlett et al. (2002) posit that the discourse of education as serving economic purposes of countries has a hegemonic place today, granting elite race and class interests an unchallenged legitimacy. In the follow

section “Main Approaches to School Choice,” the empirical research on school choice developed internationally is presented.

Main Approaches to School Choice

The literature on empirical studies on school choice has been organized through two main approaches. These studies focused on the effects of school choice on the educational system, and others addressed school choice placing parents as protagonists and the main subjects under study. Empirical research focused on Chile has been integrated to the extent it is related to the main approaches here described.

School choice and the educational system. The first body of literature explores mainly the effects of school choice on two dimensions of the educational system. The subsections are: 1) Choice Effects on Student Achievement, and 2) Choice Effects on School Segregation.

Choice effects on student achievement. Evidence of the impact of choice on school effectiveness and student achievement, particularly in the U.S. context, is mixed and therefore, inconclusive. Large-scale studies tend to estimate only modest benefits, if any, to participating in school choice programs and, more generally, the evidence of the effects of competition on the school system remains inconclusive (Loeb, Valant, & Kasman, 2011; Musset, 2012). Testing the impact of exercising choice on student outcomes has proven to be difficult methodologically.¹⁴

¹⁴ Some of the central questions have been; what the focus is (who leaves or who stays)? What is the extension of time? For example, Hoxby (2003) states the necessity to focus on programs that have been sufficiently large and long-lived to produce competition, and how to separate effects from school productivity or sorting?

Recently, Loeb, Valant, and Kasman (2011) developed a literature review on the effects of choice and competition on student outcomes in the U.S. revisiting the theory behind school choice to explain the mixed results observed thus far. They conclude that “the existing literature on charter schools’ impact on student achievement suggests little difference between charter and traditional public school performance on the whole, but a more nuanced story of successes and failures underneath the surface” (p. 149). The authors claim that some studies about the impact of charter schools in student achievement, such as CREDO (2009) one of the largest such studies, found negative effects of charter schools relative to public schools on reading and math; however, these results came largely from high school and students in their first year in a charter school. Moreover, comparing with the rest of students, charter school students obtained higher scores than students on public schools. Some of the methodological concerns are related to adjusting enough for selection bias and fixed effects, a main problem of most of the large-scale studies of charter school performance (Loeb, Valant, & Kasman, 2011).

In order to overcome these difficulties some studies utilize randomized lotteries. Comparing student performance between lottery winners and losers, these studies also find mixed evidence. Positive impacts of school choice policies have been found by Hoxby and Rockoff (2004) who investigate how students’ achievement is affected by their attending charter schools in Chicago. They identify a positive impact in student achievement for those students who attend charter schools in comparison with those who do not attend (Hoxby & Rockoff, 2004).¹⁵ Conversely, applying the same procedures - exploit randomized lotteries - among primary and secondary schools, other studies do not

¹⁵ These effects on achievement were stronger if students remained more time at the charter schools.

find achievement gains in students. In the context of an open enrollment policy, Cullen, Jacob, and Levitt (2005) find no significant benefit in terms of achievement for students that transferred; that is those that attended a public school other than their local or neighborhood school. Authors develop an empirical analysis based on detailed student-level panel data (of graduation rates not test scores) for over 60,000 students who attend high school in the Chicago Public Schools. More than half of the students who opted out of their assigned neighborhood school were more likely to graduate than their peers, the differences, however, rested on unobservable dimensions such as their motivation level and parental involvement and not in the fact that these students attended better schools or a school that better matches their preferences.

Comparing across countries, Dronkers and Robert (2003) investigate the effectiveness of public, private government-dependent¹⁶ and private independent schools in 19 Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries selected from the PISA 2000 survey. They estimate the effects controlling for sociological characteristics of students and parents, school composition, teaching and learning conditions of schools and students', and principals' perception of the climate of their schools. According to authors, the main difference in mathematical achievement is the better social composition of private schools, either financed or not by government, which is a clear consequence of school choice (Dronkers & Roberts, 2003). They highlight that private independent schools are less effective than public schools with the same students, parents, and social composition, while private dependent schools (e.g. charter schools) are more effective than comparable public schools.

¹⁶ Private government dependent schools are schools funding for the government and administered privately.

In Chile, where this type of empirical research has been extensive, no positive impacts of school choice on student achievement have been evidenced. Hsieh and Urquiola (2006) assessed the impact of the national-wide voucher program by comparing the change in educational outcomes in different communities (with high and low private schooling). The data base was the performance of Chilean students in international tests in science and mathematics (widely known as the TIMSS) in 1970 and 1999. Using panel data for roughly 150 municipalities, they consistently fail to find evidence that school choice improved average academic outcomes as measured by test scores, repetition rates, and years of schooling. However, they found evidence that the voucher program led to increased sorting, as the “best” public school students left for the private sector. Hsieh and Urquiola (2006) pointed out a methodological difficulty in measuring the effects of school choice on educational outcomes, which is how to separate those effects that operate through enhanced school productivity, from those that operate through sorting. Other research support those findings emphasizing that school choice policies have led to sorting, with no clear improvements in average achievement (Contreras, Sepulveda, & Bustos, 2010).

*Choice effects on school segregation.*¹⁷ One of the main criticisms of school choice policies are based on the empirical evidence that choice increases sorting of students by race, class, and/or gender. Empirical findings seem consistently suggesting that choice might result in increasing segregation. Acknowledging this, scholars have claimed that if choice leads to a higher degree of sorting by ability and peer effects

¹⁷ Segregation is evidently a topic that crosses from individual to systemic levels. There are different impacts of school segregation in classroom, school, or district and therefore, it is important to differentiate them. In this section, studies are centered on district and school level.

matter, then, the distribution of educational benefits is likely to be quite unequal (see Epple, Figlio, & Romano, 2004). At district level, Bifulco and Ladd, (2006) and Saporito (2003), assert that ethnic and racial segregation between schools levels increase as a result of school choice policies because parents choose schools with racial and economic compositions that match their own backgrounds. Focusing on charter schools, Bifulco and Ladd (2006) point out that racial and class based on sorting of students across charter schools has also contributes to the poor performance of charter schools in North Carolina. Saporito (2003) explores the influence of school choice programs on racial and class segregation, by analyzing magnet school application data from a large city to explore the choices of families for schools that vary in racial and economic composition. He finds that parents' choices vary according to those variables; white and wealthier families avoid schools with higher percentages of non-white students (Saporito, 2003). Searching for similar environments by parents is identified as a factor that fosters school segregation.

In countries that operate with national voucher systems such as Sweden, Netherlands, and Chile, research arrives to similar conclusions; choice leads to segregation. In Sweden, Böhlmark and Lindahl (2007) using a large administrative data set on individuals graduating from 1988-2003 find more segregation for migrant students since the reform in 1992, as parents with higher levels of education tend to choose private schools for their children. Likewise, in the Netherlands, research focus on the levels and trends of school segregation in Dutch cities, concludes that migrant student are highly segregated by schools, and this segregation has increased over the last decade, despite little or no increase in the proportion of migrants (Ladd, Fiske, & Ruijs, 2009).

Socioeconomic school segregation is without doubt one of the most persistent effects of the incorporation of school choice policies in Chile (Valenzuela, Bellei, & Rios, 2010, 2014). Valenzuela et al. (2014) argue that the Chilean case shows that educational institutions are not just a mirror of contextual factors, since educational dynamics would have made SES school segregation considerably greater than residential segregation. Moreover, while residential segregation seems to be stable, school segregation is increasing (Valenzuela et al., 2010). Carnoy (1998) and Hsieh and Urquiola (2006) argue that voucher program led to increase sorting, as the best public school students left for private schools. This research shows that subsidized private schools compete for students with better academic records, attracting the best students from public institutions. Other studies demonstrate that these subsidize private schools segregate by controlling the admission of students, either academic performance or to the Institutional Educational Project, which encourages a homogeneous (and “better”) population of student (Trevino, Salazar, & Donoso, 2011). Accordingly, Elacqua (2012) and Valenzuela et al. (2014) find that public schools are more likely to serve disadvantaged students than private voucher schools and that disadvantaged students are more segregated among private voucher schools than among public schools.

This body of literature represents the importance of assessing school choice in a systemic level according to its effects on concrete (and measurable) outcomes, such as, student achievement and segregation. These studies seek to establish a quantitative measure in specific criteria about school choice that is treated as independent variable. A disputed aspect of this literature is related with the methodologies used to establish and to quantify impact on the outcomes. Researchers pointed out difficulties in generating and

interpreting information on school performance (What are the outcomes? and How can be measured?). Finally, this body of research fails to inform about the rationales playing in the process of choosing a school, the insider's point of view (to give meaning of the acts), and broader implications of the outcomes highlighted in the educational setting.

School choice and parents as protagonists. This section gathers empirical research that, in spite of having different epistemological and methodological approaches, shares the interest in understanding the politics of school choice from the perspective of parents as protagonists and subjects under study. Two subcategories are: 1) Parental Choice, Satisfaction, and Decision Making, and 2) Parental Choice as a Sociocultural Practice.

Parental choice, satisfaction, and decision making. Research on public school choice policies shows that choice increases parents' satisfaction and involvement (Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Hausman & Goldring, 2000). Goldring and Shapira (1993) studied parental' satisfaction in four magnet schools in Israel concluding that choice led to parental satisfaction. Authors also pointed out that parents' satisfaction was highly dependent upon their roles as real partners in decision making, which was more the case for upper SES parents than for lower SES parents. These findings are congruent with research in the U.S. Hausman and Goldring (2000) note that parents' reasons for choice are important predictors of their levels of satisfaction, influence, and involvement with the school; and that parents who choose for values reasons, are more likely to be involved, satisfied, and having more influence in their school of choice. Studies describe benefits of public school choice not only to the individual but also to the broader community (Schneider, et al., 1997), and a high level of social capital in parents from

school district with public school choice policies (Schneider, Teske, Marshall, 2000). Glaserman (1998), however, points out that a positive effect on parents' satisfaction may be accompanied by greater segregation.

Moreover, scholars have been interested in the criteria parents use to choose a school and the rationales of those choices. These studies are characterized by quantitative data collected from surveys, parental ranking of choices or secondary information about some attributes of chosen schools. In most cases these attributes have been previously identified from theory, so participants chose attributes from a list previously defined.

According to a literature review from studies in The Netherlands, Denessen, Driessena and Slegers (2005) identify that, parents' reasons for school choice can be associated with four main domains: ideological (i.e., religious and/or pedagogical), geographical distance, quality of the education, and non-educational characteristics of the school, such as the school population. In the review, authors observe that the quality of education is one of the leading reasons for selecting a school. Other reasons include school climate and order and discipline.

Focused on a parental public school choice plan in a district of North Carolina, Hastings, Kane and Staiger (2005) estimate parental preferences for school characteristics. Using rankings of top three choices of schools and matching them with student demographic and test score data, they find that parents have different preferences over schools. Particularly, schools perceived by parents as high quality seem to attract students of parents with strong preferences for school quality, while neighborhood schools may serve the remaining students with strong preferences for proximity and a

lower priority placed on school quality. These differences on parental responses might lead to disparate demand-side pressure on schools to improve performance.

Research on Chile confirms the idea that socioeconomic status is a strong predictor of choosing behavior in parents (Elacqua & Fábrega, 2004; Mizala & Romaguera, 2000). McEwan and Carnoy (1998) examined preferences of parents for certain school characteristics such as test scores or the socioeconomic background of other parents in the school. They found that parental school choice was sensitive to those characteristics; higher income parents have a strong preference for schools with a higher educate parent clientele than lower income parents; less educated parents do not respond in the same way that more educated parents to the offer of higher-performing schools, even when these schools were accessible for them. Less educated parents tend to choose schools based on non-academic criteria and they did not used as expected the information about school quality (McEwan & Carnoy, 1998). Other aspects such as familiarity with school, discipline, and the perception of a good education (Córdoba, 2014; Raczynski & Hernández, 2010), and “the practical reasons set” (distance, cost, security, proximity to work, and that someone they know works at the school) (Elacqua & Fábrega, 2004) have been highlighted as the criteria for parents from low socioeconomic status.

Aligned with those findings, studies in Chile coincide in the critical role played for social class. The social class composition of the student body is identified as a key factor on parental choice in Chile (Schneider, Elacqua, & Buckley, 2006), whereas the quality of the sources of information and networks, and the precision of knowledge about the schools are differentiated in function of the socio-economic level (Elacqua & Fábrega, 2004).

The role of information is a prominent feature of studies in this category, in particular, the type and sources of information used by parents for choosing schools. Ball and Vincent (1998) were pioneer authors in pointing out that information is obtained and valued by parents in ways that do not align with the rational choice theory. The most important sources of information in the process of choosing a school came from relatives, friends, people perceived as reliable, etc. They defined this type of information as ‘hot knowledge’ in opposition to the ‘cold knowledge’ acquired from official sources or formal knowledge and through quantitative data. Authors identified three categories of parental responses to the grapevine or hot knowledge: suspicions, doubt, and acceptance. Although these were not straightforward related to social class, the access to such knowledge was socially structured, and thus, the use of information varied by social class.

A Chilean study found that parents make decisions based on multiple criteria, utilizing a variety of sources, and using diverse indicators of school quality, not only standardized tests (Elacqua & Fábrega, 2004). From the variety of sources, authors identified three: formal information (information provided by the Ministry of Education), school information (information provided by school staff), and social network (information provided by neighbors, friends, relatives, coworkers). They found parents with higher levels of education used more formal sources of information and school information. Conversely, parents with lower levels of education used more information from social networks.

Recent studies, however, have complicated traditional findings emphasizing that parents, if they have it, are using information about performance delivered by official

sources. A recent study in Chile indicated that parents, regardless their social class, declared to be using more the information of school performance when choosing a school than 15 years ago. They also found that the probability of choosing the nearest school decreased based on children's age, mothers' years of schooling, and with distance from nearest school (Gómez, Chumacero, & Paredes, 2012).¹⁸

Overall, findings emphasized that parents are not solely basing their decisions on information delivered by government such as school quality indicators (i.e., assessment scores or national test scores). Indeed, studies in Chile reveal the scarce importance that families give to those indicators as reasons to choose a school (Ayala Carrère, 2010; Córdoba, 2014; Elacqua & Fabrega, 2006; Raczynsky & Hernández, 2010; Winkler & Rounds, 1996). Instead, a complex set of rationales based on different values and practical aspects were revealed. This argument questions the tenets of rational choice theory that postulates that parents make decisions from 'clear value preferences' (Bosetti, 2004).

The importance of the literature focused on satisfaction and decision making lies in the ability to focus on the "family" side of the phenomenon of school choice, as a way to recognize that it is a process modulates by families as educational actors. Some limitations of the studies on parental decision making, however, are that the criteria for choosing are predefined and they do not emerge from participants, the comprehension of the school choice as a specific moment rather than a process, the little information about

¹⁸ The authors estimate a model of school choice using information published of the national standardized test (SIMCE) in 1996 and in 2003, and the information contained in a household survey carried out by the Ministry of Planning of Chile each two or three years (CASEN). CASEN survey allows for the identification of the school that each student attended and at the same time, it does contain information about the block in which the household is located.

the process of how parents' built their 'choice set', and the lack of questioning about who really choose (who really is able to exert choice and who does not and the social implications of it).

Parental choice as a sociocultural practice. The third body of literature understands school choice as a sociocultural practice that has a role in the perpetuation of social dynamics. These studies note that the exercise of choice is constrained by cultural boundaries and institutional settings (Fuller & Elmore, 1996). Understanding school choice as a sociocultural practice means defining school choice as beyond “than merely educational, rational or utilitarian action. It connects the social, material and cultural aspects of social life with the current educational development of children and their future social positions” (Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2014, p. 20)

Unlike previous research, scholars in this category go beyond identifying criteria valuable to make decisions about schools focusing on the reasons why parents make those decisions, and how sociocultural distinctions such as class, race, and gender, influence their choices. Studies usually develop an historical underpinning of notions such as choice, privatization, and markets in order to situate the emergence of the concept of school choice itself as a product of a determined view of educational systems (see Fuller & Elmore, 1996; Lauder & Hauges, 1999). An important goal across these studies is to assess the assumptions in which pro-choice advocates tend to claim, such as that parents are equally prepared for making decisions in the education market, and have the same capability to send their children to schools of their choice.

Coherent with the purpose and scope of this chapter, and recognizing that there is extensive literature on parental choice from a sociocultural view, I will review a selection of the most relevant studies of social class while briefly mentioning studies focused on race and on mothers' approaches, aspects that might be further examined through the studies referenced here.

Using a social class and cultural capital approach, several studies are aligned with the seminal work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), "*Reproduction in education, society and culture*," where authors develop an empirical analysis and a theoretical model of the complex mechanisms through which the school system contributes to the reproduction of the structure of class and social relations. The notions of social and Cultural Capital and Habitus¹⁹ are crucial in this frame. These two concepts have been largely applied by scholars to the school-family relationship topic -as it has exposed in the first section- and they are also applied to study of choice. If social class provides parents with unequal resources to participate in school-family relationships, one might expect that parental cultural capital will influence the process of choosing a school.

In the intersection of school choice, social class, and social reproduction, the sociologists Stephen Ball and colleagues generated a set of studies that ended with the elaboration of a comprehensive framework around the intersection of choice and social class, and about the operation of micro-markets in education (Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1994, 1996, 1997). The concept of micro-market referred to what they found. They identified a set of factors associated with social geography, policies, history, and school

¹⁹ For a revision of the concept of Habitus applied to educational research see the work of Diane Reay (2004).

management approaches, which created particular market relations and those relations explained reasons for choosing schools. They claim, “within schools we observed the development of new forms of management, new kinds of management-teacher relations, a shift in relations between schools, an increasing managerial emphasis on budget-led decision- making and image management; competition between schools for highly valued students (high ability student girls, students with motivated parents); and changes in values, that is a movement away from the priorities of comprehensivism towards those associated with the market (Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1994).

In their research placed in the Greater London area, they differentiated among what they called *circuits of schooling* (Ball, et al., 1997), which corresponded to different types of schools according to school identity and location, and the location of the students they receive. They found that based on social class, “different groups of parents *plug into* each of the circuits and each circuit empowers students differently in terms of life chances (Ball, et al., 1997, p.53 emphasis in the original). Authors pointing out that the educational markets can be exploited by the middle classes as a strategy of social reproduction in their search for relative advantage, social advancement and social mobility (Ball, 1993; Ball, et al., 1996; Reay, 1998b).

These studies showed an active participation of middle class parents within an educational market to achieve social advantage through schooling experience of their child. Social reproduction through school choice is one of the main findings of such research.

Scholars interested on class, as van Zanten (2003, 2005) studies French public schools, and explore exclusionary practices of middle class parents with the aim to reject and to limit interactions with lower class parents. More complex and subtle middle class parents' strategies are evidenced by Raveaud and van Zanten (2007). By conducting interviews with parents from Paris and London, these scholars argue that choice mobilizes,

tensions and dilemmas between being a good citizen, which implies in parents' perspective sending them to the socially and ethnically mixed local school, and being a good parent, which for them implies that they should provide their children with the best education for individual development and success (Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007, p. 122)

In order to solve these dilemmas, middle class parents used their cultural and social resources in ways that allowed them to limit the anticipated negative effects of local public schools and to retain their advantages over lower class and immigrant parents.

Class and racial segregation are emphasized from studies that find parents tend to prefer schools with populations ethnically and socioeconomically similar to themselves.²⁰ At the same time, incorporating a gender perspective, Reay (1998a) in England and André -Bechely (2005) in the U.S. study choice focusing on mothers' approaches. Those studies operate under the premise that mothers' work in schooling is strategic in the generation of social-class differences. These two studies ended highlighting that middle-

²⁰ For studies that integrate racial segregation to the study of choice policies in the U.S. see Gordon and Nocon (2008) and Saporito and Lareau (1999).

class mothers acting in their child's best interests inevitably end up acting against the interests of other, less privileged, mothers.²¹

The sociocultural lens places the experiences and the background of the parents, as well as their insider's perspective -- how they justify their choices-- in the role of the protagonist. Within this third group of studies, it is possible to recognize at least three major contributions to the study of school choice. First, this literature reaffirms that it is worth it to study choice without studying the context because choices are not made in a vacuum but instead they are intertwined in the social and cultural dynamics that permeates school' functioning as well as school-family relationships. Second, by conceptualizing school choice from a sociocultural standpoint, this research problematizes the veil of neutrality that usually dominates the school choice debate because it acknowledges that there are unequal opportunities to exert choice that go beyond the factors from a rational theory approach (e.g. information, disposition/motivation, etc.). The social class categories (i.e. poor, middle and upper class) play a key role in modulating parental choices that is tightly related to the last contribution, which is that parents and schools seem to use school choice as a device to ensure their social credentials and the social class differentiation.

In concluding this literature review I must reiterate that school-family relationships and school choice are vast topics and each of them has been the focus of extensive research. Given the purpose of this chapter, I deliberately left uncovered dimensions on the topic of school-family relationships (e.g. initiatives on developing

²¹ For studies on mothering, schooling, and social reproduction from a feminist approach: Griffith & Smith, 2004. The work of Annette Lareau also deserves distinction (1987, 2003).

parental involvement and their effects, the role of educational policies in encouraging parental involvement, etc.) with the purpose of building a bridge that would allow me to explore the possibilities that a school-family relationships approach could take in the context of choice policies.

The exposition and discussion of the Chilean case has been also intentional. The characteristics of the implementation of the school choice policy, the temporal extension, and the long-term outcomes on school segregation and the largely crisis of public education, offer a unique and privileged context to understand the interaction between schools and families. Moreover, there are not studies in Chile that explore such intersection during the process of choosing a school.

What has been accomplished, however, is call the attention on to what extent each topic, school-family relationship from a social class perspective and school choice, has been understood in general as an unidirectional process, that is, as centered on either school(s) or family(ies) rather than an articulated process, and thus there is a lack of research from social class perspective that studied “the dynamic” between them, where schools and families participate.

Furthermore, through the lens of social and cultural capital, the comprehension of how parents view and engage with schools and, moreover, how schools perceived and interact with families is illuminated by this body of literature. Parents with more cultural capital are transversally been viewed as more aligned and articulated with schools’ requirements and expectations. This, in turn, makes them more successful and having to invest less in developing a relationship with school. Schools, for their part, even when

they try to reformulate their approaches with families, continue to have a school-centric approach that has proved weak to attend students' and families' needs, in particular, those who do not share the codes promoted by schools. In this way, social class allows understanding dynamics by which schools and parents contribute to social reproduction, separately and jointly. Likewise, this approach locates the issue of power relationships at the center, either to understand how schools' practices affect family's involvement, as well as to understand how families might use school choice policies to achieve advantages in their class status.

In the discussion below, I attempt to outline some key learning from the literature review as well as point out interconnected additional topics that might prove useful in moving the work forward. I conclude with a set of potential research questions.

Conclusion

(...) At its core, the purest form of privatization in education begins with family effort. Studies of educational achievement or educational attainments consistently find that differences in family circumstances have a large influence on educational outcomes, typically greater than the impacts of differences among schools. For this reason, education is already heavily "privatized." (Levin & Belfield, 2001, p. 1800)

If educational process merges into the familiar efforts of elemental forms of privatization from its beginning, is worth asking why the literature on school and family relationships and on school choice appear so distant from each other. This event is not casual and has to do with that in general, families have been seen as depositaries of school's efforts and not

always exerting a protagonist role in such relation. As Levin and Belfield (2001) argue, educational policy – at least in the U.S. – has established an extensive set of legal and contractual obligations for schools, whereas the only contractual obligation for families is to meet compulsory education requirements. In their view, parents need to be seen as contractual partners in schools’ efforts.²²

This literature review illustrates that the topics of school-family relationships and school choice have been explored in parallel rather than in articulated ways. Such gap deserves attention for multiple reasons. In the literature on school choice, scholars either advocates or critics tend to emphasize that the insertion of school choice policies characterizes a new aspect of parental involvement. That is, choice is seen as a new pathway for parents to participate in schooling. However, as this literature review shows, the school-family dimension seems to disappear of school choice researchers’ interests.

As this revision indicates, a potential point of intersection is social class because it repositions school-family relationships and choice as framed by sociocultural aspects, but most significant, like articulated processes. While research explores in which parents’ from different background, social classes, or cultural capital, face and make meaning of the school choice process (e.g. Ball et al, 1996; van Zanten, 2003, 2005; Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007), this research lacks of a focus on schools’ responses, and how the school-family relationship is affected by the context of choice. Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of cultural capital illuminates the understanding of how educational systems reproduce social structure and class privileges. Lareau's (1987) work stresses the role of families in

²² Authors developed a framework for establish a metaphorical “contract” with parents in relation to their involvement in their children’ education.

the development of strategies to manage their interactions with the school creating advantage. In sum, through school-family interactions (i.e. those modulated by school choice) education becomes sites of, as Levinson and Holland (1996) pointed out, “intense cultural politics” as it serves as a current key resource to promoting a determined view of society. Following that idea, one could think in school as places of cultural production and contestation that play a complex role in perpetuating inequality in society (Levinson, Foley, & Holland, 1996).

Such analysis, critical around the world, seems especially relevant in the Chilean educational context, where after 30 years of its implementation, the relevance of the voucher system as a mechanism to induce improvements on education, through parental choice, has been at the center of policy discussions. National research coincides on the impact that socioeconomic level has in the understanding of parental choice and competition effects in a national-wide voucher system. Furthermore, current concerns on education, especially the socioeconomic school segregation, allow glimpsing the potential benefits of using a social and cultural capital perspective. It calls the attention that although the role that social class plays in schooling is evidenced by research findings, there is a lack of studies in Chile that addresses school choice from the capital perspective and includes the school-family relationships perspective. An investigation on the proposed themes could help narrowing the existing gap.

This chapter has been organized through the idea that school-family relationships and school choice in conjunction are critical, but still underexplored areas of research to understand the intersection between schools and families in the context of school choice. This implies breaking with the traditional focus either on schools or families are separate

entities in order to prioritize in the interrelationship between them. A premise in this argument is that any comprehension of one actor without the other limits our understanding of the complexities of school choice and its role in the reproduction of inequality. Using a social class as a lens allows identifying the connections between schools' and families' perspectives and practices related to the school choice process.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

The explanation of school-selection practices and their influence on the relationship between society and education will remain conceptually restricted to the limitations of the method in terms of circumscribing and localizing choice within broader social phenomena (Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2014, p.2).

The purpose of this study is to come to understand how families and schools enact social class during the process of choosing a school. The combination of data collection and analytic methods were selected based on the understanding of school choice as a social phenomenon, and they were used to reveal how social agents (families and schools) approach the process of choosing a school in a way that reflects the emergence of habitus, which mediate their practices-decisions. The study adopts a qualitative multiple case study design based on interpretative methods and sociocultural theories to make meaning of the data around the topics that constitute the axes of interest.

The chapter is organized in 6 subsections: 1) Researcher Positionality; 2) Research Design; 3) Research Methods and Rationale; 4) Data Collection Strategies; 5) Data Analysis Strategies; and 6) Limitations of the Study.

Researcher Positionality

Positionality in this study is informed by how I make sense of my place in the social structure through my personal and professional experiences and my own epistemology. I classify myself as a Chilean middle class woman who has been faced

with issues of school choice during my own educational path, so I have been able to see how my class status has played a role in that process. In a highly segregated society, being a Chilean middle class woman makes me more sensitive to issues of social exclusion and inclusion. I have experienced privilege because of my class status (e.g. being able to choose a private high school), and I have been affected by it (e.g. not able to access to financial support from the state for graduate education). Also, my personal and critical point of view about the impact of education policies grounded on marketization forces on educational segregation is underlying the main questions of this study.

My interest on school choice started many years ago, when based on my work with schools in issues related to family involvement in low income neighborhoods, I began to be interested on how families experienced the process of choosing a school, specifically for mothers for whom it seemed to mean a lot. I saw that aspect as foundational in the relationship between school and families. Based on those professional experiences, I wanted to understand how schools participate in the process of choosing a school.

In 2009, I conducted a pilot study interviewing mothers in an urban school. From those conversations, I was able to see that the decision making about the school was one of the first one and more intense in framing the relationship between school and the family, for families. Although one can feel it, there were marked elements of social class in those mothers' perspectives, but I was not familiar with the larger sociocultural lens and how it plays in educational context.

The election of a qualitative approach is coherent with my own epistemology as a researcher. The main questions are focused on the understanding of the social class phenomenon within the context of choice and school competition. I value qualitative research because it gives voice to the social agents, as well allows the researcher to explore comprehension, not only description, of the phenomenon.

Research Design

Understanding social class not as an explicit category but as an implicit and largely flexible mental construct requires exploring the process of interpretation. This suggests a choice of methods that is open to understanding how social actors interpret their experiences in a specific content: Qualitative methods focusing on researcher interpretation are most appropriate. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note,

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world....Qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

A study of families and schools enactment of social class during the process of choosing a school needs to be focused on the *interpretative* and *material* practices that make participants' *world* visible to the research. This focus requires examining the interpretations and the material practices/ actions that arise from that implicit interpretation.

Another reason to choose a qualitative approach emerges from the literature review; the necessity of incorporating the notion of context in the study of school choice. Scholars argue that education markets are essentially local in nature which also means that to understand choice, one must understand it in a particular context (Waslander, Pater, & van der Weide, 2010). This is important because an important body of literature in the U.S and in Chile already exists to address the school choice phenomenon from quantitative and econometric methodologies which focus more on trying to homogenize rather than differentiate contexts. The notion of context allows us to comprehend why similar policies or schemes of choice operate differently, and have different results, in local education markets. Furthermore, a local context is always historic and located in a larger national narrative where sociocultural elements are deployed. In the case of Chile, the context of school choice policy was shaped by marketization since 1981, and today it is still possible to find new and characteristic elements of the educational system derived from new waves of privatization-marketization efforts.

A qualitative methodology is best suited for gaining better understanding of dynamics located in specific contexts. Such approach is also necessary given the limited amount of qualitative studies that would help to explain both the subjective and social meaning of the statistical evidence (e.g. Córdoba, 2014; Raczynski & Hernandez, 2010). In taking this approach, I follow the distinctions offered by Carrasco, Falabella, and Mendoza (2014) and understand the process of choosing a school as something more complex than a simple event: it is a symbolic and affective dimension of social life that is strongly dependent on the institutional features of educational systems.

In this study, I employ a multiple-case study in order to explore families and schools enactments of social class in the process of choosing. Case studies are focused on questions of “why” and “how” and are ideal for explanatory questions, lack of control over the event, and a focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, multiple-case studies allow exploring similarities and differences among cases, enriching the understanding of the phenomenon. Although this aspect might lead to the possibility for generalizing findings, this is not a major goal of the study.

A compelling rationale for using multiple cases studies is the exploration of a poorly-understood phenomenon situated within a particular context (Gay et al., 2009) and the use of extensive, multiple sources of evidence in data collection. In this instance, the selection of cases (schools), based on a homogeneity criterion, is relevant in order to compare them. Bryman and Cramer point out multiple case studies also allow the examination of the phenomenon in different stages of development (Bryman & Cramer, 1994), an appropriate approach to understand the particular nature of each local context in examining the ways in which social class is enacted during the process of choosing a school.

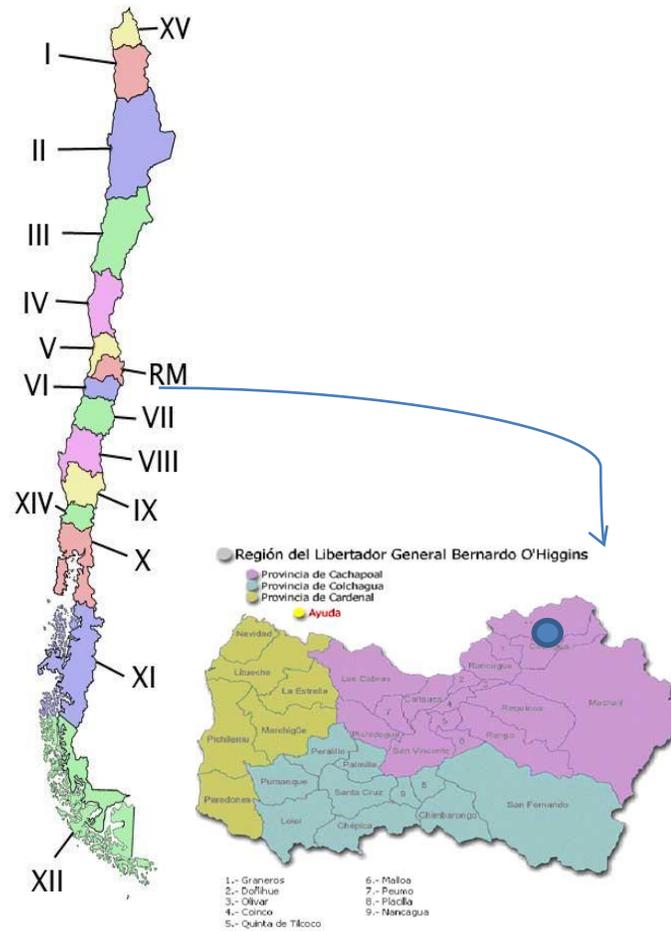
The next section, “Research Methods and Rationale,” goes into the description of research methods and the rationale for using four levels of sampling. Within that description, the strategies used to involve four school cases and the final sample of participants, are presented.

Research Methods and Rationale

Sampling. This study utilizes four levels of sampling. The first level is the selection of commune (a territorial area that represents the smallest geographical and political-administrative unity in the Chilean territory) the second level of sampling involves the selection of neighborhoods within the commune, the third level is the selection of schools, and finally the fourth level is the selection of participants within each school. Four school institutions from the same commune in two different neighborhoods will be chosen as cases for this multiple case study. The sampling method used is a non-probability sampling procedure because in each level the sampling was chosen following a set of predetermined criteria aligned with the purposes of the research.

First level: Commune. Typical Sample. Chile is divided into 15 regions, which are the country's first-level administrative division. The sixth region is organized territorially in three provinces (see figure 1.0). The largest province integrates 17 communes. The majority of communes (15) are of a medium size (population of 20,000 to 50,000). Most of these communes are urban although there is still rural population.

Figure 1.0. Chile, VI Region, and the Three Provinces



From the total of 17 communes in the largest province, 5 communes share the following: a similar distribution of the educational options between municipal, private subsidized, and private schools (one exception); the absence of student enrollment in private schools at elementary level (with one exception); a growth in the private subsidized enrollment; and consequently, the decline of municipal enrollment during the last decade. Although the difference is less pronounced, the communes differ in the enrollment for elementary levels according to sector, where some of them have a majority of enrollments in the private subsidized sector; while others have a majority of enrollments in the municipal sector.

Table 2.0. Comparison among Five Communes

Communes	Palermo	Commune 2	Commune 3	Commune 4	Commune 5
Population 2016	34,212	53,118	26,693	32,827	47,317
% Population Urban-Rural	U 89.87 R 10.13	U 95.06 R 4.94	U 80.70 R 19.30	U 42.96 R 57.04	U 66.28 R 33.72
Number of schools according to sector*	M 10 PS 14 P 0	M 11 PS 15 P 6	M 11 PS 7 P 1	M 16 PS 5 P 0	M 27 PS 13 P 2
Enrollment 2013 by sector (elementary level)	M 1.994 PS 2.708 P 0	M 1.289 PS 3.497 P 1.344	M 1.981 PS 576 P 0	M 1.696 PS 1.101 P 0	M 2.975 PS 2.529 P 0
Growth of enrollment in Private Subsidized sector (2006-2013)	+5.6%	+142.4%	+1,8%	+6.6%	+36.2%
Percentage change of enrollment in Municipal sector (2006-2013)	-20%	-27.6%	-5%	-22.7%	-27.5%

*Municipal schools (M); Private subsidized schools (PS); Private schools (P).

The commune of Palermo has been selected because it represents a typical case of the educational scheme of the sixth region, and therefore, of the central zone of Chile. Furthermore, given its geographic proximity (45 miles) to the capital of the country, Santiago, focusing on Palermo is relevant because it allows a contrast with past studies on school choice in Chile, most of which have focused on big cities such as the capital (e.g. Carrasco, Falabella & Mendoza, 2014; Córdoba, 2014; Elacqua & Fabrega, 2004; Raczynski & Hernandez, 2010).

Second Level: Neighborhoods. Selective Sampling. A selective sampling of schools was developed considering the existence of neighborhoods with potential educational markets. That included schools that provide elementary education (municipal and private subsidized) and which share a geographic location (within less than a kilometer or .6 miles). The researcher's knowledge of the commune was useful to establish the boundaries of each neighborhood. Two neighborhoods were selected considering that, at least in theory, families had the possibility to choose from more than

one elementary school for their children. One neighborhood was located in the center of the commune and the other in the periphery. The following image corresponds to a map of the commune that shows the two neighborhoods selected for this study.

Figure 2.0. Neighborhoods Selected in the Commune of Palermo



Third level: Schools. Selective Sample. Within the two neighborhoods, schools that offered elementary education were identified and invited to participate in the study. The five schools invited accepted to participate. The four schools that composed the sampling of the study at the school level are described in table 2, which characterizes the schools according to:

- The type of administration (municipal or private subsidized)
- The socioeconomic group of students' families (SEG). The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) classifies the schools according to the predominant socioeconomic characteristics of their students, which are defined based on: parents' educational background and information about monthly family's income. The levels are five: low (A), lower-middle (B), medium (C), medium-high (D), and high (E). This

classification is commonly used by local research to establish socioeconomic categorization of families and therefore to refer social class.

- Enrollment and growth of enrollment during the last decade
- SIMCE average scores during last three years and comparison with national average for schools with equal SEG²³
- Official recognition refers to the years of functioning
- Payment information indicates if the school is associated with the copayment policy and requests a payment from families
- School's vulnerability index IVE-SINAE informs the condition of vulnerability of students' population within a school. The index consists of various measures of social vulnerability related to health, education, housing, etc. This information allows to schools apply in order to obtain alimentation services for students (something similar to free and/or reduce lunch program in the U.S).²⁴

²³ SIMCE (in Spanish) is the national evaluation system "Education Quality Measurement System", which the Ministry of Education uses to evaluate all students in second, fourth, eighth, tenth and eleventh grades. More information about SIMCE can be found at www.simce.cl

²⁴ This information was extracted from www.junaeb.cl/live

Table 3.0. Characterization of Schools

SCHOOLS	Administration	Families SEG	Enrollment 2015 (1 st to 8 th grade)	Enrollment growth	SIMCE average last 3 years - Comparison	Official Status	Tuition	IVE-SINAE
Peripheral neighborhood								
SAINT ANTHONY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Private Subsidized	Medium ²⁵	226	(2012-2013) N.A.	272 – higher	2012	No tuition ²⁶ (until 2014, 1.8 – 3.5% of family income)	57.5%
Downtown neighborhood								
NERUDA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Municipal	Lower-Middle ²⁷	647	(2004-2013) +13.6%	243 – lower	1981	No tuition	76.5%
GABRIELA MISTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Private Subsidized	Lower-Middle	251	(2004-2013) -11.3%	232 – lower	1989	No tuition	75.3%
VIOLETA PARRA SCHOOL ²⁸	Private Subsidized	Medium	604	(2004-2013) +8.5%	274 – higher	1981	5.9 – 11% of family income ²⁹	55.3%

Strategies for contacting schools. The schools were invited to participate through an initial contact involved sending a formal letter of presentation of the study by email and a phone call to each of the principals and the superintendent of the commune. This initial contact had the purpose of presenting the overall characteristics of the study, the requirements for schools in terms of activities, the rationale for having selected that

²⁵ The majority of parents have declared having between 11 – 12 years of schooling and a monthly family income that goes between \$570 and \$1,100US.

²⁶ \$20US monthly.

²⁷ The majority of parents have declared having between 9 – 10 years of schooling and a monthly family income that goes between \$350 and \$570US. Between 61,01 and 81% of students are in a social vulnerability level. <http://www.simce.cl/ficha/?rbd=2207>

²⁸ This is the only school from the sample that has secondary education and asks for a monthly payment from families.

²⁹ Around \$65US monthly

particular school, and the contribution of the study. This first contact was important in getting access to the four schools selected; therefore, it was established in advance. The letter of presentation and the phone call were made in July - August with the goal of ensuring a meeting with the principal at each school during the last two week of September 2014.

The letter of invitation included a brief presentation of the researcher, the purpose and objectives of the study, the methodology, and the offer of a future post-study meeting with school personnel to discuss the initial findings. Both letters in English and Spanish are attached in Appendix D.

In the case of municipal schools, a phone call to the superintendent of the district was made after sending the letter of presentation. This phone call was intended to let him know about the research and to ask him to authorize the participation of the selected municipal schools. The contact with the superintendent was important in terms of following the local procedures related to the public education system.

In the case of private subsidized schools, the need for a meeting with the executive director (superintendent) was discussed with principals at each of the three schools selected. In one case, the principals did not consider this meeting necessary and on the contrary more an obstacle because of the lack of presence of the executive director at the school. In one case, the meeting was considered important by the principal, but it was impossible to conduct due to the executive director's schedule. Finally, in the third case, the interview with the executive director was conducted and included as part of the data collection process and subsequent analysis.

Although during the initial contact (e.g. phone call) there was a conversation about timeline and dates, the specific schedule of data collection activities (i.e. interviews, focus groups, and observations) at each school was determined in the meeting that was held during September. Such meetings were conducted only with principals in each of the four cases.

The reciprocity component³⁰ was seen as positive and facilitated the acceptance of the schools invited. In each, I discussed the contribution of the study to the school and offered a workshop to present and discuss the main findings with schools personnel and families. In one of the school, the principal asked me for a more detailed description of both the benefits and risks in which the school would be involved as a result of their participation in the study, and a document was added to the letter of invitation.

After two weeks of finished the collection of data, a workshop was conducted in each of the schools of about 2 hours to present the main findings and discuss strategies to improve the overall relationship between school and families. Information about the material presented in each school has been included in Appendix E.

I leaved the option opened for any other follow-up activity that might interest the principal and the management team. In one case I was asked to develop a focus group with students of 8th grade to know their perceptions about the school.

Fourth level: Participants. Selective Sampling. The main goal was ensure two sources of information at each school, one from school personnel, (including the

³⁰ Traditionally schools are object of research; but they rarely receive information of the outcomes (i.e. final report, paper, etc.) of it. Less common is the development of meetings after finalizing the research process to present the findings of the studies or workshops related with topics chosen by schools' participants. This type of approach creates distrust and suspicion from schools toward researchers.

principal, management team and teachers) to capture both the institutional and the pedagogical view about the school choice process; and the other from family members, which involved principally mothers because as discussed in chapter 2. Research has shown that they play a key role in school choice during the first years of schooling.³¹

The invitation to school personnel to participate in the study focused on teachers who teach in the primary grades (1st to 4th grade) or teachers with active roles in the enrollment process at the school, which was not only coherent with the focus of study but also a way to facilitate the organization of the interviews in the bigger schools. In the smallest the total amount of teachers allowed that the focus group was made with all staff.

The selection of family members was based on the information or/and access given by the principal and teachers. The support of the principal and the teachers was incredibly important in selecting families who were (relatively) new to the school. However, it is important to mention that interviewees, specifically mothers, contributed to reach other parents. They provided names and other contact information of potential participants. In some cases, even mothers interviewed used their own cellphones to help me to reach other mothers.

At the beginning of the collection data process, I did not have direct access to the mothers invited, so I tried to get a diverse group by explicitly asking the principal and the teachers to help me reach parents who would be heterogeneous. This strategy had the purpose of better understanding what the perception about the school and about the

³¹ There are important differences in choice process when students are older. Literature has shown that children have more influence in the decision making when families choose a secondary or high school (Reay & Ball, 1998).

school-family relationship was from families. I argued that it would only be possible to the extent that the group was diverse in their opinions and experiences.

The overall criteria for selecting mothers were that their children must have no more than one to two years at the current school and that they changed schools; however, the selection of mothers were much more flexible in practice, accepting to a more ample range of participants. For example, mothers with three years at the current school, mothers with only few months at the current school, mothers who have had all their children at the current school, were all included. The description of participants from schools and families are included in appendix F.

In sum, in terms of school participants, the sample was integrated by 40 participants. In terms of family participation, 48 mothers participated either on individual interviews or focus groups. In total, the study was compound of 88 participants.

To obtain consent, each participant was called to a meeting where the information of the study was shared. If participants agreed to participate, they filled and signed a consent form that included: the purpose of the study, procedures, benefits and risks of participation, a promise of anonymity and confidentiality of the information they share, their right to withdraw at any time, contact information of the researcher, and the agreement for transcription. After participants agreed to participate, the interview or focus group was conducted.

To facilitate participation, I asked the principal the possibility of excusing teachers from some activities already scheduled (e.g. monthly teachers' council). In the

case of family participants, I offered the alternative to meet them at home; yet, this only happened once.

Data Collection Strategies

By privileging the collection of more *dense* and *rich* data from different sources, the strategies used in the study were: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis.

Semi-structured interviews. Four semi-structured interviews of 60-75 minutes were conducted with each of the principals with the purpose of gain a deep understanding about; their perspectives on the school-family relationships; the reasons why families choose the school; and the process of enrollment and recruitment of student. The structure of the interview has some particular aspects such as the professional trajectory of the principal and what pathways led her to the direction of the school, how the process of students' enrollment impacts teachers' and principals' work, and their views on the current education reform.

In the case of family members, 32 semi-structured interviews of about 60 – 75minutes with mothers (there was only one exception where there was a couple). Interviews with families started with a focus on their children as a way to establish rapport with the interviewee. Then, they also were asked how they view the overall school-family relationships, and what they liked best about the school. After covering those questions, the interview was dedicated to collecting data about their perceptions and experiences during the process of choosing a school. Within that set of questions

specific questions about their opinions about choice, copayment, and the practice of pupil selection was included.

The existence of a common general structure was crucial to identifying themes across interviews in both schools and families (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Each interview was recorder in audio format; participants were asked to stop the recorder each time they needed. The interviews protocols are in Appendix A.

Focus Groups. With school staff, a total of 7 focus groups of 60-90 minutes were developed. In each school 2 focus were conducted, one with teachers from 1-4 grade, and other with the management team. The exception was Saint Anthony Elementary School where there was not management team; thus, there was only one focus with teachers.

Additionally, three focus groups with mothers were conducted in each school (the exception was Saint Anthony Elementary School). These focus groups were conceived as further source of information and were developed with the support of school staff. In this case, the idea was contrasting and enriching the perspectives offered by mothers during interviews with a more general view of mothers in a group conversation.

Focus groups had the purpose of exploring the collective meanings and interpretations that participants in each school have built around the process of choosing a school and the way in which social class played a role. In this sense, the protocol did not change very much but in their approach to collect more collective views; agreements and disagreements about the topics. One key aspect of the focus groups is that they may allow participants to develop a collective reflection in which new topics, not previously considered by the researcher, might appear (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). This occurred

with some ideas such the importance of how the school was perceived in the community. In some cases, the information that emerged was integrated in new waves of collection of data and the protocols were modified accordingly. Appendix B contains the preliminary elaboration of questions, and Appendix A the final set of questions, and the particular questions used in next rounds (in specific schools).

Observations. A set of diverse observations were conducted at each school and the followed a more ethnographic approach. These were naturalistic observations of parents' conferences, community celebrations and activities and other activities related to promote the school in the community. In direct relation with the process of choosing a school, activities related to the process of choosing a school such as information sessions with new families enrolled, or how teachers informed about vacancies to families were privileged.

Observations allowed exploring the school-family relationship through an alternative approach that focuses on actions rather than words. Either because observations complemented the information already obtained or because they were useful to reformulate and contextualize questions of the interviews and focus groups, they helped to enrich the researcher's perspective and have a more diverse array of evidence (Creswell, 2012). Especially important was the instance of the parents' conferences because as families and school designed and coordinated activities to celebrate the end of the school year; schools and families enactments of social class were much more evident. Although it was impossible cover all the parents' conferences during the second semester, at least 2 observations were conducted at each school.

Document Analysis. The document analysis was focused on information about the annual process of enrollment, and was based on flyers sent to families and the information posted in the school (walls, offices). In general, schools participants did not use documents other than those for marketing themselves.

Initially, the document analysis would be limited to material that schools use in the process of recruiting and enrolling students; however, during the process of collecting data, one extra document was integrated: the Institutional Education Project (PEI). The PEI is a document that reflects school's mission, vision, and the main institutional goals according to their context, history, and their community's needs. This document represents data that demonstrates school's values because participants have given attention to producing them (Creswell, 2012). Three of the four schools made that document available, but one school could not because it was in a reformulation stage.

Timing of the data collection. The data collection activities were conducted during the second half of the Chilean school year 2014, and extended to the beginning of the following school year 2015³². In other words, the data was collected from September 2014 through March 2015. The rationale for placing the collection of data during the second semester was that people could think about school choice considering the experiences of the first semester, which was especially important for new families. Another rationale for choosing the second semester of the school year was that it allowed capture staff's perceptions and practices in a specific moment where they were designing and implementing strategies to face the students' enrollment and recruitment processes for the following year.

³² School year in Chile starts in March and ends in December.

To align with the idea of process rather than a moment in the collection of data, I defined an organization of the activities by group or actor sequentially to incorporate the material collected during the first waves of interviews and focus groups in the later ones. First, I conducted interviews with principals; second, I organized focus groups with teachers and the management team; third, conducted interviews with mothers; and fourth, I organized focus groups with families. In one case, I had to schedule the focus group with the management team at the end of all activities in the school.

Themes and issues that were critical in one school were further explored in the activities that took place after the first round of interviews at the same school. The purposes of organizing data in this way was to understand the overall boundaries of a school case without losing perspective on the eventual cross-case comparisons.

Data Analysis Strategies and Procedures

The idea that collection, coding, and analysis of data occur in a circular pattern is foundational to qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Based on this idea, I assumed that the information collected in the first stage would inform the rest of the data collection process and the analysis as well. In this case, the steps that I followed to organize the collected data were important to further contextualize the analysis and checking they analysis in the following activities. In addition, the active role of the interviewer in interpreting meaning and offering that meaning to the participants for confirmation or correction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) was an important strategy not only to develop with follow-up questions but also to approach the analysis during the collection of data.

Data analysis strategies. Data analysis included an overall strategy and specific analytic techniques to be applied to two types of analysis: a within-case and a cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). As Yin (2009) suggests, every case study should follow a general analytic strategy through which the researcher organizes what needs to be answered by the data collected. In this study, the overall strategy relied on understanding how in each school case, families and school perceived and faced the process of choosing a school, which is at the core of my research questions. This provided a well-defined focus to collect specific kinds of data systematically (Mintzberg, 1979). The use of the two techniques in the study is described below.

Within-case analysis. The importance of within-case analysis resides in the possibility to cope better with a staggering amount of data. This might involve detailed case study write-ups for each case (Eisenhardt, 1989). After finishing the collection of data in each school case, a set of descriptions by school cases was developed with the purpose of understanding each case as an entity. These descriptions were differentiated by schools and families within each school case and guided by broader questions such as: how do families and schools see each other and their relationship?; how do they interpret the policy of school choice and the process of choosing a school?; what elements of social class emerge from schools and families points of view?

Cross-case analysis. In the search for cross-case patterns, I contrasted and compared each school case according to the specific processes relevant to the main purpose and research questions (Yin, 2009). I divided data into the two groups targeted in the study: families and schools. When I compared cases by families' views and perspectives, I started to see that there were agreements on which all participants seemed

to converge, despite their differences such as their social class. Moreover, there were also differences in the strategies available to families to navigate the process of choosing a school. After this analysis, I compared the school cases focusing on their similarities and differences.

From this twofold exercise of looking at the school case in detail and of comparing the cross-case themes, concepts, and relationships, an initial frame began to emerge. As Eisenhardt (1989) notes, “the next step of this highly iterative process is to compare systematically the emergent frame with the evidence from each case in order to assess how well or poorly it fits with case data” (p. 541). This two-part process involved (1) refining the definition of the construct, and (2) building evidence for that construct (Eisenhardt, 1989). Although I explored different concepts that were important to a certain stage of the analysis, such as social class strategies, typologies of families and schools, the most powerful construct was the notion of habitus. Habitus was part of the framework initially explored in the literature review; it emerged as a fundamental construct that allowed for an interpretation of the differences among the school cases. Identifying the unique expressions of habitus in each school case, differentiating it by families and schools, and then contrasting habitus among school-cases were a central task in the process of building evidence.

Data analysis procedures. For data collection focused on families, the first step was transcribing and analyzing 15 of the 32 semi-structured interviews. For data focused on schools, I transcribed 5 of the 11 semi-structured interviews and focus groups with teachers. These transcripts were coded by using Nvivo software, and then reviewed and re-coded and new codes emerged. I started with open coding, selecting the data and

labeling key quotes that were meaningful to compare with other data. The revisions of this material led me to developing an initial codes book that included codes, categories and subcategories. The code book is in Appendix C.

Following the process of initial coding, a second round of analysis involved listing and codifying the audios for the other interviews and the conversations of the focus groups through Nvivo software.³³ This process was ongoing over time as each subsequent revision of material confirmed, strengthened, or refined existing categories and codes. The development of coding categories followed an order guided by role, distinguishing school personnel from family actors, given the assumption that the vision from principal and teachers differed from parents. The resulting order was: first mothers' semi-structured interviews and focus groups, then principals' semi-structured interviews, and third, teachers' focus groups. Finally I included observation notes and document analysis. These steps allowed me to build an overall scene about the data before going deep into each school case (within-case analysis) and across cases.

After coding all the data, I conducted an iterative revision and analytic organization of themes. Analytic techniques appropriate for this multiple case study were internal case (which uses explanation building) and then cross-case synthesis. Explanation building is especially useful when the purpose of the study is to explain a phenomenon based on a set of causal links about how and why something happened (Yin, 2009). The explanations result from an iterative process in which an initial theoretical statement or proposition is compared with evidence from the case and then contrasting information is compared with the ongoing revision. Thus, the evidence is examined,

³³ The decision for codifying audios follows a cost-effectiveness criterion.

theoretical propositions are revised, and the evidence is re-examined from a new perspective.

In order to validate the analysis, I used member checks in three moments of the study. First, I met with principals in each school after the collection of data to share the concepts that were being generated from the school and get feedback from them. Then, I developed a workshop in each school with members of school staff where the emergent concepts and connections among concepts were presented. In this meeting, participants gave their opinions regarding the accuracy and the validity of the findings. I also met twice during the process of collection of data with an expert in my field with the purpose of discussing the initial categories and codes. He suggested that I focus on the further exploration of specific themes. These themes included the reference to “other people” from which mothers want to keep distance, and the emergence and justification of exclusionary practices from mothers based on their concerns with school discipline.

Given the extensive amount of data, the analysis implied a constant movement through the codes and categories, and strategies such as explanation building and cross case analysis that are iterative processes, not linear ones. As data was coded, the analysis focused specifically to the data related to the issue of the process of choosing a school by families and schools, and other data was left out.

Limitations of the Study

One of the main limitations of the research design is the small sample size, which affects the possibility of generalizing the findings to other communes in Chile and to school choice processes at other levels of schooling. Another limitation is the lack of

diversity in the participants, which affects the possibility to select a diverse group during the recruitment process. It was difficult to select participants who have different views and experiences about the process of choosing a school.

Regarding to the first limitation described above, this research uses purposeful sampling at the four levels (commune, neighborhoods, schools, and participants) and centers around one very particular setting. Therefore, findings cannot be generalized to other communes of Chile. Instead, the study is looking to develop a theory, which is suitable for a multiple case study. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that school choice is a different process in elementary than in secondary and tertiary levels of education, thus, findings are not able to be generalized to other stages of school choice.

The second limitation imposed a challenge associated with the research design. Choosing participants by using the principal's criterion may affect the understanding of a more complex picture of what is happening at each school. For that reason, I used complementary strategies to recruit participants. Among them, I extended the invitation to all teachers in the primary grades (1st to 4th grade), and asked teachers in those levels to identify mothers who might be willing to participate in the interviews. This strategy was useful for including mothers from diverse backgrounds, thus ensuring a broader spectrum of participants. Additionally, this strategy was more effective for reaching mothers, especially in the cases of larger schools where principals were too busy to help with the arrangement of the interviews.

The qualitative nature of this study acknowledges that research bias cannot be removed but recognized and problematized during the process. With the purpose of

disclosing my personal assumptions, I kept a reflective journal during the process of data collection, analysis, and writing in order to reflect on the effect of assumptions on my own interpretations. By doing that, I chose to make my experiences, thoughts, and feelings visible, and acknowledge them as part of the research process.

One important aspect to mention regarding families' participants being all women (one exception) is the potential gender biases that might exist. As I explained in chapter 2, the rationale for choosing mothers is grounded in other important studies that are foundational to this one, which posit that women, as mothers, serve a critical role in schooling. These studies highlight that mothers participate in the process of social reproduction by segregating and excluding other families and students (See André-Bechely, 2013; David 1994; Reay, David, & Ball 2005).

Regarding the use of a social class lens, it is worth mentioning that although I use the socioeconomic compositions of students' families (SEG) to categorize the school cases, my purpose was never to measure "objective" social classes of participants. Purposefully, I did not ask parents or school staff to classify them, which cohere with the definition of social class as a more subjective dimension rather than an objective one.

Throughout this chapter, I demonstrated that the use of multiple-case study allows for a deep saturation point to be reached. Building on this analysis, the next chapter presents findings of the multiple-case study, focusing on themes that emerged in all four school cases analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter Four

Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to come to understand how families and schools enact social class during the process of choosing a school. Based on the literature review I conducted, I argued that the interaction between schools and families is a critical but not traditionally integrated piece for understanding the process of choosing a school. I also posited that given the differentiator role of social class in literature on school choice and on the relationship between schools and families, a social class lens is needed.

This chapter presents the main findings of this qualitative, multiple-case study and includes narrative data gathered from families and school professionals in four school-cases within one local commune of Chile. Findings are centered on similarities and contrasts among schools from families and school staff perspectives and practices. I conclude with a cross-case analysis in which I identify emerging patterns/themes across the cases.

The first section, set forth below, “Habitus and School Choice,” elaborates on the way in which key concepts from the theoretical framework are used in the context of the study. The next two sections are the heart of the chapter; and they articulated around the emergence of habitus and its relationship with the concept of social class during the process of choosing a school. Specifically, the second section, “Commonalities across School-Cases,” describes the transversal agreement among participants regarding the value of school choice and pupil selection. The third section, “Differences among School-Cases,” presents the differences in terms of the three habitus that emerged among the

school-cases. A final fourth section concludes with a discussion about the distribution of habitus among the four school-cases, and the three types of habitus according to their central elements.

Habitus and School Choice

The thematic organization and the analysis of the data follow the conceptual distinction given by Bourdieu's notion of Habitus and indicate how it emerged in this study. Bourdieu saw Habitus as systems of *dispositions* to action (Bourdieu, 1977) that were produced by internalizing the social structure and one's place in it in relatively unpredictable ways. Habitus, thus, mediates structures and practices. He also defines habitus as a compilation of collective and individual trajectories, so, the individual trace of an entire collective history (Bourdieu 1990 in Reay 2004, p 434). It means that habitus might be developed collectively and thus be similar across members of one group.

In this study, participants both from families and from schools consistently talked about features that Bourdieu would have included in the concept of habitus as aspects of their practice. *This means that*, they used aspects of habitus to show how sets of assumptions, expectations, values, and actions during the process of choosing a school come to appear in families and schools. Thus, habitus was used as a way to understand people's practices and choices.³⁴ Specifically, understanding families' and schools' perspectives and practices, and how these understandings are related to social class.

³⁴ For a revision on the concept of Habitus and its use in educational research, review Reay (2004). She has described that most of educational research "referenced habitus instead of working with it" (p. 440). Habitus in those cases it is assumed not put into practice. She categorized empirical research showing both weak and strong uses of Habitus as a methodological tool. I am drawing this analysis basing on her conceptualization of habitus as a methodological tool.

The following section outlines themes common across the four cases. The themes are described in terms of three habitus, which emerged across the school staff members' and families' perspectives.

Commonalities across School-Cases

As noted in Chapter 2, the policy of school choice in Chile has more than three decades of history. It is not surprising therefore, that choice illustrates local values.

In the study, about 90 percent of the more than 70 participants mentioned they perceived that choosing a school was important and a value by itself, as well as something necessary in society, and was even seen as a civic right. As expected, the value of choice in the commune of Palermo suggests that the national pro-choice discourse, enacted by education policy, has persisted in this area. In one of the schools, one member of the management team focused on the value of choosing a school in relationship to the changes in the context due to the educational reform. This quote reflects the value of choosing embedded not only in families, but in school staff as well.

E: I think the most detrimental thing for education and for families is the elimination of the possibility to choose schools.

I: Why?

E: Because, one, choosing a school is one of the most important decision makings you made, and second, I have to be content with the school assigned to me,

although the school's mission does not represent me. It is not aligned with my life, or with the life of my son (Emilia)³⁵³⁶

The quote highlighted the importance of choosing a school as a civic right to the extent that it allows families (individuals) to have control over their education experience. The quote also implies that choosing a school is strongly related with an identity process where families can align themselves with an educational project.

The assumption about the positive view of school choice emerged when participants were asked about their views on the Chilean education system and the school choice scheme in place. The view of choosing as a social value emerged even among families who were not able to choose and thus who are disadvantaged by it. Nevertheless, there was the acknowledgement that choice was not available for all in the same way, and thus, those who do not have financial resources or who did not satisfy the school's requirements (e.g. admission tests) see their options much more constrained.

A second specific commonality shared among the families' participants, regardless of their socioeconomic status, was the extensive support that exists for pupil selection. Of a total of 48 family's participants, about 70 percent of parents agreed and legitimated the selection of students by the school. The importance that the school can select students based on their abilities was valued as a strategy to ensure homogeneity

³⁵ Participante: Yo digo que lo peor de la reforma es la eliminación de la capacidad de los padres de elegir escuela.

Entrevistador: ¿Por qué?

Participante: porque uno, no me dan la posibilidad de seleccionar algo tan importante como lo es la escuela, y segundo, tengo que conformarme con la escuela que otros me asignaron, aunque la escuela y el Proyecto Educativo de esa escuela no me representa, que no está alineado con mi vida, con la vida de mi hijo (Emilia)

³⁶ Original quotes in Spanish have been included as footnotes in red color to highlight their significance.

establishing a common base from where starts instruction. Such practice was justified as a way to protect students from the frustration that may be caused by the realization that they do not know what they should know. Isidora, a mother who also works in Violeta Parra School further explained:

I think [pupil selection] is good for knowing what level students are at. If students are tested in second grade and they do not have the knowledge a kid should have in that grade, then it is harder for teachers (Isidora)³⁷

Another justification for pupil selection was that the use of tests to select students based on their knowledge is valuable not only because it protects the student, but it is also beneficial for the rest of the class, especially for those students who are more advanced. Selecting students, therefore, prevents that students without the minimum knowledge harm the rest. This idea reflects the lack of concern for the more “struggling” learners who are not advanced learners.

In the case of the municipal school, the opinions about pupil selection were divided among parents. Some of them saw it as something critical to the quality of education offered by a school. These parents explained that many of the weaknesses of municipal education in comparison with private subsidized education were due to the inability of these schools to select students either because of lack of resources or lack of knowledge. Receiving all students is seen as the cause of the failing of municipal schools. Moreover, these parents believed in including an admission test as a filter in the sense

³⁷ Creo que es bueno para saber en qué nivel vienen los chiquillos, si dan prueba en segundo básico que efectivamente tengan el conocimiento que un niño debe tener en segundo básico, porque uno a veces se encuentra con niños que no lo tienen (...) eso cuesta para los profesores (Isidora)

that it allows selecting students that are really committed towards learning. In other words, by applying an admission test, bad students are left behind. The underlying reason for supporting pupil selection was an exclusionary discourse that postulates some students (bad) should be left behind in the system.

Other parents, however, declared they were against pupil selection through the application of admission tests; especially when they specifically discussed their children's own experiences. In talking about her daughter, a mother said,

In that school, they [students] had to take an admission test, but she did not know how to read. She had to know how to write her name, but she did not know how to do it yet, and I did not like that. I said to the person that they were asking too much for a child who was just going into first grade (Valentina)³⁸

This important support for choice policies and pupil selection confirm previous studies in Chile (Falabella, Seppanen & Raczynsky, 2014). Nevertheless, in this case, although there was important support for such practices, opinions were mixed in the case of the municipal school, particularly, when parents referred to their own experiences.

Differences Among Four Schools

Families' and schools' perspectives and practices of the process of choosing a school and the process of enrollment and recruitment respectively, allowed groping them based on similar elements. The similar elements organized in a common narrative among

³⁸ Ahí había que rendir una prueba y ella como todavía no sabía leer para primero pero el colegio le exigía rendir una prueba, ella tenía que saber escribir su nombre pero ella todavía no lo sabía escribir. Y a mí eso no me gusto. Yo vi las cosas que le pedían y le dije a la señora que esas cosas eran muy complicadas para una niña que va recién a primer año (Valentina)

school-cases referred to three different habitus that were identified as: historical habitus, aspirational habitus, and survival habitus. These three types of habitus expressed a particular way in which families and schools enacted social class in the process of choosing a school.

The next section describes the main findings of the study by presenting each school-case through the lens of the three habitus. Each habitus is described in terms of: an initial overview of the habitus; a characterization of the school and families; a section about school staff perspectives and practices, including a sub-section on the process of enrollment and recruitment; a section about families' perspectives and practices, including a sub-section on the process of choosing a school; and a conclusion of the main aspects portrayed by the habitus of families and schools.

Historical Habitus

Historical habitus expresses dispositions ground in the history of the school in the commune and the connection of people with that history. Within this habitus, the meaning of choosing, which refers to the approach underlying families' understanding of choosing a school, was either reproducing or becoming a part of the history of the school and its legacy in the commune. The meaning of recruitment, which refers to the approach underlying schools' understanding of the process of enrollment and recruitment, was to reinforce the internal network of families.

Another component of the habitus is the temporal orientation, which refers to families' and schools' focus regarding time when facing the process of choosing a school and the process of enrollment and recruitment respectively. In historical habitus, families'

and schools' perspectives and practices were consistently focused on the *past*. For families, it meant that the reasons for choosing the school were supported by referring to their or others' past experiences with the school and to schools' legacy. For schools, it meant focusing on families that are already linked to the school in one way or another, who embodied their historical heritage.

In this habitus, there was a strong sense of agency in terms of the active role that both families and schools had during the process of choosing a school. Families expressed the importance of the process itself and also of their participation in it, and mobilized resources to the process of choosing. Schools were active in developing strategies to recruit families that were aligned with their expectations.

The two school-cases that displayed historical habitus were: Violeta Parra School and Neruda Elementary School.

Violeta Parra School. General characterization. Violeta Parra School is a private subsidized school located in the center of the commune of Palermo.³⁹ It has more than three decades in the commune (1981). Violeta Parra School serves grades pre-K through 12. In 2015 604 students attended at the elementary level. The school asks for additional payment from families and selects students based on an admission test. The SEG correspond to middle class families (medium level) and the school's vulnerability index is the lower in the sample (55.3%) (See chapter 3, table 2.0). Students live across the commune and in the surroundings communes.

³⁹ Geographically, it is located less than 5 minutes walking from Neruda and Violeta Parra schools.

The school was created as a family enterprise. The Flores family is widely recognized for their contribution to the local culture, especially regarding music and dance. Three generations of the family have been involved and most of them have worked in the school. The executive director⁴⁰, the principal, the instructional coach, and the finance person are part of the nuclear family. The significant weight of the school's reputation is exalted in institutional documents (PEI).

Violeta Parra School has a hallmark focused on local and traditional culture expressed through arts, folk music, dance, etc. The school also focuses on sustaining the great prestige in terms of education quality and academic achievement, discipline, and civic engagement. These aspects are formally acknowledged and promoted in institutional documents such as the Institutional Education Project (PEI).

Moreover, according to internal research conducted in 2011, the retention of students that have been in the school since kindergarten to college was greater than 80%.

The teaching staff is composed of 45 whilst the management team is composed of 10 members. Among those were: the principal, the executive director, the instructional coach, the assistant principal, the human resources' director, the curriculum and instruction's director, and the coordinators of instructional evaluation and student counseling. Most of them were either former students or part of the nuclear family.

Violeta Parra School receives students from Palermo and surroundings, and it maintains a good and stable demand for enrollment. Indeed, at the time of the interviews, the school did not have any vacancies for the first grade in 2015.

⁴⁰ He was also part of the management team.

Families are diverse regarding professional background. While some parents hold professional degrees (i.e. social workers, lawyers, teachers, doctors, etc.), others have seasonal jobs or are workers in a local factory. Many of these students receive a government scholarship that gave them a 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% of monthly tuition discount.⁴¹ This means that vacancies were kept for families from lower socioeconomic groups.

In some cases both parents work; in others, mothers stay at home and fathers work; or families are composed by single mothers who are the main provider of income.

The school is explicit about the expectations for families, and about their critical contribution to the overall education experience. The PEI states the need for a strategic alliance between school and families, who are seen as responsible for the ethical and moral education of their children.

Schools' perspectives and practices. The school staff emphasized the value of payment which they understood as the main expression of the commitment of the family with the school. This involved not only the act of paying but also the efforts associated with it. Principal Flores described a story about a couple of seasonal workers (only worked about 4 months a year) that spent almost half of their total income to pay the yearly tuition. She highlighted that the school awarded their children with a scholarship, and the fact that they were currently in college. In telling that story, she explained how the school's expectations were associated with a particular approach to payment. Emilia,

⁴¹ Since 2004, schools with family provision (copayment policy) must ensure a certain amount of students that receive a discount on the monthly tuition fee.

a member of the management team, stressed that precisely such effort from families was the added value with which parents contributed to their children's academic success.

One of the added values offered by the school is that we have many families that have a low level of education or precarious jobs, for example, seasonal workers. Those families make a very significant effort and pay the tuition for the full year at once (...) I believe in that gesture, those families made a commitment for their children's future (Emilia)⁴²

Moreover, paying for education was a practice for ensuring a certain level of social homogeneity across families, which was perceived as something very important for a school that had a family culture as a part of its main narrative. Although school personnel did not say it explicitly, this was evident as they talked about the challenges in working with families who do not pay a monthly tuition, who come from a lower social class background. In Principal Flores' words, families from a "lower cultural level" were *misaligned* with the school's expectations. She mentioned they did not have respect for authority, and the children did not have the manners of the rest of the students. This misalignment usually resulted in conflicts between school and families, and teachers had to make a greater effort towards achieving this alignment.

Being a "family" school was the most salient adjective that participants used to describe the school. Families, teachers, and members of the management team shared a history with the school from being former students, having relatives that studied at the

⁴² Yo creo que este colegio uno de los valores agregados es que nosotros tenemos muchos apoderados con tienen un nivel de escolaridad bajo o que tienen trabajos bien precarios por ejemplo son temporeros y hacen el esfuerzo de trabajar diciembre, enero y febrero y antes de pagar las clases, pagar el año de estudio de sus hijos (...) y en ese gesto apuestan por un proyecto de vida para sus hijos y eso no es fácil de ver (Emilia)

school, or having worked there many years. There were also families who, using Principal Flores's words: "fell in love with the mystique of the school." Either for a personal experience or/and the school legacy in the commune and surroundings, families were attracted to it.

This "family" orientation of the school was encouraged by school practices. It incorporated the easiness for families to approach teachers and the management team, and a close and affective relationship with students. Principal Flores noted, "If parents need to come and talk with me but they do not have an appointment, it does not matter because we want to build an alliance with them, so we need to be available to them."

Some teachers and members of the management team talked about parents participating through fundraising activities or by facilitating access to resources. For example, in one grade, thanks to the parents' professional networks, a whole class was able to get access to a private park to celebrate the end of the school year.

Although being a family school was perceived one of the strongest assets of the school, it also had certain negative outcomes. One of them was the issue of boundaries between school and families. Teachers saw the lack of boundaries in terms of communication as something negative because in their view, parents believed that no matter what teachers were doing, they had to be available to them and address their requirements. One teacher mentioned that she had dealt with parents as she walked home. Another teacher elaborated further:

One characteristic of this school is that it gives power to families and ears to what families want. For example, we are having lunch and have to attend families any

time because this is a family school. Families also know they can reach us whenever they want (...) even beyond a formal schedule⁴³ (Focus group, teachers)

The extreme aspects of an open-door policy and close communication with families were portrayed as frustrating the school personnel, and the establishment of limits with families was considered as a challenge.

Another difficulty is when parents want to be involved in everything, technical issues included. We have to be constantly reminding them, you know what? We know what we do. As a school we have to be setting ground rules⁴⁴ (Emilia, management team member)

A second negative outcome of being a “family school” was related to the institutional culture aligned with that notion, which imposed significant challenges to those who worked at the school. There were implicit and sometimes explicit requirements for teachers and/or members of the management team of being present *unconditionally* at the school or “24/7.”

The process of enrollment and recruitment. It flowed as a natural outcome of the school’s main narrative centered on “being family.” As it has been described, Violeta Parra School was a family school not only because it was a family enterprise, but because

⁴³ Escuela que da atribuciones a los apoderados y les da oído para decir lo que quieran: estamos almorzando y debemos atender a los apoderados a cualquier hora por ser un colegio de tinte familiar en donde uno se puede saltar el conducto regular. (...) las familias entienden que uno tiene que estar disponible cuando ellos quieran (Focus group profesores)

⁴⁴ Otra dificultad son los apoderados que quieren meterse en todo, en cosas técnicas, y hay que estar constantemente recordándoles mire, ¿sabe qué? Sabemos lo que hacemos. Como colegio estamos constantemente rayándoles la cancha a ellos también. (Emilia, miembro del equipo de gestión)

the concept of family was reinforced as something central to the school in their relationships with families.

The school addressed the process of recruitment of families by reinforcing the existent network, so, whenever they had vacancies, the first option was offered to current students' families or their relatives, and they did not give an opportunity to those who were not (already) part of the school. Such strategy was not causal but rather consistent with the idea of being a family. The school actively searched for and privileged families to strengthen the network they already have.

Families' perspectives and practices. In agreement with school staff's view, families placed enormous value on making the effort to pay for education, which was portrayed as the inheritance they could leave to their children. As Martina said: "I always think that the best you can leave to your children is education"⁴⁵ For some parents, the payment created stronger relationship between the school and families, and gave families the right to demand a quality education. Sofia explained this clearly:

In a school, the family is as important as the student. Here, families sign a commitment related to payment, and when your budget is involved ... you are also involved. If I am paying for education I have the right to demand, but in the public sector you cannot. It is like they are doing you a favor by receiving your

⁴⁵ Yo siempre pienso que lo mejor que uno puede dejarle a los niños son los estudios.

children, so, then you have to bear what they offer you because you have no choice⁴⁶ (Sofia)

The idea of commitment through payment was present even in families who received scholarship, and thus, who do not pay the full monthly tuition. They also feel they have the right and responsibility to make their voices heard with the purpose of improving the service the school is delivering.

“As Sr. Flores always says, this is a family” (Isidora, mother)

Families appreciated the strong focus of the school on “being family.” Valentina, one mother, valued the affective way in which students were treated, which not necessarily has to do with the size of the school but with its *ethos*.

What I like the most about the school is the close environment because it is more personalized. Regardless if the class has 45 students, I find that the atmosphere is familiar (...). For example, my son is known by teachers and school staff, but in larger schools the students become unknown⁴⁷ (Valentina)

Families expressed their high level of involvement and commitment with the school in diverse ways. This was clearly reflected in the easiness to schedule visits and

⁴⁶ En un colegio el importante es el alumno pero también es la familia detrás del alumno. Porque acá uno no manda solo al alumno (...) o sea acá uno firma un compromiso y cuando le tocan el bolsillo por dios que duele, ¿sí o no? Porque si estoy pagando tengo derecho a exigir en cambio en los municipales siento yo que es yo te estoy haciendo el favor de cuidarte a tus hijos porque no tenis otra opción poh, entonces o te la aguantai o te la aguantai (Sofia)

⁴⁷ Lo que más me gusta es que la escuela es pequeña es como más personalizada aunque independiente que el curso sean 45 alumnos pero encuentro que el entorno es más familiar (...) por ejemplo mi hijo no es cualquier no, es [nombre de sus hijos], en cambio en otros colegios donde hay una infinidad de cursos por nivel son como cualquier niño (Valentina)

interviews with families during the process of data collection. The same day I asked, just after some calls from one member of the management team, seven individual interviews and one focus group with families were scheduled. As Sofia (a mother) put it:

Here is the mom that is always present at the school, if they call me 20 times, I'll be here 20 times⁴⁸ (Sofia)

At the same time, families valued the closeness and familiarity of the school, they were extremely active in terms of their involvement in academic and curricular issues. In the school's and families' views, the participation of families in curricular aspects and their evident concern about the academic performance of the school were part of the characteristics of families. Families sought and had the expectation of having a high impact on curriculum decisions. Transversely mentioned by the participants was the fact that the families were asking for more information regarding the elaboration of content standards and assessment rubrics, and wanted to have a greater influence on them.

For families, being part of a family school implied focusing on developing a relationship with other families, who they perceived as similar to themselves in terms of parenting. Mothers talked about the similar experiences of students (e.g. studying together). One mother, Valentina, declared,

I feel other families are similar to own. I realize through the things we talk about parenting and how they see education, how much time they spend supporting their children⁴⁹ (Valentina)

⁴⁸ Ahí está la mama que asiste a reuniones, si me citan 20 veces, las 20 veces voy a estar aquí (...) (Sofia)

Some parents also mentioned the importance of creating and developing relationships with other families from an upper social level as part of what the school offers. This expectation of getting in contact with families who were in an upper class position was an underlying reason to choose the school. As if they recognized the potential social capital that can come with being connected with such families. Antonella (a mother), claimed the contact with “other type of people” is important beyond school setting. Also, she suggested how important is that kind of social assessment of students’ families at the moment of choosing a school.

I have always wanted to make friends with other perspectives (...) if you want to make something of yourself, you have to socialize with other groups of people, and learn from them. For example, which schools they choose, if they are concerned about their children, if they call them when they spend the afternoon in a friend’s house. Those things are very important when you think about the school and the environment you want for your child⁵⁰ (Antonella, focus group, parents)

Families expressed a desire for connecting with some families and for taking distance from others. They talked about the need to protect themselves from new members, when they were perceived to be from a lower class. This concern emerged in their views of the current education reform, where parents discussed the eventual elimination of pupil

⁴⁹ Percibo que sí, las otras familias son similares a la nuestra. Me doy cuenta en lo que uno conversa, acerca de la crianza de los hijos. En cuanto se dedican al estudio y de las notas que sacan (Valentina)

⁵⁰ Yo siempre he pensado mis amistades deben ser con otro tipo de mirada (...) pero siempre he dicho si tú quieres ser alguien en la vida tienes que relacionarte con otro tipo de gente y aprender de ellos, lo bueno no lo malo. De ver en qué colegio los tiene, si son preocupados, si esta en otra casa si la mama lo llamo o no, etc. Eso es súper importante cuando uno piensa en la escuela para su hijo (Antonella, focus group padres)

selection. Some mothers were explicit about how that would affect the school negatively.

As Martina noted:

What would happen with this school under the reform? I think it will decrease the quality of education. Why? Because children are impressionable. For example, there are children who have a poor vocabulary because their classmates do. Also, teachers may imitate that vocabulary in order to be on the student level⁵¹

(Martina)

The process of choosing. From the family side, it seemed that the historical habitus overcome choice. Indeed, three (out of six) mothers interviewed, Isidora, Valentina, and Sofia, were explicit about not having any other school in mind but the Violeta Parra School. In their views, there was almost no choice; they could not even think of alternatives.

Isidora connected their experience with the school as the trigger of her decision-making. She was a student and now works at the school as a teacher assistant in pre-K.

When I started studying in at this school it was private and one of the best. My parents always liked the school so, when I started looking for jobs, I came and worked as a teacher assistant and now I have been working here for 10 years⁵²

(Isidora)

⁵¹ ¿Qué pasaría con el colegio (y la reforma)?

Bajaría, ¿por qué? (...) Porque los niños se dejan influenciar, por ejemplo hay niños que tienen muy mal vocabulario porque los compañeros de la escuela o el liceo hablan así, porque el profesor no habla como profesor sino que habla como cualquier alumno para poder llegar a entregarle la información (Martina)

⁵² Cuando entre a estudiar aquí era particular, particular y era de los mejores. A mis papas siempre les gusto la escuela por el folklore. Luego yo volví a trabajar con una profesora y me quede 10 años (Isidora)

Families' decision-making about choosing appeared highly informed by the history, where their own experience with the school and its current reputation was most important in their choice. The current school's reputation was composed by the academic results in terms of standardized tests, the perception of good discipline, and a positive climate. Linked with this last aspect, the images of having well-behaved⁵³ students were widely recognized in the community as the hallmark of the school, and consequently, had a powerful impact in terms of school choice. Students' discipline was expressed through a good personal presentation of students (military fashion – short hair?, using uniform, etc.). Mothers specifically noted that the image that students projected in the community is about order and discipline,

Here, all children appear very well presented; short hair for boys and girls with tied up hair. I really like that because I like when students look orderly.⁵⁴

(Isidora)

And that image serves as a powerful magnet to attract families. In fact, for Catalina that was precisely the reason to choose it: other children and their families.

There were people that told us the school was good, and the social environment was different. We want our child to be more educated in contrast with what you see in the streets. Here, you are not going to see teenagers smoking or swearing as

⁵³ Clearly this is a complex and ambiguous concept, but among the actions that express a good behavior is: not fight, look tidy, not say bad words, have a strong vocabulary.

⁵⁴ Aquí los niños andan todos impeques, con su pelo corto y las niñas con su pelo tomado. A mí me parece bien porque me gustan que anden ordenados. Porque así como ande el profesor, ellos andan. Ellos adaptan la forma de sus profesores (Isidora)

in the school that is across the street. That represents the environment that I do not want for my child. I do not want my child be like those students (Catalina) ⁵⁵

Neruda Elementary School. General characterization. Neruda elementary school is a municipal school located in downtown.⁵⁶ Neruda elementary school has a long tradition in the commune and it is also recognized as one of the best public schools in the commune. This perception, however, is not based on standardized tests but on the overall common perception that it is a *good* school (see chapter 3, table 2.0). The school offers pre-K through eighth grade. In 2015, it served 647 students, where a 77% of students qualify for free and/or reduced cost lunch (based on the school's vulnerability index). The SEG corresponds to working class families (lower-middle level) (see chapter 3, table 2.0). Students lived in the neighborhoods around the school and in surroundings communes.

The teaching staff is composed of 30 professionals, and the management team is composed of 7 members, all women. Most of the latter (5) have been working at the school for more than three decades. The principal, Mrs. Mendoza, and the management team talked about the history of the school and its connection with their life stories; they have aged with their students, see them grow, getting married, raising a family, and then return to the school with their children and grandchildren. About one third of the teachers have extensive experience teaching in the school, while most were more recently arrived teachers. It is noteworthy that, although there were extensive references to the importance

⁵⁵ Había gente que nos había dicho que era bueno y el ambiente era diferente. Nosotros queremos que nuestro hijo sea más educado por lo que uno ve en la calle. Acá no se ven niños fumando o diciendo garabatos como en el colegio de enfrente y ese era el ambiente que yo no quiero que mi hijo vea ni tenga. No quiero que mi hijo sea como los demás (Catalina)

⁵⁶ Geographically, it is located less than 5 minutes walking apart from Violeta Parra and Gabriela Mistral schools.

of history in the conversations with school staff, no references related to the history of the school in the community were found in the Institutional Education Project (PEI).

Of the seven mothers interviewed, three are stay-at-home mothers, one is looking for a job, one has a seasonal job, and two have jobs as secretaries or administrative assistants (one family works independently as real estate agents). Several families live in the neighborhood that surrounds the school (5-10 minutes walking), another group of families live in the peripheral neighborhoods close-by (15-30 minutes walking), and others are from neighboring communes (around 3-4 miles) that are smaller than Palermo..

School perspectives and practices. “*Families trust in us and that makes us stronger*” (Member of the management team)

In the management team’s view, the most important strength of the school was being part of the history of Palermo. The school has educated generations of students and families that continually have entrusted their children’s education to the school. The school staff feels they know the community and that the community knows the school. This mutual knowledge was foundational to trust.

Participants in Neruda School mentioned the word trust transversally. Trust was encouraged not only by history but also by communication approaches, which were mentioned as a critical element in the relationships with families. Communication strategies with families involved giving information about the school to families as well as requesting information in order to respond better to the students’ and parents’ needs. Principal Mendoza explained,

They [parents] know who to contact whenever they want to, but we are also continuously communicating and seeking information from them (Principal Mendoza)⁵⁷

Linked with communication, trust was encouraged by the school's practices, such as teachers being open to receive mothers in classrooms daily, either to talk with them or for them to offer support in activities with students. Moreover, credibility reinforced trust; however, it involved a permanent effort from the school's side, which they recognized and worked for. The management team clarified,

What we tell them, is understood as a reality for the families. It takes a continuous effort for us not to lose that trust (...) the promises we make with parents, we have to meet. Keep our word (...) because what we say to them is understood as trust (Focus group, management team)⁵⁸

Literature on trust in schools identifies institutional mechanisms to reinforce trust. Some of those include developing a respectful approach to families, being open to provide the required information, and the perception of competence to meet the obligations assumed with families (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

The process of enrollment and recruitment. There was not a major concern regarding the recruitment of new students and families. The school relied on both school legacy and its positive reputation to draw new families. Indeed, even before the school

⁵⁷ Ellos saben a quién contactar cuando lo necesiten, pero nosotros también estamos continuamente comunicándonos con ellos y buscando información desde ellos (Directora Mendoza)

⁵⁸ Lo que decimos es una realidad para las familias. Tenemos que hacer el esfuerzo permanente de no perder esa confianza (...) uno tiene que hacer lo que promete a las familias. Cumplir nuestra palabra (...) porque lo que decimos es la verdad para ellos. (Focus group, equipo de gestión)

year ended, they did not have vacancies available for next year, and instead, they had a waiting list for kindergarten and first grades.⁵⁹ Principal Mendoza said the process of recruitment was not part of her focus of attention because enrollment had not decreased the last five years, and thus, the competition with others schools was not perceived as a critical issue. Like Violeta Parra School, Neruda School offered vacancies primarily to current students' families, reinforcing the internal network of families who already trusted in them.

Families' perspectives and practices. As mentioned, the concept of trust emerged consistently across participants and it was reflected in various aspects of the relationship between the school and families. Trust was built along the history of the relationship between the community and the school. Most families in Palermo knew the school because the school was part of the local history. Therefore, even families who did not share a personal experience with the school were embedded in the historical relationship of the school with the community.

Trust also came from the personal experiences shared with the school. The school was composed of generations of alumni who returned to the school as parents, grandparents, or even as teachers. In some cases, the relationship with the school was extended three or four generations. One mother, Fernanda, emphasized that knowing teachers gave her confidence to bring new family members to the school.

⁵⁹ Such phenomenon was contrary to the common expectations regarding enrollment in public education in the rest of the commune, and the country, there municipal education shows a marked decrease in the students' enrollment during the last two decades (Elacqua, 2012; Elacqua & Santos, 2013). Therefore, Neruda School has a unique position in terms of competition and recruitment.

I've always trusted the school, because my oldest daughter graduated from here and I never had a problem. Thus, I already have that trust in the school (...)

(Fernanda)⁶⁰

Families perceived communication with the school as fluid, which contributed to sustaining existing trust. Mothers valued that teachers maintained strong communication channels with parents, especially when children were not doing well either academically or personally.

[What do you like about school?] When children are ill, they [teachers] talk to one immediately, plus you know when something happens (Constanza)⁶¹

The process of choosing. was highly modulated by the historical legacy of the school in the commune. The importance of trust was mentioned by most of the participants when exploring how and why they choose the school. In other words, trust became part of the school's reputation.

The shared history was central in the decision-making of Javiera, Maite, and Maria. Javiera lived in a close commune (9, 3 miles⁶²) and she chose the school because her nephews studied there. In order to send her only child, a seven-year-old, to Neruda

⁶⁰ Yo siempre le he tenido confianza porque a pesar de que la grande [su hija mayor] salió de aquí yo nunca tuve un problema de que le haya pasado algo, lo que pasa es que la confianza yo ya la tengo con la escuela (...) (Fernanda, focus group parents)

⁶¹ [Que es lo que más le gusta de la escuela?] Que cuando los niños están enfermos, ellos te llaman e informan inmediatamente, además, uno sabe al tiro cuando algo pasa (Constanza)

⁶² 9.3 miles (15 kilometers)

School, which was about 9 miles from her home, she had to invest in private transportation (about \$60US monthly).⁶³

Maite's three older children studied in the school (about 15 years ago). When she and her husband faced the process of choosing a school for their fourth child, her husband decided for a private subsidized school because of his belief that private is better than public. After a negative experience, Maite took the decision to move her daughter to Neruda School.

Maria had Violeta Parra School as the first option for her son, but the main limitation was financial. She came to the conclusion that the best alternative was Neruda School because she was a former student and therefore knew the kindergarten teacher, which encouraged her confidence and trust.

I remembered when I studied here and the teacher in Kindergarten was the same teacher that I had, so the trust was already there. That is why I decided to put him in this school (Maria)⁶⁴

The role of legacy emerged in the stories of Francisca, Josefa, and Agustina. The school's legacy was the direct reason for choosing the school for Francisca, who lived in a close-by commune. Francisca looked for public schools in Palermo and discovered the strong reputation of Neruda School. During the last five years, she had sent her son to Neruda School, which implies traveling nine miles away daily from her commune to

⁶³ In Chile, districts offer free transportation but it does cover only some specific routes, so, in the case families are far from those, they have to be responsible for the transportation. Transportation is responsibility of families in private subsidized schools. Some private subsidized schools offer transportation as a strategy to increase enrollment.

⁶⁴ *Me acorde que yo había estudiado aquí y la profesora que está a cargo de kínder era la misma que me había hecho clases a mi así que estaba la confianza y por eso decidí ponerlo aquí (Maria)*

Palermo commune. It also implies she has invested in private transportation during all that time (about \$60US monthly). Similar was the story of Josefa, who arrived to Palermo because she obtained a house through the government, and asked her new neighbors about good municipal schools. Finally, Agustina believed that private subsidized education was better than municipal. When searching for those schools in Palermo, she realized that the monthly tuition fee was an important limitation for her. So she started to consider municipal schools. When she opened to those schools, the positive reputation of Neruda Elementary School in the community was fundamental in her choice. As for Francisca, for Josefa and Agustina, the reputation of Neruda School was decisive.

In these cases, the historical habitus emphasized the reputation of the school, which it obtained either through personal or close experiences or through the community's views as the strong rationale for choosing it. However, it is important to mention that for three interviewees (Maite, Maria, and Agustina) the shared story or legacy did not emerge immediately when families thought about their options. More precisely in those cases, the consideration of the school as *the best second option* emerged after families assessed the constraints to choose their *first option*, for example the payment of tuition. In any case, the interviewed mothers chose the school they felt was their best feasible option. Such decision-making revealed that families were active in thinking about schools, assessing alternatives, and acting accordingly. Indeed, history and legacy emerged after other criteria were not achieved.

The process of choosing a school seemed a product of multiple and complex assessments of dynamic criteria. The process of choosing a school for working class

families seemed the product of an assessment of multiple and complex criteria operated in a dynamic way (Navarro, 2004).

Conclusion. The two schools that performed this habitus corresponded to different socio-economic groups. Violeta Parra attended to middle group families (middle class) whereas Neruda attended to lower middle group families (working class). In these schools, the family habitus was more conclusive for understanding the process of choosing a school than families' socioeconomic categories. This finding is aligned with the definition of social class in this study, which is more complex than purely socioeconomic distinctions.

Families and schools that displayed a historical habitus expected and actively worked to reproduce their social belonging in the process of choosing a school. The concepts of family and trustworthiness reflect a mutual sense of belonging. In Violeta Parra School, it was all about being family, and the boundaries between families and school professionals were blurred. To some extent, families and school felt: "We are them." For families in this case, choosing this school implied both to get access to certain social groups and to get away from others. This focus on the possibility to establish relationships with other social class groups was important.

In the case of Neruda School, relationships between the school and families were characterized by the idea of trusting. Relationships were not necessarily perceived entirely positive but based on trust.

In both cases, the schools' ways to perceive and face the process of enrollment and recruitment reflected elements of their habitus. The recruitment of families and

enrollment processes showed that the primacy of the family network was a very conscientious strategy, used more or less explicitly to reinforce social homogeneity. Similarly, these two school-cases coincided with a high level of mutual satisfaction, where overall, families and school staff expressed their contentment in the relationship with each other.

In spite of those commonalities, differences between school-cases were found. In the case of Violeta Parra School, family habitus made the decision of choosing as something automatic, not even reflected upon. Parents choose but to a certain degree, their choice was predetermined because the shared history with the school and the school's reputation strongly determined the decision-making. In the case of Neruda School, family habitus highlighted the history and legacy only when other assessments were made. The school was always considered in comparison with other schools, and it became the best second option for families after considering other factors, in particular, the ability/inability to pay monthly tuition. In fact, some families from Neruda School wished to go to Violeta Parra School but they realized they were not able to afford the monthly tuition. This finding corroborates previous studies that documented constraints in choosing imposed by the copayment policy in Chile (Elacqua & Fabrega, 2006; Gallego & Hernando, 2009), and illustrates the complex and dynamic practices in the process of choosing a school, where habitus interplays with socioeconomic constraints.

Aspirational Habitus

Aspirational habitus reflects dispositions oriented toward social mobility. Within this habitus, the process of choosing the school became an expression of families' desires

to use education as a platform for advancing in the social structure, at least symbolically. The meaning of choosing, thus, was creating a new social position for families. For the school staff, the meaning of recruitment was crafting and selling the image of an upper class school in the commune.

The temporal orientation in this aspirational habitus was *future*; and both families and school perspectives and practices were focused on the future. Families chose thinking and acting in pursuit of a better future for their children, and mothers declared explicitly they wanted their children to *be more than them in the future*. As Trinidad said, “You always want your children be more than you in the future” (Trinidad). They also stated the personal and family investments they were doing in the hope of having a better future. It seemed that by choosing a school, they were focused on the eventual future consequences of their decision-making.

The school focused on *future* by looking for families interested in achieving social class aspirations for their children in the future. They engaged on future by creating a particular image of the school that connected with families’ aspirations of social class, and by offering them the possibility to appear as a member of a higher social class group. This meant offering families what they want to become in the future. Families perceived their choices as embedded in forthcoming investments, which demanded personal efforts. For example, when they talked about their experiences of being isolated from parental groups based on the activities in which they were involved (gym, yoga classes, etc.).

Unlike historical habitus where families and schools focused on the schools’ aspects (i.e. schools’ history) as the main trigger for choosing and for recruit families, in

aspirational habitus, families and school focused more on the social composition of families (i.e. families' appearance in terms of social class and the use of social distinctions) and both families and school staff were invested in creating social capital by social networking. In this sense, there was also a strong sense of agency during the process of choosing and recruitment. Families declared the importance of choosing a school in terms of the social impact by asserting that life after schooling is hard and highly competitive, so children need to be prepared for that and one of the ways to be prepared is through education. By its part, school staff reinforced social distinctions as part of their common practices and particularly in the process of recruitment of new families.

One school of the sample reflected this habitus: Saint Anthony elementary school.

Saint Anthony Elementary School.⁶⁵ **General characterization.** Saint Anthony Elementary School is a young private subsidized school (2012) located in a peripheral neighborhood of the commune.⁶⁶ The school opened in 2005 but because it experienced administrative and financial problems, it changed its internal organization and its legal recognition, reopening in 2012. Saint Anthony Elementary School operates as a family business, however, after changes to its legal status, owners left their administrative positions and were only in charge of the executive direction. The school offers pre-K through eighth grade. In 2015, it served 226 students, of which half classifies for free and/or reduced lunch (based on the school's vulnerability index). Saint Anthony School used to ask for a monthly payment from families but since 2014, they eliminated that

⁶⁵ This school has English pseudonymous in order to be consistent with its real name that is also an English name.

⁶⁶ The school is located in a peripheral neighborhood, one mile from the rest of the schools (1.05mile).

practice in order to increase the school's enrollment. The SEG corresponds to middle class families (medium level), who live across the commune of Palermo and other close by communes (see chapter 3, table 2.0).

Due to legal changes, the administrative staff changed. However, most of the teachers and the rest of school personnel has been working at the school since 2005. The principal, Ms. Barrera, is a young professional, who for the first time occupies a formal school leadership role. The teaching staff is composed of 19 professionals. More than half of the staff consists of young teachers for whom the school is their first workplace. The rest are experienced teachers that have worked in the municipal and private sector. Principal Barrera combines her administrative tasks with teaching.

Regarding families, most of the parents have stable jobs and both parents work. Although many mothers have jobs as secretaries and other services' jobs, others have seasonal jobs or stay at home to focus on their children's education.

School perspectives and practices. In Saint Anthony School, the perspectives of school staff and their practices differed. There was an evident involvement of the school staff in the image the school seeks to promote and sell in the community, and in the way the school reinforces social distinctions. However, when they talked about the school's approach to families, they criticized the school's owners and families.

School staff believes that families see education as a consumer good, with them as clients buying a product, and therefore demanding the school to meet their expectations. They complained about the lack of academic expectations of families and the excessive focus on the social class distinctions. For example, they talked about a parent who wanted

the school to expel one student for fighting with his son. Having to handle those situations with families was perceived as a source of stress for school professionals and resulted in a more distant overall relationship with families.

A different aspect of school staff's criticism of families was the latter's individualist approach to schooling. According to the teachers, parents were only focused on their children's performance and they cared less about the class's academic progress. One teacher said: "families are solely interested in what is related directly with their children and not in the rest of issues that focus on the collective or the class as whole." (notes, October 15th 2014).

Another example of this individualist approach was what they call the "score culture," which they described as an excessive focus of parents on grades rather than on the process of learning. Ms. Barrera said: "families believe they are buying a service, and thus, they feel entitled to demand the highest grades all the time"⁶⁷ (notes, October 15th 2014). Additionally, principal Barrera gave examples of some parents having discussions regarding their children's position in the class (#1, #2, or #3) in first grades⁶⁸.

These views of the families indicate a distant approach taken by school staff. Although there were no serious conflicts with families, the overall relationship was framed by emphasizing the discrepancies with families' points of view and practices rather than the opposite. They portrayed families and school operating separately instead of cooperating.

⁶⁷ Entender que están comprando un servicio les hace asumir que su hijo debe tener 7s todo el tiempo

⁶⁸ In Chile, the practice of assign students to the first three places of the class based on their academic performance during the year reflected on the overall average of their grades is widespread across all country.

The process of enrollment and recruitment. The school displayed an aspirational habitus in the strategies used during the process of enrollment and recruitment. Specifically, this refers to the use of the symbolic social differentiators that the school created to captivate a determined group of families including the name of the school, which was English – a symbol for western culture, - and the students' uniform, which had a similar design to those used in private schools. Vacancies were published in two languages and class pictures showed students in school uniform. In addition, school staff uses an accent of Spanish that is spoken by higher social classes when they meet with families interested in applying to the school. Subconsciously, the teachers and the school's owner participated actively in implementing these strategies in the process of recruitment.

Families' perspectives and practices. Families attach much importance to the image that the school portrayed in the community, which is critical to understand the relationship between the school and the families. Although families belong to the middle class or middle lower class, they talked about the school being perceived as an elitist school because families were perceived as upper class. Here, the perception of other families at the school played a central role in attracting new families. Ignacia and Camila, two mothers, described the elements that distinguished other families' social class.

Respondent: In the private subsidized schools families have to pay so not everybody can get into [the school], but in the municipal schools anybody gets in (...), so, here I saw another social environment.

Interviewer: What kind of environment?

Respondent: for example, here all [parents] have a car; I am one of the few who walks. In my daughter's class it is pretty obvious that all of the parents have money (...) (Ignacia)⁶⁹

Yeah, even the name of the school, it's not San Antonio School but *Saint Anthony School*,⁷⁰ and the teachers are named as *miss or teachers*⁷¹ (...) people told me in that school, there are only rich families (...) (Camila)⁷²

Families realized the school projected such an image to the rest of the commune. Camila mentioned that friends or relatives commented to them: “you put your child in a school that is full of rich people; it is *like* a private school” (emphasis added). When families described their approach to choosing the school, it seemed that the image as an upper class school that the school had in the community was something appealing to them. However, considering the lack of extreme differences in social class groups in Palermo, the emphasis on the school's image seemed more symbolic as opposed to being representative of any tangible differences.

“If you do not have [money], you will do everything possible to obtain it” (Belen, mother)⁷³

⁶⁹ A: En los [colegios] particulares se supone que paga la persona que puede pagar y en los municipales llega de todo. (...) entonces aca yo vi otro ambiente.

I: Que tipo de ambiente?

A: Por ejemplo, aca todas tienen auto, yo soy casi la única que llega de a pie. En el curso de mi hija llegan las mamas y se nota que todas tienen plata (...) (Ignacia)

⁷⁰ Emphasis on the fact the school name is in English, which has an important connotation in terms of social class status.

⁷¹ Emphasis on the fact that the way in which they name teachers is in English and not in Spanish, which has an important connotation in terms of social class status.

⁷² Claro, es que incluso el nombre, o sea no es colegio San Antonio sino que Saint Anthony school, o a las tias le dicen miss o teachers, (...) me decían no, ahí van puros cabros ricachones, es otro ambiente, o sea, ahí no va cualquier cabro pobre (Camila)

Families were highly attracted to other families, especially to those that appeared to belong to a higher social class. Additionally, mothers interviewed showed an active role in creating and developing relationships with other parents. One of the ways in which parents approached other families was through formal spaces of interaction like at parents' conferences. Some mothers share activities outside of the school such as going to the gym or shopping. Because the intention of the mothers is to interact with parents of *higher* social class, practices of self- and external discrimination occurred often, according to the interviewed mothers. They mentioned that parents' groups were closed and thus that there was not much mixing among parents.

There are many moms that get together in the school and talk with each other, and it is all about money (...) they say, we are going to go to the spa, we are going to go to the gym, we pay so and so, I can do it, me too, others say. And all of them who have a car get together, and seems like we are pushed aside (...) although they say hi to us, it is like we are not part of their group (Camila)⁷⁴

Mothers understood the role of the school mainly as social, in the sense that schools should create social and cultural capital. They talked about the importance of knowing how to use and to acquire social distinctions as varieties of language, type of clothes, and activities that evidence a determined cultural capital. Also, families referred to the identification of social capital in terms of with who to socialize and who to stay away from.

⁷³ Si uno no tiene, uno va a hacer lo que sea para poder tener (Belen)

⁷⁴ Hay hartas mamas que se juntan aquí a conversar entre ellas, de puras riquezas, que vamos a ir a un spa, que vamos al gimnasio, que pagamos tanta cantidad de dinero, ya yo puedo, ya yo también, y se juntan todas ellas las que tienen auto, y nosotras ahí como que quedamos a un lado, o sea igual nos saludan pero como que ellas, como que su grupo es de ellas no más (Camila)

The value of education relied mainly on the status being transmitted due to the relationships with other groups rather than purely the academic experience. Indeed, the academic performance of the school was similar to that of other schools with the same socioeconomic group of students' families (SEG). Coherently, the latter appreciate those characteristics that had an impact in terms of social dynamics. The closeness and the "good atmosphere" linked with the small size of the school were admired aspects. Additionally, parents advocated for institutional practices that maintain that environment such as the selection of students and the monthly fee.

The process of choosing. The underlying rationale for choosing the school relied on the social distinctions offered by the school and by the social composition of school. Mothers choose the school with the expectation to create and be part of the network of families as the main way to advance their children. This finding reaffirms previous studies in Chile that highlight the role of a school's social composition as a main criterion for choosing it (Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2014; Carnoy & McEwan, 2003; Elacqua 2012; Elacqua & Fabrega, 2004; Winkler & Rounds, 1996). Discipline and school climate emerged as social differentiators used to justify the school choice.

Mothers referred to school discipline mainly as student behavior⁷⁵, and it was one of the most important aspects they expect from the school of their choice. Likewise, the school climate was mentioned among the main reasons for choose the school. Two mothers interviewed (Paula and Ignacia) emphasized the closeness of the school, not in the geographical sense but in terms of a family environment, and the concern for each

⁷⁵ A good discipline, by its part, meant a limited amount of student behavior's problems (such fights, problems with authority, etc.).

child. Mothers repeatedly used the vague term "good atmosphere" to describe the main rationale for choosing the school. Similarly, being a small school contributed to the idea of being an elitist community, which became a social class differentiator.

A good environment meant being separated from and not mixed with lower social class groups. In this case, those groups were students with bad behavior or "*flaites*", a particular popular sub-culture that was directly associated with behavioral issues. Parents searched for a school that does not have "*flaites*" among the students. One mother elaborated,

I've always tried to give the best to my daughter. If I chose this school, it was because it is good: because of its name and its prestige. You are accepted here only if you are able to pay (...) it is assumed that here you will not see students carrying a knife or fighting (Belén)⁷⁶

Another symbolic differentiator was *the value* that families placed on payment for education. I emphasized "*the value*" intentionally in order to demonstrate that families saw payment as a symbolic differentiator. That meant that talking about "payments" or the "spending of money" was not focused on tuition payment. In fact, the school stopped asking for tuition payment since 2014. But, the value of payment appeared strongly in other activities such as those to celebrate the end of the school year.

Implicitly and explicitly the issue about the monetary contribution of parents was perceived as an almost *natural* expression of commitment to their children. Conversely,

⁷⁶ Yo siempre he tratado que mi hija tenga lo mejor, si yo elegí este colegio es porque es bueno, también por el nombre, por el prestigio, porque va gente que puede pagar (...) se supone que aca viene pura gente de plata, no van a andar cabros con cuchilla o cabros peleando (Belén)

being late in making that contribution or not able to do it was strongly sanctioned by other parents and school personnel as a way of not being responsible enough towards their children. Moreover, in families' views, schools that requested a payment from families were portrayed as being better than those who do not (private subsidized schools were considered better than municipal schools).

Conclusion. The school case that showed an aspirational habitus includes middle group families (middle class). In Saint Anthony Elementary School, families and school staff and owners were actively focusing on the creation of social class advantage. Families were active in looking for such advantage and the school was active in producing and *selling* a particular image that embedded social advantage.

By choosing the school, families felt and believed they can advance in terms of social class and that their children can advance in a close future. The main attraction of the school was the social status of the other families, and the choice for the school was based mainly on both getting access to certain social groups and getting away from others. Mothers in this case revealed critical elements that seemed composed by their social identity as new middle class/emergent middle class. They wanted to access social mobility in a discrete way. As they can't have access to real private education, Saint Anthony School offered them an intermediate alternative in terms of social class.. In this sense, the habitus displayed is also the result of agency and structural (socioeconomic) constraints.

Unlike the previous habitus, school staff criticize the aspirational dispositions of families and do not see themselves as reinforcing the social class distinctions. However,

the ways in which they approach the process of recruitment manifest elements of the aspirational habitus, where the use of language and symbols are a common practice. The misalignment between school perspectives and practice may explain the low level of satisfaction of the school staff regarding the relationship with families, whereas families express the opposite.

Survival Habitus

Survival habitus refers to dispositions grounded on practical decision making. Within this habitus, the meaning of choosing was resolving a practical problem, and a means of survival. The meaning of recruitment was nothing else than follows a traditional procedure, something that needs to be done at certain stage of the school year.

Survival habitus refers to dispositions based on practical decision-making. Within this habitus, the purpose of choosing was to resolve a practical problem, and a means of survival. The purpose of recruitment was nothing else than following a traditional procedure, something that needs to be done at a certain stage of the school year.

Contrary to the two habitus described previously, in the survival habitus the relevance of the process of choosing and recruitment and the expectations that followed from it, were minimized both by families and the school. It is something both parents and the school had to do. By choosing a school, families were *only* choosing a school.

The lower income families' expectations about the outcomes derived from the decision of choosing the school illustrated very well that families believe it would not impact their or their children's lives. Coincidentally, there were also lower expectations about schools. Overall, families just wanted to find a place where there were vacancies

for their children or in some cases, a place where their children were well treated (in the cases where families moved to another school as a result of experiencing bullying or other aggressions).

The temporal orientation of this habitus was on the *present*; the families and school's perspectives and practices were focused on the present. Families usually did not take much time to make the decision, and choices were made for schools where children felt "they fitted in" (children felt good about themselves and accepted by classmates). Schools' orientation towards the *present* was expressed by looking at the process of recruitment as an *event not as a process*, something that they must do once a year. Basically, when they reached the deadline for enrollment, the manager hung up a sheet of paper with information about registration.

In this way, families and the school assumed a passive role and there was not so much a sense of agency but rather a sense of constraint due to contextual factors that made the process less satisfactory for families (e.g. choosing the school because they were new in the commune and they had to find a school in order that their children did not lose the school year). Another expression of the weak sense of agency of some families was reflected in their leaving the decision about the school up to their children.

For families, the main trigger for choosing the school was the ease of the process by which the school admitted new students. From the school's side, there was no requirement other than vacancies to accept students (no copayment from families and no pupil selection practices). Therefore, they practically accepted every family that applied.

One of the schools in the sample, Gabriela Mistral School, exemplified this habitus.

Gabriela Mistral Elementary School. General characterization. Gabriela Mistral Elementary School is a private subsidized school located downtown⁷⁷. Like Neruda and Violeta Parra School, it has a long history in the commune (1989). These schools composed the triad of elementary schools located in the center of Palermo. The school offers pre-k through eighth grade. In 2015, 251 students attended, of which an important percentage qualified for free and/ or reduced cost lunch (based on the school's vulnerability index). Unlike the two private subsidized schools in the sample, Gabriel Mistral does not ask for any additional payment from families nor does it have a student selection process. The SEG corresponds to working class families (lower-middle level) (see chapter 3, table 2.0).

Some of the parents worked in seasonal jobs during summer. Some mothers had short-term jobs during the rest of the year (vendors, cashiers in a grocery store, housekeeper, etc.) whereas others stayed at home. Families came from two sectors of the commune, one was relatively close to the school (8-10 minutes walking), and the other corresponded to a peripheral zone (20-30 minutes walking).

The principal, Mrs. Boza, has more than 30 years of experience in an administrative position. She started to work at the school eight years ago after her retirement from the municipal sector. Her main motivation was because "she still felt motivated to work in education" (notes, interview, October 16th 2014). The management

⁷⁷ Geographically, it is located less than 5 minutes walking apart from Neruda and Violeta Parra schools.

team is composed of the principal, instructional leader, and an assistant principal. The teaching staff is composed of 18 professionals. With one exception, teachers did not have a previous relationship with the school prior to accepting a position with the school, although some live close-by.

School perspectives and practices. The school staff recognized that traditionally the relationship with families have been characterized by conflict and distance. As a factor that might contribute to the lack of trust, teachers mentioned that the school has been hermetic to families because former teachers felt threatened or criticized by parents. They declared there have been some improvements, and there are positive cases, yet they acknowledged that the development of trust with families was an ongoing process and current challenge for the school.

Similarly, the relationship with the executive director was described as distant by families and teachers. In one way or another, they feel neglected by the executive director.⁷⁸ School staff described the director as distant, difficult to reach, and apparently not interested in the school in the same way they were. Teachers also criticized the lacking conditions under which they worked (e.g. teachers have to pay for internet in order to use it as resource in classes).

The process of enrollment and recruitment. Similarly, for the school, the process of enrollment and recruitment of students seemed not to be a main concern and they approached it in a practical way too. The principal explained that they were not focused on recruiting more students, and that the enrollment had been constant during the last

⁷⁸ As previously mentioned, this person was not the principal, but part of the administrative team.

years. As strategy, at the end of the school year, they hung up information on the cork board within the school about vacancies for the following year and the dates for enrollments. As in the case of families, recruitment and enrollment were discussed as something that had to be done each year. It was given little attention.

Families' perspectives and practices. “Most of the parents are dissatisfied with school; they have children here because there is no other option.” (Rocio, mother)

Families described the relationship with the school as distant and troubled. Families understood their distance as product of feeling unwelcome when they did try to participate. They referred not only to the relationship with school staff but also with the executive director. Laura, one mother, mentioned the negative perception about the executive director. In her view, the latter only worried about the “money” that she can receive from families through vouchers, but did not care about the school’s infrastructure, nor about students’ families. In this scenario, the whole community appeared as fragmented in terms of relationships.

An important agreement among parents (but also the school staff) was the opinion that the school varies greatly between the early grades (pre-K to 4th grade) and the upper grades (5th to 8th grade). Families recognized that in general there was more dissatisfaction in the higher grades rather than the first ones. Mothers interviewed, Renata and Magdalena, expressed feeling distrust with the second level’s teachers. Magdalena indeed was evaluating the idea of leaving the school when her child finishes 4th grade.

Families perceived a lack of concern of the school for the families, expressed by the deficient information they received from school regarding class suspensions or

students' academic progress. They criticized the negative views and low expectations some teachers held for students. Pia, one mother, elaborated:

I have visited the classroom and sometimes I ask them [students]: hey why do you behave so badly? Why are you like that? (...) and they say, teachers do not treat us well. (...) to some extent, I think that they are right (Pia)⁷⁹

Although two exceptions (Renata and Magdalena), mothers perceived teachers were not committed enough to students and their learning. In their views, this was reflected in extremely traditional classes, and the apparent indifference of teachers towards developing a positive relationship with students. The case of the parents of students in 8th grade was extreme. They expressed the deep belief that nobody in the school was committed enough to those students, neither academically nor personally. This concern came particularly from students' stories to their parents about their experiences at school. Some parents mentioned specific examples of teachers who were committed and developed an affective relationship with them, but in all those cases, teachers left the school.

Emotionally, these mothers were unsatisfied, frustrated, and indeed upset with the school. There was no trust in the school's impact neither on students' academic performance nor on their emotional and relational wellbeing. Consequently, they approached their relationship with the school with a negative predisposition, with a subtle (and sometimes explicit) intention to discuss with teachers and the principal. Renata and

⁷⁹ Yo vengo a la sala y de repente les pregunto a ellos [alumnos], oye por que se portan tan mal, porque son asi, miren no hagan esto (...) y entonces me dicen ay tia es que usted no sabe a nosotros nos tratan mal, nos dicen aquí y allá. Entonces yo pienso que también ellos [alumnos] tienen algo de razón (Pia)

Pia said things like: I came to talk to her (teacher) just to show her that she was wrong or I asked for an appointment with the principal and I knew it would be useless.

The process of choosing was an expression of the survival habitus in the sense that families were forced to do it. The survival habitus accounted for the dispositions of families facing school choice as practical (and in many cases fast) decision-making. In the process of choosing a school, families who were going through personal situations of crisis, either because of concrete changes in their lives (e.g. moving, new in the commune, etc.) or because of negative experiences in schools (e.g. bullying). Therefore, families chose a school to a greater extent just because they had to do it.

The survival habitus was reflected in the parents' choices by focusing heavily on the distance as well as by excluding the other two schools downtown. Rocio and Renata, two mothers, recognized their main reason for choosing a school was distance. At the time of the interview, Rocio was thinking about moving her daughter to another school because they received a house through a government program in a different neighborhood, so, the distance between home and the school will eventually increase. Because the main criterion to choose a school was distance, she was willing to move her daughter to another school.

Renata has four children and all of them studied at the school. She chose the school because of distance as well. When she and her family had to move to another commune because of her husband's job, she moved their children to the closest school. Eventually and because of work reasons, they all moved to Palermo again, so she came back to Gabriela Mistral School without considering any other school in the commune. In

her view, that was the school she knew, and that was the school she choose. In this case, work reasons were much more decisive although experience with the school played a role when they came back to the commune. This was a choice for survival because it was made in order to respond to other challenges in her family's life.

Regarding families who chose the school without considering the nearest two schools, Gabriela Mistral received students that had negative experiences in either Neruda or Violeta Parra schools. This was the case for two out of five of the mothers interviewed: Magdalena and Pia. This dynamic suggests that distance among downtown schools played a role in the decision of those mothers, as well as disappointment and feelings of dissatisfaction with the closer schools.

Magdalena explained that her daughter was a victim of bullying in Neruda school. She looked for another school trying to find a safer place for her daughter. Pia shared that her son was in Violeta Parra School but he was bullied by classmates and by one teacher. She decided to move him to Neruda Elementary School; however she described being discriminated against because of the behavioral reports of her son. After these negative experiences, these two mothers chose Gabriela Mistral Elementary School.

The cases of Pia and Magdalena were clear examples of the survival habitus, where choice was based on emotional and relational reasons, i.e. looking out for their children's wellbeing. The stressful situations these families experienced put them in a critical place where finding a school that offered a safe environment was the main criterion. In addition, these cases confirmed the mobility among students in the three schools located downtown, and the subsequent existence of an educational market

operating in a unidirectional way, where Gabriela Mistral Elementary School received students from the other two schools. For some parents, there were other schools where to go after Gabriela Mistral and those included always the municipal one in the commune. For other parents, however, the school was the last option in the chain of schools considered.

Conclusion. The school case that illustrated this habitus caters to lower middle group families (working class). Families' and school's staff dispositions followed a pragmatic orientation.

In the process of choosing a school, the family habitus was portrayed as *survival* decision-making in the sense that families chose a school because they needed a school for their children. Within this habitus, mothers understood their choices not as something transcendental for the educational experience of their children, but rather irrelevant, and therefore, they responded to it as to a demand that asked for a practical answer in a short period of time. Perhaps this approach made the decision for choosing a school more dependent of other family decisions, and more susceptible to reasons of convenience as well. Thus, proximity, the primacy of "immediate" wellbeing of children (the importance that children feel they fit in the school), and the consideration of children's will combined might explain the underlying reasons for choosing the school.

For families, the urgency for finding a school and the minor importance of it influenced the low requirements expected from the school. Families looked basically for any school with open vacancies. Indeed, in most of the cases, students had negative

experiences in previous schools, and therefore finding a school was more a matter of survival. They had limited time “to find” a school.

In the process of enrollment and recruitment, the school reflected a survival habitus. The school staff perceived and dealt with the process as an event, a formality they had to accomplish once a year (as many of other tasks). The school’s approach might be understood in its context. The enrollment has held steady, thus, it seemed there were not incentives to actively recruit students. Although the school was not aware of it, they acted as if they knew they will end up with families by default, particularly those that live nearby or did not make it into the school with more complex selection processes.

Survival habitus illustrated the experiences of a working-class community, where both families and the school were included. Families perceived themselves as distant from the school, and they felt the school was not the best place for receiving care and attention from teachers. They did recognize, however, that the school offered a vacancy for their children, and that’s the reason they choose it. As one mother Rocio put it: “this was not the best school, but it wasn’t the worst either.” At the same time, families felt distant from other families, and were not invested in creating relationships with them.

By its part, school staff perceived that the relationship with families was a challenge and they felt distant from the owner of the school and criticized the lack of support they received. Therefore, both families and the school were not only hopeless but also highly dissatisfied with each other. This aspect is extremely important for understanding survival habitus. Parents and the school acted as if they *knew* that, in the

long run, neither relationship with other families or with schools will actually benefit them.

Discussion

Findings of this qualitative, multiple-case study illustrate how families and schools enact social class during the process of choosing a school. As the chapter shows, the identification of commonalities across school-cases about the value of choosing a school and pupil selection practices by schools are important to understand the common place for families and schools located in the commune of Palermo. Putting it in the wider context, supported by other studies and other data⁸⁰, I argue that these overall values not only apply to the commune but are national values regarding education in Chile. While this was not the focus of the study, further exploration of these commonalities across cases might suggest elements of the habitus of the commune of Palermo.

Moreover, in spite of the emergence of shared assumptions, findings indicate the existence of central differences among school cases in the ways social class is enacted in the context of the process of choosing a school. Those differences were articulated as expressions of habitus, and three types of habitus were identified; in historical habitus social class is enacted as tradition and legacy; in aspirational habitus as a desire for social mobility; and in survival habitus, social class is enacted as a pragmatic and urgent problem to resolve.

⁸⁰ On October 2014, a group of families, school professionals, and administrative staff of private subsidized schools marched in Santiago to defend the profit in education and criticized the education reform forbids it. Participants argued the importance of the contribution of families to school quality through the copayment policy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hnRXiyh1Fw>

Whereas habitus reflects the enactment of social class, it involves a much richer and complex dimension than merely socioeconomic categories. Particularly, habitus imply dispositions that reveal a unique and collective construction of positions in the social structure. By choosing a school, families disclose a way to reproduce or recreate their positions in the social structure, a temporal orientation and a sense of agency embodied by families and schools. Therefore, using the concept of habitus allows enriching our understanding of the influence of social class on the process of choosing a school.

In describing how and why families chose the school, a particular habitus was also displayed. This family habitus emerged as the way in which families enacted social class during that process. In the case of schools, by describing how schools perceived and faced processes of enrollment and recruitment of families, it was possible to identify elements of schools' habitus. The habitus emerges as the way in which schools enacted social class during that process. In each school case, both the families' and school's habitus shared similar elements but appeared separate.

Table 4.0 describes the distribution of the four school cases according to the type of school (municipal and private subsidized), the socioeconomic group (SEG) of students' families, and the type of habitus. It can be seen that, in terms of SEG, middle group schools differed in the habitus displayed. Violeta Parra School enacted social class with the expression of a historical habitus, while Saint Anthony Elementary School enacted social class with the expression of an aspirational habitus. The lower middle group schools also differed in their enactment of social class. Neruda School displayed a historical habitus while Gabriela Mistral displayed a survival habitus.

Table 4.0. Distribution of Schools Cases

Socioeconomic Group (SEG) of students' families	Habitus		
	Historical	Aspirational	Survival
Middle group	Violeta Parra School (private subsidized)	Saint Anthony Elementary School (private subsidized)	-
Lower-Middle group	Neruda School (municipal)	-	Gabriela Mistral School (municipal)

Additionally, with the purpose of providing more clarity regarding the emergence of habitus in both families and schools, table 5.0 characterizes the main and core elements that constitute the expression and display of habitus by families and schools during the process of choosing and the process of recruitment and enrollment respectively.

These core assertions do not come explicitly from participants, however, they reflect the central ideas underlying each group's perspectives and practices. By looking at the dispositions of families and schools in each habitus, one can develop a better sense of the dynamics among schools and families through a social class lens during the process of choosing a school.

In the next chapter, conclusions of the study are presented. The chapter will discuss the answers to the research questions, the role of habitus on the process of choosing a school and the influence of social class on the process of choosing a school

from the dynamic interaction between schools and families. The implications and suggestions for further research follow the conclusions.

Table 5.0. Core Assertions from Families and Schools

Habitus	Families' dispositions	Schools' dispositions
Historical	We looked for a school that reinforces our past, and offers a strong legacy	We looked for families from our network that trust in ourselves
Aspirational	We looked for a school that allows us to get symbolic social mobility	We looked for families interested on symbolic class distinctions
Survival	We looked for a school where there are vacancies and based on practical criteria	We do not look for families and we accept all students we receive

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This study explores the dynamics among schools and families through a social class lens during the process of choosing a school. Findings illustrate that families and schools enacted social class through the emergence of habitus: historical, aspirational, and survival. In the case of families, habitus is not directly reflecting a socioeconomic category. In the case of schools, institutions activate elements of their habitus in the ways in which they perceive and face the process of enrollment and recruitment of students. The chapter illuminates the ways in which social class moderates school choice by affecting not only families but also schools. In doing so, it addresses the contribution of habitus to understanding the complex relationships among social class, social capital, identity, and educational institutions in a setting where choosing among different educational options is normative.

It is divided into the following sections: 1) Answers to Research Questions; 2) Study Contributions to Extant Literature; 3) Original Conclusions from the Study; and 4) Implications and Contribution for Future Research.

Answers to the Research Questions

This study was developed to address two research questions:

1. How do families enact social class during the process of choosing a school?

2. How do schools enact social class during the process of choosing a school?

These will be addressed separately below.

Research Question 1: “How do families enact social class during the process of choosing a school?” I describe families’ enactments of social class contrasting the responses of families within each socioeconomic group of students’ families (SEG) groups; that is, middle and lower-middle (see chapter 3, table 2.0). These elements are presented according to each SEG group, which are: 1) Middle Socioeconomic Groups; and 2) Lower Middle Socioeconomic Groups.

Middle socioeconomic groups. The differences in school choices among families within a same socioeconomic group have become a focus of interest in current research on choice from a sociocultural approach. An array of studies have explored the ‘counterintuitive’ and ‘against the grain’ decisions of middle-class parents for public schools. Authors have focused on class identity pointing out that parents’ choices are product of a dynamic and complex identity-work that involves political, ethnic, and moral dilemmas (Crozier, Reay, James, Jamieson, Beedell, Hollingworth, & Williams, 2008; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2014; James, Reay, Crozier, Beedell, Jamieson, Williams, & Hollingworth, 2009; Reay, Hollingworth, Williams, Crozier, Jamieson, James, & Beedell, 2007; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011)⁸¹.

During the process of choosing a school, families in the middle group, shared important ideas and values regarding education and school choice such the value of

⁸¹ With the exception of one work (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2014) all studies are from UK.

family payment for schooling and the consequent view of education as investment. Nevertheless, families emphasized different aspects when choosing; in one school, families chose by the school's history and their own experiences in that history, in the other, families chose motivated by their aspirational ideals.

Violeta Parra School's families relied heavily on their personal experiences and in the legacy of school in the commune of Palermo. These families were also part of the history of the commune, and part of the history of the school (most of them were the third and four generation). Many teachers and school professionals were former students. In a sense, these families reactivated their family past through their choice for the school; they chose mainly by the shared history.

For their part, Saint Anthony School's families grounded their choices on the possibility of receiving the social rewards that came from educational credentials. They talked about the importance of knowing how to use and to acquire social distinctions as certain language, type of clothing, after school activities, etc. In tune with previous studies in Chile (Carrasco, Falabella, & Mendoza, 2014; Carnoy & McEwan, 2003; Elacqua 2012; Elacqua & Fabrega, 2004; Winkler & Rounds, 1996), they also referred to importance of the social composition of the school. Coherently, they focused on the social image of the school and the status that might come from it. Therefore, families chose in order to satisfy their aspirational expectations regarding education, which was attuning with most of the literature on middle class families' choices (e.g. Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1995; Brantlinger, 2003; Holme, 2002).

Lower-middle socioeconomic groups. During the process of choosing a school, families in lower middle group highlight contrasted facets; one was linked with the value of tradition, and the confidence to choose the best school accessible, another was marked by practical reasons that emphasize school availability.

Contrary to what literature has shown about the involvement of working class families in school choice (Ball, 1993; Ball et al., 1994, 1996, 1997), Neruda School's families were active, involved, and saw school choice as something important. Through these actions, they created a central role for themselves in the educational process. In that sense, these families displayed what literature has tended to associated with higher educational and socioeconomic levels (Ayala, 2010; Gallego & Hernando, 2009). For example, they thought about choosing, developed practices to assess different options, and were willing to make financial efforts to pay costs associated with schooling (e.g. transportation).

Neruda School's families enacted social class through the conviction that the school offered them the best education quality they could get among other public schools. Some of these families lived in the surrounding smaller communes, where the public education offered was perceived as insufficient; so, they were inclined for schools that were located in a bigger commune such as Palermo.

For their part, Gabriela Mistral School's families exhibited a more skeptical view of schooling in general, and adopted a passive role in the process of choosing a school. These families chose the school that accepted their child. In this enactment of social class, families assessed the child ability, capacity, and wiliness, instead of assessing the

school. When families talked about other schools considered, they expressed a more individualist approach focusing on assessing children's capacity and abilities in order to determine if other school was worthy.

The concept of habitus became central to understanding the different ways in which families enacted social class during the process of choosing a school. In the case of families from middle class groups, habitus emerged as a disposition centered on history and internal networking for some families, and on social aspirations for others. For lower-middle class families, habitus emerged as a disposition towards history grounded on trust for some, and a practical decision-making for others. The types of family's habitus are: historical, aspirational, and survival.

Research Question 2: "How do schools enact social class during the process of choosing a school?" I describe schools' enactments of social class contrasting the responses of school staff within each SEG groups, which are middle and lower-middle (see chapter 3, table 2.0). These are described below through two subsections that include: 1) Middle Socioeconomic Schools; and 2) Lower-Middle Socioeconomic Schools.

Middle socioeconomic schools. In Violeta Parra School, the school staff perceived and faced the process of enrollment and recruitment reinforced the historical network of families that reflected school's legacy and reputation in the commune of Palermo. The school had always used the same strategy to recruit new students; focusing on the network already existent with families. Whenever they had a vacancy, they gave priority to current families, relatives, or even friends of current families. Additionally, being former student or had a relative in the school was seen as a positive antecedent in

the process of enrollment. Coherently with the idea of being a family school, it was common that teachers had their children in the school.

Saint Anthony School's staff faced the process of enrollment and recruitment by using symbolic social class distinctions. The school was particularly skillful at creating and "selling" an image of higher social class school based on the symbols of class such as the use of English language, students' uniform, logos, pictures of students, etc. that were consistent with families aspirational desires.

Lower-middle socioeconomic schools. Neruda Elementary School was aware of the privileged place that projected in the community, as one of the best public schools. With that, the history of the school along with the perception of quality (i.e. positive student achievement) were conflated elements, foundational to the existence of both relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) and an organizational climate of trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

Consistently with the trust, the school staff faced the process of enrollment and recruitment with an intentional focus on internal networks of families. As in Violeta Parra School, this implied both informing current families about vacancies by class, and favoring current or former students' families when that happened.

Gabriela Mistral School perceived and faced the processes of enrollment and recruitment under the premise that they accept all students arriving. The school, particularly, the management team saw this process more as an event than a process. They reduced the strategies and activities for that goal to the minimum. As an event, it solely consisted on hanging a word sheet with the requisites and dates of enrollment

outside the school's main entry. This approach suggests that the school did not privilege current families nor was centered on particular symbolic distinctions. School's practices indeed indicated that anyone interested in the school, could access to it. The school staff appeared as taking a more passive role which was aligned with their understanding of the school as open to families that do not have another place available.

The exploration of schools' ways to enact social class demonstrates that schools, not only families, enact social class through the particular expression of a habitus during the process of enrollment and recruitment. With one exception, schools were actively engaged in such process, evidencing an important level of autonomy and creativity in the ways they oriented towards families, and that commitment was similar to what families displayed in the process of choosing. In the four cases, strategies displayed by schools provided evidence to the idea that they produced a habitus. The types of school's habitus are: historical, aspirational, and survival.

An Elaboration of the Role of Habitus in the Process of Choosing a School

The results of the study illustrate that in the context of choosing a school, both families and schools enact social class, and that enactment is captured by the notion of habitus. In other words, the influence of social class in the process of choosing a school arises from the dynamic interaction between schools and families through their habitus. Such dynamic involves a process of interaction and mutual alliance, where social class is enacted as habitus in both sides; families and schools.

The understanding of school choice as a process of mutual interaction between families and schools contributes to deepen current literature regarding the process of

choosing a school. The idea of process rather than a moment or a one-step decision making is reinforced. Such process involves the development and expression of families' and schools' practices and strategies, grounded on notions about education and social identity.

Habitus in the study comprises both individuals and institutions in a way that reflects more alliance than antagonism between them. Such alliance offers an unexplored mixture, between individuals and institutions that contrast with previous empirical studies (Ball, Davies, David & Reay 2002; Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Reay 1998b; Reay, David, & Ball, 2001). The importance of this alliance speaks not only about the contribution of schools in corresponding families' habitus but especially, it has an important function in the reproducing social class divisions. In this sense, this study adds to Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. He clearly describes how habitus becomes the accomplice of choices made, when he said:

This disposition [habitus], always marked by its social conditions of acquisition and realization, tends to adjust to the objective changes of satisfying need or desire, inclining agents to 'cut their coats according to their cloth', and so to become the accomplices of the processes that tend to make the probable a reality (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 64)

Likewise habitus, choices for schools are infused with elements of social class, where temporal dimensions and agency and structure are conflated in diverse ways. Families and schools interact in a dynamic process of matching where families matched their habitus with schools, and in turn, schools matched their habitus with families' habitus.

This finding needs to be read in the context of Chilean education system, a country with a well-established choice system, where the design contributes to social segregation (Flores & Carrasco, 2013). The main contributions of the study to literature are presented below.

Study Contributions to Extent Literature

This study deepens social reproduction theories and illuminates new facets of the concept of habitus. These facets are related to; the link between habitus and social class, the temporal dimensions of habitus, and the relation between agency and structure. These will be addressed separately below in three respective sub-sections: 1) Social Class; 2) Temporal Dispositions; and 3) Agency and Structure.

Social Class

In theory, individuals that have the same habitus are products of the same objective conditions. Therefore, as Bourdieu posited, “A social class (in itself) – a class of identical or similar conditions of existence and conditionings – is at the same time a class of biological individuals having the same habitus” (1990, p. 60). In this interpretation, social class becomes an objective condition that makes probably that individuals share a similar habitus by virtue of their membership to a specific social class. Indeed, Bourdieu (1990a) recognized that although not even two members of the same class have had the same experiences; it is likely that they, as part of the same class, have been confronted with more similar situations.

In this study, the understanding of the ways in which social class emerges during the process of school choice has been enriched by emphasizing the dynamic relationship

between habitus and social class. Such interaction emerged from the empirical data and is useful to comprehend the differences that exist among similar socioeconomic groups of families and schools in the enactment of social class during the process of choosing a school.

It is important to mention that habitus allows understand the differences among school cases, which appeared even after trying to homogenize the sample by controlling for factors other than social class (e.g. same town, same culture/country, all parents of school-age children, and same gender). As described in chapter 3, school cases were selected given the geographical boundaries of the commune of Palermo, a medium-sized town in Chile. It is also significant remind that in the study the focus on social class is not concern with measuring it, neither with participants self-classifications of social class, but rather it is on the interpretations of their social class based on their narratives and school's SEGs.⁸²

In the process of choosing a school, families and schools enacted social class by expressing a specific type of habitus, which was always more rich and complex than socioeconomic categories. Habitus embodied social class but also complicates social class as a distinctive attribute of individuals and communities. Going further in exploring those ways, this section discusses two approaches on how habitus enriches our understanding of social class: 1) Adding complexity to class; and 2) Linking class with identity.

⁸² Socioeconomic Group (SEG) of students' families.

Adding complexity to class. The study confirms the idea that social class is not merely an issue about objective differences of capital, neither just about beliefs and perceptions (Ball, Davies, David, & Reay, 2002). Social class is an issue of dispositions and embodiment that frames not only our understanding of the social world but the understanding of ourselves in that social world. Consistently with other studies on social class that use habitus (James et al., 2009; Reay, 1997; Reay et al., 2011), findings in the study reinforce the idea that habitus “enables an analysis of social class as complex sociological and psychological processes than encompass far more than materiality and social location” (Reay, 1997, p. 227). The concept of habitus is particularly important in dealing with the multiple-defined concept of social class.

The best example of how habitus adds complexity to social class is at the heart of findings. Middle class families choose a school not only driven by aspirational ideals, but also by history, where their own experiences are celebrated and they can replicate a social belonging. Moreover, working classes also differed in their motives to choose a school, and not only are guided by pragmatic approaches but also by history. Thus, within a same socioeconomic group, diverse habitus might emerge when choosing a school.

Linking class with identity. The exploration of habitus in this study, affirms the idea that social class is forged and experienced as identity (Downing, 2009, in Reay et al., 2011). Studies that have explored school choice focused on social class (Cucciara & Horvat, 2014; Crozier et al., 2008; James et al., 2009; Reay et al., 2011) have used the lens and notion of identity as critical piece to understand heterogeneous responses within similar social class groups. These authors understand differences in school choices as social identity differences. In this study, habitus shows that social class is *a sense of*

belonging to a particular social group. Thus, in one way or another social identity is embedded in habitus.

Temporal Dispositions

Theoretically, habitus is a concept strongly grounded in the past where former experiences shape its overall structure. As Bourdieu (1990b) posits, “The habitus – embodied history (...) and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present” (p.56). Despite the marked orientation of habitus in the past, findings in this study hint a richer emergence of temporal dimensions in the habitus identified during the process of choosing a school. Particularly, future and present dimensions, which suggest that habitus is not only a sense of place (Reay, 2004; Reay et al, 2011) but also a sense of time.

Temporal dimensions are infusing in the rationale underling the choices made by families and by schools. In historical habitus, temporal dimension is centered on the past. For families and for schools, the process of choosing a school allows them to reproduce the shared history; a history which both belong (the history of families and their ancestors, the history of the schools in the commune).

In aspirational habitus temporal dimension is around future, and it emerges in families and the school. For families, the process of choosing a school offers a way to react to or depart from the past towards future; and allows the creation of a history that is *possible*. Families understand their role as critical in changing their children’s future and choices are made explicitly looking the best for children *in the future*. For the school, the

process of enrollment and recruitment will eventually shape the future school community, so, they are invested in the process of attracting a specific group of families; who want to build a different story in terms of social belonging.

Finally, in survival habitus, families and the school are centered on the present; as they give an enormous attention to immediacy; where families described the process of choosing as something that will end as soon as they find a spot in one (any) school; and where school approached the recruitment of students as something practical they have to do at certain point of the school year. Furthermore, the focus on present was expressed through the idea that although there were not satisfied with some aspects of the school, they did not change or look for another because it was good enough *for now*.

Agency and Structure

Bourdieu (1977, 1990a, 1990b) envisages the concept of habitus as a way to overcome dichotomies of structure and agency, where structures denote the recurrent organization of social context and agency refers to the individual capacity to act within the framework of such organization. Habitus encompasses the way in which social world is integrated in a meaningful way by social agents. In this study, differences between the dynamics of structure and agency translate into the three different habitus. As agency and structure are dynamics that occur in each group, I refer to each group separately: 1) Families and 2) Schools.

Families. Structure is given by the socioeconomic categories to which families belong; and agency is expressed in the way families perceive and face the process of choosing a school.

A deeper analysis shows that to a greater extent the habitus defined the level of agency of families. Families with a historical habitus exert agency by looking actively a school to be part of the local history; families with aspirational habitus had agency in looking for a school that disrupts their social background; and families with a survival habitus did not exercise agency, almost leaving the decision on the school's side.

In three of the four cases families demonstrate a marked sense of agency regarding their role in schooling and the process of choosing a school. The two middle SEG families and one of the lower-middle SEG group see their role as critical to encourage learning during first years of schooling. These three groups of families use diverse strategies and resources to get the *best school* for their children (historical and survival habitus).

The contrast case is families in the second lower-middle SEG group, who denoted a lower sense of agency (survival habitus). Families in this group, feel the outcomes of schooling are to some extent out of their control, and out of their primary concerns, so, they chose the school *available*, which make sense when we read it using habitus lenses.

Schools. Structure is composed by elements of the design of the education system such the type of school (municipal, private subsidized), the adherence to copayment policy, and the selection of students through admission tests. Agency is expressed in the way the school understands and faces the process of enrollment and recruitment of students.⁸³

⁸³ In Chile, the processes related to enrollment and recruitment of student is highly dependent of the approach taken by the school, not from other external guidelines or regulations. Although during last few

Similar to the description of families; habitus, more than the structural characteristics, defined the schools' agency. Although different in their structural characteristics, historical schools assume a similar sense of agency focused on enrich their internal networks and reinforced on the historical role and mission of the school; the aspirational school, is particularly active in trying to recruit a specific group of emerging middle-class families by centered on how they create and sell an particular social image; and the lower sense of agency is evident in the school with a survival habitus, who approach the process of enrollment and recruitment as something out of their interest and (to some extent) control.

In sum, both families and schools enacted agency, and such agency is, of course, aligned by habitus. These cases uncover the transformative aspect of habitus in a determined field; where it generates a more wide repertory of possible actions (Reay, 2004) enabling individuals assume more agencies. Nevertheless, although high levels of families' agency are evident in three of the four cases; the final decision for one school or another is limited by structure. That is, the structure of families (given by their socioeconomic categories) and the structure of schools (given the policy mechanisms of copayment and pupil selection). In this way, for example, although families from lower-middle SEG group would like to go to the private subsidize school with historical habitus, this was impossible for them because of structural constrains.

years communal plans and strategies have been implemented to face the increase diminishing of enrollment in the municipal sector.

Original Conclusions from the Study

In this qualitative multiple-case study, habitus emerges as a key concept to explore families and schools enactments of social class during the process of choosing a school in one middle size commune. Although research findings are limited to the experiences of schools and families within a geographical setting, it is possible to envisage the next steps for exploring habitus in the process of choosing a school. This section focuses on its unique contributions.

The use and value of the concept of Habitus in education research is not without tension (Reay 2004; Nash 1990; Sullivan 2002), and thus, a consideration about its specific contribution is necessary. Such contribution is present below through three subsections: 1) Habitus as Methodological Tool, 2) Habitus and Capital, and 3) Habitus and Identity.

Habitus as Methodological Tool

The common recurrence of concept of habitus in sociocultural theory applies to education contrasts with the small number of studies that look at it empirically. Reay (2004) criticizes the use of habitus in education research as something assumed rather than something put into practice. She argues that although habitus is cornerstone in Bourdieu's theoretical framework, most of educational research, "referenced habitus instead of working with it" (Reay, 2004, p. 440).

This study contributes to the effort of putting habitus into practice and using it as a methodological tool in the sense it allows asking questions about data (Bourdieu 1985).

Regarding the study of choice, I used habitus as a way to understanding courses of action that individuals (families) and institutions (schools) deem thinkable/unthinkable about choosing a school, as well as, about recruiting new families. In this way, habitus was a method for understanding how sets of attitudes, assumptions, expectations, and practices come to the surface in groups such as families and schools, which share a history. I used it as a tool to guide the inductive exploration of empirical data, so, although habitus was part of the central concepts of Bourdieu's framework, it only took centrality during the process of analysis of data. I did not ask about a specific habitus during the process of collection of data, instead, habitus as concept was a tool to understand complex collective practices.

Habitus and Capital

One of the question raises by the study is regarding the relation between habitus and capital. On one hand, the study contributes to emphasize the pertinence of habitus over the concept of capital. On the other; it enriches the concept of social capital by using the concept of habitus; as habitus intersects social capital with identity. These are described below under two sub-categories: 1) Choosing Habitus Over Capital and 2) Enriching Social Capital.

Choosing habitus OR capital. Within Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction⁸⁴ the existence of and the mobilization of capitals are critical to maintain social structure. I started the study with an explicit interest on the impact of capital on educational choices. Literature posited that the social reproduction process relied on the different types of

⁸⁴ Such theory refers to the mechanisms by which social worlds tend to ensure their reproduction or transformation (Bourdieu 1996 in Reay 2004).

capital that families were able to mobilize in order to manage school expectations. Also it says that elements of habitus in families are present in their cultural capital (see chapter 2).

Nevertheless, findings indicated that habitus is a more appropriate concept for understand families and schools enactment of social class during the process of choosing a school. Families and schools descriptions and explanations of the process of choosing a school were beyond the display of capital or types of capital. In other words, within the process of choosing a school, schools cases not only differentiated themselves regarding certain types of resources, or abilities, or social aspirations, but especially about inherent (or at least well-developed) dispositions that were a key reflection of habitus. Those were ways of thinking and perceiving the world and themselves in it. As Bourdieu (1990b) recognizes, habitus generates not only meaningful practices but perceptions that give meaning as well. This reference to dispositions, a structure that organizes experience implies habitus is a more enduring composition of individuals and groups, and that made a difference in practices such as school choice.

Capital in this view becomes a more superficial or at least more moldable dimension: one can acquire (or lose) different forms of capital over relatively short periods of time, with a job, membership in a club or church, or by getting advanced training. Habitus, in contrast, emphasizes in a deeper dimension that reinforces embodiment. In sum, the role of social class in the process of choosing a school was not only regarding to the displaying of resources but about dispositions.

Habitus AND capital: Enriching social capital. The primacy of habitus over capital did not mean that different forms of capital were hidden or unclear in data. The existence and the creation of social capital within the historical and aspirational habitus were explicit. Within the historical habitus, for example, schools and families were actives in reinforcing networks between families and school. In aspirational habitus, the school facilitates networks among families and families themselves were highly invested in its creation.

In the identification of these habitus, social capital was much more than social resources; it comprises identity aspects for families and for schools. In that way, habitus enriches the concept of social capital by linked it with ways in which groups see and define themselves.

Habitus and Identity

A critical concept intersected with the concept of habitus is identity. This study contributes to see that habitus shares common aspects with the notion of identity, and at the same time, vary from it. I argue that habitus was an expression of social identity and at the same time that habitus cannot be simply equated with identity. The connection between habitus and identity is explored in two parts: 1) Associating the Concepts, and 2) Contrasting the Concepts.

Associating the concepts. The identification of habitus in this study reflects strongly that through the enactment of social class there was also the enactment of identities. When families talked about the importance of the financial investment in education; when schools described the importance of being family; or when families

talked of feeling abandoned by the school, they were informing about who they are, and about how they understood themselves and their relationship to others (school/family). In this sense, habitus always reflected elements of social identity of those groups. Habitus is associated with identity in the idea that our identity only makes sense within the specific habitus we inhabit. Habitus is the invisible bubble and a meta-narrative by which we approach the social world, and where we give meaning to ourselves, individually and collectively.

Within this association of concepts, studies similar to this one, have use the framework of identity to explore the intersection of social class and school choice (Crozier et al., 2008; James et al., 2009; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2014; Reay et al., 2011). They have described the ways by which the process of choosing a school is a process where identity-work is produced and enacted by families.

In those studies, families develop, confirm or disconfirm aspects of their own social identities and at the same time those of other people. James and his colleagues (2009) have been intentional about associating habitus and identity to address counterintuitive choices of schools for middle class parents. They highlighted that those concepts together capture some of the inherently relational and dynamic nature of the identity-work.

For its part, Reay et al. (2011) focused on middle class families who made choices against self-interest, emphasizing that in spite of become a deviation from their own privileged positions, those choices appeared to represent new forms of capital, and to secure identity and opportunity. In sum, both this study and similar studies confirm that

there is an important association between concepts of habitus and identity, and that choosing is a practice that implies a deep identity-work. The next part, however, highlights the need for contrasting both concepts.

Contrasting the concepts. Although there is an unquestionable relation between habitus and identity, the two cannot be simply equated. One distinctive contribution of habitus in comparison with identity is associated with the relational dimension added by the interconnection with the concept of field. Actions and practices should not be seen, then, only as the product of habitus, but as the product of the relations between habitus and the specific contexts or field where individuals act (Reay et al., 2011). For example, in the study, I focused on specific context of interactions located within an education setting; and habitus contributed to make sense of such field regarding the process of choosing a school. This idea adds a more specificity to the notion of social identity, which means understanding that it emerged here as subordinated to the habitus that is placed in one specific field.

Another uniqueness of habitus in contrast with identity is the low level of consciousness of it (Bourdieu 1984 in Reay 1997). In the study, the habitus identified accounted to understand schemes of perceptions that were described as logic, obvious, expectable, part of the common sense of participants. With exceptions -the idea of trust in Neruda school or the idea of being a family in Violeta Parra-, nor families nor schools were not aware of the habitus they had, while the concept of identity suggests more awareness from individuals or groups who display it.

Implications and Contribution to Future Research

Three venues for further research are identified in this study. These emerge from the exploration of social class through habitus, from the role of school habitus in the process of choosing a school, and from the specific context of Chile regarding its characteristics and the literature on school choice. Coherently, three sub-sections are: 1) Habitus as Enactment of Social Class; 2) Schools Habitus and School Choice; and 3) Habitus and Social Reproduction in Chile.

Habitus as Enactment of Social Class

This study disclosure the richness of Bourdieu's concept of habitus to explore the process of choosing a school, and conclusions open further questions regarding how habitus enriches our understanding of the role of social class in educational processes. As this study shows, habitus appears to be a strong tool to explore social class empirically by adopting an inductive approach.

Habitus allows understanding social class as social and individual dispositions, and emphasizes the role of agency. Although this have been declared by Bourdieu (1977; 1990a), few empirical studies have used that specific approach in education research. An important exception is the work of Diane Reay in England (Reay 1998b; 2004). Given the fact that the role of class is still so important in educational experiences, such school choice, more research is needed from sociocultural and ethnographic approaches to further illuminate those venues.

Schools Habitus and School Choice

The study raises the questions: to what extent schools in Palermo are active in choosing families in their process of recruitment, selection, and enrollment in order to respond to their habitus. Literature from a sociocultural approach has extensively described how families chose schools, and its contribution has been critical to problematize traditional rational choice theory approaches to school choice. But to what extent schools are involved on the process of choosing a school through by investing time, resources, and energy in recruit not only students but families that are the best fit to their habitus. More empirical research in diverse settings about schools' habitus and how they might reinforce, recreate, or interrupt family' habitus would be beneficial to deepen our comprehension of school choice dynamics.

Habitus and Social Reproduction in Chile

The importance of the alliance between schools' and families' habitus during the process of choosing a school, reveals the important contribution of schools to social reproduction, but needs to be understood in the context of Chilean education system. This study is located in one middle size commune, a very particular setting, and it was started in a period of change. In the following years, more studies might examine how the alliance between schools and families is displayed in context of school choice.

Moreover, this study contributes to an increasing set of studies interested in explore the school choice phenomenon as a *sociocultural practice* (e.g. Carrasco, Falabella & Mendoza, 2014; Córdoba, 2014; Mendoza, 2014; Hernandez & Raczynki, 2010). In these studies, social class though socioeconomic characteristics of families

emerge as key in trying to understand the significant effect of the school choice after almost four decades of implementation, especially on segregation and school inequality.

Although the approach assumed by such research relies mostly on qualitative and ethnographic studies, no studies have explored the role of habitus in the understanding of the way in which social class operates in the context of school choice. Findings of this study are limited in scope but they propose that socioeconomic categories should be articulated with the notion of habitus (not replace by) because both interact at the moment of choosing a school. Further studies on school choice might look at such intersection.

The Chilean education system is currently under important changes in the structure of education system. The policy of copayment from families, as well as, active pupil selection, central characteristics of the education system are in process of gradual elimination since 2015. With this new scenario for schools and families, further studies need to address the contribution of the national context in the emergence or not of this alliance, and to explore the ways the new context pushes or discourages schools and families to reproduce social class divisions through school choice. Furthermore, more research is needed to comprehend the effects of those changes on the enactments of social class by families and schools in the process of choosing a school, especially considering the weight of those structural elements.

Finally, in a highly segregated education system, we need to improve our understanding of the contribution of schools to the socioeconomic segregation.⁸⁵ This

⁸⁵ Although studies have explored the contribution of the structure of the education system in school segregation by focused either on the design of it (Flores & Carrasco, 2013) or on policies implemented (Valenzuela, Bellei & Ríos, 2014) no studies have from a sociocultural standpoint have explore the interaction between schools and families while choosing a school.

study concludes that schools operate in a dynamic interaction with families who choose it; yet there is still the strong need to better understand through which practices and under what processes, schools become accomplice to the social reproduction process; that knowledge may be fundamental to design strategies that support structural changes boosted currently by government.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Protocols

A.1. Interview Protocols

A.1.1. Interview Protocol: Parents

Demographic Information:

1. [Age, occupation, place of residence within the neighborhood]
2. How many children do you have? /How many are students at [name of school]?
3. How long have you had a child enrolled in [name of school]?
4. In what school you were before choosing this one

Interview Questions:

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your daughter/son? (E.g. what are her/his strengths at school? What are her/his challenging areas? How is the relationship with her/his classmates?)
2. What is what you like best about this school? [give examples] What is what you like less about this school? [give examples]
3. How your daughter/son did come to this school?
4. What things do you remember as the most important in this process for you? (Do you feel that you chose for the school? and if so, knowing if it was difficult or easy to choose and why?)
5. What schools were considered to choose and why? Which schools were not considered at all and why?
6. Were there any people especially important to you in this process? Who (was/were) and why?
7. What information did you search (receive) about the school? How did you get it? From where? Do you think you had enough information to make the decision?
8. What was the most appealing thing about this school?
9. What did you have to do in order that your daughter/son was accepted to this school? How did you hear what you had to do to make your daughter/son was accepted to this school?
10. Do you think that others students' families are similar to yours? How do you notice this?
11. How important is to you that the students' families are people who share your own values?
12. Do you feel that this school helps meet the expectations you have for the education of your son / daughter? How?

13. What do you think about choosing school? (It is important, valuable, or not and why)
14. What do you think about per pupil selection? (it makes sense to you, why?)
15. What do you think about competition among schools for students' enrollment?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?/ Is there a question you would like to make?

A.1.2 Focus Group: Parents Neruda School (second round)

Visión de la escuela

1. Me podrían contar acerca de sus hijos (ej. en qué curso esta, 2 o 3 características de su hijo/a)
2. ¿Qué es lo que más les gusta a ustedes de esta escuela?
3. ¿Qué es lo que menos les gusta a ustedes de esta escuela?
4. ¿Cómo fue que eligieron esta escuela para su hijo/a? ¿Cuáles escuelas fueron consideradas y por qué? ¿Cuáles escuelas de las cercanas no fueron consideradas y por qué?
5. ¿Qué fue lo más atractivo de esta escuela al momento de elegirla?

Relación escuela-familia

6. ¿Cómo es la relación de los padres y apoderados con los docentes?
7. ¿Cómo es la relación de los padres y apoderados con el equipo directivo?
8. ¿Existe confianza en la escuela? De ser así, ¿Qué prácticas o personas han sido importantes para generar confianza? De no ser así, ¿Qué falta para generar confianza de los padres y apoderados en la escuela?
9. ¿Cree usted que las familias de los otros estudiantes se parecen entre sí? ¿Cómo se dan cuenta?
10. ¿Es importante para ustedes que las familias de los otros estudiantes sean similares a su familia o que tengan valores similares a los de su familia? ¿por qué?
11. ¿Sienten que esta escuela ayuda a lograr las expectativas que tienen para la educación de sus hijos? ¿De qué manera?
12. ¿Qué saben y opinan de la reforma? ¿Qué opinan de la selección de estudiantes?
13. ¿Qué le parece esto de “escoger escuela”? (es importante, valioso o no, y por qué?)
14. ¿Hay algo más que quisieran agregar? O alguna pregunta que quisieran hacerme?

A.1.3 Interview Protocol: Principal

Demographic Information:

1. How long have you been working at [name of the school]?
2. How long have you been the principal at [name of the school]?
3. Where do you live? Do you live close or outside of this neighborhood?

Interview Questions:

1. How would you describe is the relationship between the school and students' families? [identify strengths and challenges]
2. How you would describe to the families that choose this school? "Who are they"? [what elements are chosen to describe families]
3. What are the expectations of parental involvement in school? in what things parents are expected to contribute (at school level)?
4. What is your opinion about the evolution of enrollment in the school the last years? [Explore in the phenomenon of declining municipal enrollment and the migration of students to subsidized private schools or due to competition with other schools in the district]?
5. With which other schools do you compete for students?
6. Has the school been affected for the competition for students with other schools? if so, how?
7. How important is for you the issue of recruiting and retaining students? How it does impact you work as principal?
8. What is the school doing to recruit and retain students?
9. How does the school face students with behavioral problems?
10. Do you think that students' families at the school are alike? How do you notice this? Is this positive or negative?
11. Why do families choose this school?
12. What do you think about choosing school? (It is important, valuable, or not and why)
13. What do you think about competition among schools for students' enrollment?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add?/ Is there a question you would like to make?

A.2 Focus Group Protocols

A.2.1 Focus Group Protocol: Management Team

Demographic Information:

1. Age
2. How long have you been working at [name of the school]?
3. How long have you been participating in the management team at [name of the school]?

Questions:

School-family relationships

1. How would you describe is the relationship between the school and students' families? [identify strengths and challenges]

2. How you would describe to the families that choose this school? “Who are they”? [what elements are chosen to describe families]
3. What are the expectations of parental involvement in school? in what things parents are expected to contribute (at school level)?

Competition

4. Has the school been affected for the competition for students with other schools? If so, how?
5. How does the school face the competition for students with other schools?

Recruitment

6. How important is for you as a management team the issue of recruiting and retaining students? How it does impact you work?
7. What is the school doing to recruit and retain students?
8. How the school does conduct the process of students’ enrollment each year? (strategies, roles, activities) / Have there been significant changes in this regard in recent years?
9. What is expected from the families of applicants? (Requirements, characteristics, expectations) or what type of guardian/student the school is looking for? Why?
10. How does the school face students with behavioral problems?
11. Do you think that students’ families at the school are alike? How do you notice this? Is this positive or negative?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add? Is there a question you would like to make?

A.2.2 Focus Group Protocol: Management Team Gabriela Mistral School (second round)

Información General:

4. Edad
5. Cuanto tiempo tiene trabajando en esta escuela?
6. Cuanto tiempo ha estado participando en el equipo de gestión de la escuela?
7. Cargo o rol dentro del equipo de gestión

Foco de la gestión

1. ¿Cuál (es) dirían ustedes que ha(n) sido el (los) foco (s) de trabajo este año escolar? (indagar resultados, SIMCE, matricula, temas disciplinarios, etc.)
2. ¿Cómo han sido acordados o como han emergido estos focos de trabajo? (definidos por sostenedor, definidos democráticamente o incorporando información del contexto, etc.)

Relación Escuela-Familia

1. ¿Cómo es la relación de la escuela con los padres y apoderados? (identificar fortalezas y desafíos). En las entrevistas se ha hablado de un proceso de construcción de confianza con las familias, ¿Están ustedes de acuerdo? Que se necesita para fortalecer la confianza con las familias? (¿qué puede hacer la escuela?)
2. ¿De dónde provienen las familias de los estudiantes?
3. ¿Cómo describirían ustedes a las familias de los estudiantes de esta escuela? ¿Quiénes son? (características demográficas u otras que use para caracterizarlos)
4. Consideran ustedes que las familias de los estudiantes son parecidas entre sí? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo se dan cuenta? (valores, características, expectativas de la educación, etc.)
5. En algunas entrevistas se ha hablado del empoderamiento de los padres en la actualidad, ¿qué desafío y oportunidad significa para la escuela?

Competición

6. ¿Con que otras escuelas de la comuna se compite por estudiantes?
7. ¿Se ha visto afectada la escuela debido a la competición por estudiantes con otras escuelas? De ser así, ¿cómo se ha visto afectada? Y sino ¿por qué creen que no se ha visto afectada?
8. ¿De qué manera la escuela enfrenta la competición por estudiantes con otras escuelas?

Reclutamiento

9. ¿De qué manera la preocupación por la matrícula (aumentar o mantener) es una preocupación de ustedes como equipo de gestión? ¿Cómo impacta su trabajo?
10. Dependiendo de la pregunta anterior, ¿Qué hace la escuela para atraer y/o retener estudiantes? (que es necesario cambiar o mejorar de esta estrategia) si es que no es claro para los directivos, ¿por qué llegan, según ustedes, las familias al colegio? Por ejemplo, estudiantes de la Palma que viajan y deben financiar su transporte.
11. En la entrevistas apareció el tema de la preocupación por los estudiantes que se van. ¿Por qué según ustedes los estudiantes se van? (más masivamente que el caso individual).

Gestionando la matrícula

12. ¿De qué manera se enfrentan los casos de estudiantes con problemas de disciplina u otros que hacen difícil la permanencia de estos en la escuela? (que es necesario cambiar o mejorar de esta estrategia)
13. ¿Hay algo más que quisieran agregar? O alguna pregunta que hacerme?

A.2.3 Focus Group Protocol: Management Team Violeta Parra School (second round)

Información General Participantes:

8. Edad
9. Cuanto tiempo tiene trabajando en esta escuela?
10. Cuanto tiempo ha estado participando en el equipo de gestión de la escuela?
11. Cargo o rol dentro del equipo de gestión

Foco de la gestión

3. ¿Cuál (es) dirían ustedes que ha(n) sido el (los) foco (s) de trabajo este año escolar? (indagar resultados, SIMCE, matrícula, temas disciplinarios, etc.)
4. ¿Cómo han sido acordados o como han emergido estos focos de trabajo? (definidos por sostenedor, definidos democráticamente o incorporando información del contexto, etc.)

Relación Escuela-Familia

14. ¿Cómo es la relación del colegio con los padres y apoderados? (identificar fortalezas y desafíos) (en la encuesta los apoderados perciben que colaboran con el colegio)
15. ¿De dónde provienen las familias de los estudiantes?
16. ¿Cómo describirían ustedes a las familias de los estudiantes? ¿Quiénes son? (características demográficas u otras que use para caracterizarlos)
17. Consideran ustedes que las familias de los estudiantes son parecidas entre sí? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo se dan cuenta? (valores, características, expectativas de la educación, etc.)

Competición

18. ¿Con que otras escuelas de la comuna se compite por estudiantes?
19. ¿Se ha visto afectada la escuela debido a la competición por estudiantes con otros colegios? De ser así, ¿cómo se ha visto afectada? Y sino ¿por qué creen que no se ha visto afectada?
20. ¿De qué manera enfrentan la competición por estudiantes con otras escuelas?

Reclutamiento

21. ¿De qué manera la preocupación por la matrícula (aumentar o mantener) es una preocupación de ustedes como equipo de gestión? ¿Cómo impacta su trabajo?
22. ¿Por qué llegan las familias de los estudiantes a este colegio?
23. ¿Por qué se van las familias del colegio?
24. En las entrevistas aparece que el compartir valores e ideas con el resto de las familias de los estudiantes y con los propuestos por el colegio son importantes para escoger este colegio, ¿cómo aseguran que las familias que llegan al colegio tengan valores similares?

Gestionando la matricula

25. ¿De qué manera se enfrentan los casos de estudiantes con problemas de disciplina u otros que hacen difícil la permanencia de estos en la escuela? (que es necesario cambiar o mejorar de esta estrategia)
26. ¿Hay algo más que quisieran agregar? O alguna pregunta que hacerme?

Seguridad y confianza

Casi 70% de los apoderados percibe que el colegio es un lugar seguro y 30% percibe que es medianamente seguro, ¿qué cosas que hay en el colegio favorecen esta percepción de seguridad?

Un porcentaje importante de apoderados menciona que una de las razones por la que escogió el colegio es porque le da confianza o es confiable (total 25%), ¿qué hace la escuela para fortalecer la confianza de las familias hacia el establecimiento?

Respuestas intermedias a las que atender

Casi un 30% de los apoderados señala sentirse medianamente integrado en el colegio ¿cómo se lo explican?

Casi un 40% de los apoderados señala que el colegio representa medianamente los intereses y necesidades de estos ¿cómo se lo explican?

Formación en valores

Un 30% de los apoderados señala que lo que más valora del colegio es la formación valórica ¿cuáles son los valores que se forman en el colegio y cómo se enseñan a los estudiantes?

A.2.4 Focus Group Protocol: Teachers

Demographic Information:

1. Age
2. How long have you been working as a teacher?
3. How long have you been working at [name of the school]?
4. Class (es) in what you teach?
5. Where do you live? Do you live close or outside of this neighborhood?

School-Family relationships

1. How would you describe is the relationship between the school and students' families? [identify strengths and challenges]

2. How you would describe to the families that choose this school? “Who are they”?
[what elements are chosen to describe families]
3. What are the expectations of parental involvement in school? in what things parents are expected to contribute? (at school level)

Competition

4. Has the school been affected for the competition for students with other schools? if so, how?
5. How does the school face the competition for students with other schools?

Recruitment

6. How important is for you as a management team the issue of recruiting and retaining students? How it does impact you work?
7. What is the school doing to recruit and retain students?
8. How the school does conduct the process of students’ enrollment each year? (strategies, roles, activities) / Have there been significant changes in this regard in recent years?
9. What is expected of families of applicants? (Requirements, characteristics, expectations) or what type of guardian/student the school is looking for? Why?
10. How does the school face students with behavioral problems?
11. Do you think that students’ families at the school are alike? How do you notice this? Is this positive or negative?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?/ Is there a question you would like to make?

Appendix B: Preliminary Elaboration of Questions

Types of capital	Information sources	Strategies to obtain the information	A través de qué formas
Económico	-Schools' documents -Parents -Principal	Interviews Document analysis	- Será explorado en la selección de las escuelas participantes.
<p>Social (vínculos social, relaciones, networks):</p> <p>“In this article we approach social capital in terms of the emergent consensus (Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998; Stanton-Salazar, 1997) that the concept must be taken to refer to the material and immaterial resources that individuals and families are able to access through their social ties.” (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003, p. 323)</p> <p>“Resources that flow through relationship ties information, norms, and support are three general types of resources that can flow through these ties to enhance individual functioning” (Crosnoe, 2004)</p>	-Parents -Teachers -Principal	-Observations:	<p>- Look at the parents' conferences (type of relationship, communication styles, etc.), parents' interviews with teachers, and contacts of parents with other parents at school.</p> <p>-Look the establishment of networks among parents or kinship lines. Identify networks, its value, type, purpose, who participate in it, etc.</p>
		-Parents' interview/ focus group with parents	<p>-¿Qué hace [actividades concretas] usted en relación con la educación de su hijo/a?</p> <p>-¿Cómo entiende la participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos?/ ¿Cómo usted define su rol en la educación de sus hijos? - ¿Cómo, desde su perspectiva, contribuye al éxito de la educación de su hijo/a?</p> <p>-Amplitud de la red, profundidad, intensidad y naturaleza de las relaciones con otros padres u otros familiares en relación a la escuela. ¿Cómo estas redes facilitan la experiencia de los niños-as en las escuelas?</p> <p>-¿De dónde obtuvo información respecto a la escuela antes de escogerla?</p> <p>-¿Qué otra persona/grupo fue importante para usted durante el proceso de selección de escuela?</p> <p>-¿Qué persona/grupo es importante en la relación que usted</p>

<p>“We show that the resources that are made available to middle-class parents through their networks affect various aspects of their children's schooling, including teacher behavior, track placement, and pro-program participation.” (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003, p. 321)</p>			tiene con la escuela/ para mantenerse conectado con la escuela?
		-Principals' o teachers' interview/ focus group with management team	
<p>Cultural (conocimientos, valores y/o disposiciones):</p> <p>Identify the educators' standards and how they presume parents comply or not with those (to assist children with homework, help children organize their time for school projects, drive children to stores to get materials for school projects, ask informed, detailed questions in parent-teacher conferences, etc.).</p> <p>The key is to study parents' actions in the ways schools define as crucial, as well as parents' efforts to promote school success in ways that educators do not value. (Lareau & Weininger, 2002)</p>	<p>-Parents -Teachers -Principal</p>	-Parents' interview/ focus group with parents	<p>-¿De qué manera usted promueve el éxito escolar de su hijo/a?/¿Qué hace usted para que a su hijo le vaya bien en la escuela?</p> <p>-Si usted tuviera que conseguir algo de la escuela (dejar a su hijo con una profesora particular, incorporarlo a un programa específico) ¿Usted sabría lo que hay que hacer? ¿Cuánto sabe del funcionamiento de la escuela para conseguir determinados objetivos?</p> <p>-¿Cómo lo hace usted cuando necesita conseguir algo de la escuela en beneficio de su hijo/a? (acciones concretas)</p>
		-Teachers' interview	<p>-¿Qué espera usted de un papá o mamá comprometido con la educación de su hijo/a? (acciones, actividades concretas)</p> <p>-¿Cómo usted sabe que un papá/mamá está comprometido con la educación de su hijo/a? (acciones, actividades concretas)</p>
		-Principal's interview	-¿Qué tipo de acciones realizadas por los padres se consideran como cruciales en el apoyo al aprendizaje de los estudiantes?
Emocional (la forma en que las conexiones personales operan	-Documents -Parents	- Document analysis	-¿Quién es el target-objetivo de las políticas escolares de reclutamiento, selección de estudiantes u otras relacionadas

<p>como recursos familiares o recursos generados a través de las relaciones íntimas) (Guillies, 2006):</p> <p>¿Qué inversión emocional hacen los padres para el bienestar del hijo/a? (tipos y nivel)</p>	<p>-Teachers</p>	<p>-Interviews</p> <p>-Focus groups</p>	<p>con el proceso de selección de escuela? (literatura dice que en general son las madres)</p> <p>-¿Cómo se busca atraer al público objetivo de padres a ser apoderados de esta escuela?</p>
		<p>- Parents´ interviews</p>	<p>-¿Cómo describiría a su hijo/a?</p> <p>-¿Cuáles son sus mayores fortalezas? (priorización de la casa sobre la escuela - Guillies, 2006) o ¿Qué es lo que más valora de él/ella?</p> <p>-¿Incentiva usted a su hijo/a con la escuela/con su educación?. Si lo hace, ¿de qué manera?</p> <p>¿Qué significa para usted apoyarlo en las tareas? (¿cómo se siente? ¿Cuál es la importancia que otorga a esto?)</p>
<p>Habitus</p> <p>Parents´ educational and occupational expectations and aspirations</p>		<p>- Parents´ interviews</p>	<p>-¿Qué espera de su hijo/a en su futuro escolar?- ¿Qué vislumbra en el futuro escolar y profesional de su hijo?</p> <p>-¿Qué espera de su futuro como trabajador/profesional?</p> <p>-¿Qué es necesario hacer para alcanzar ese futuro?</p>

Appendix C: Code Book

Caracterización de los participantes

Tipo de escuela: Subvencionado o Municipal

1. 1. CARACTERIZACION ENTREVISTADOS (CAR-ENT)

1.1.1 CANTIDAD HIJOS (CAR-ENT-CANT) [Cantidad hijos, cursos y ocupaciones]

1.1.2 DISTANCIA (CAR-ENT-DIS) [Distancia]

1.1.3 OCUPACION (CAR-ENT-DIS) [Ocupación; trabajo papa]

1.1.4 CAMBIO CASA (CAR-ENT-CASA) [cambio de casa]

1.2 CARACTERIZACION HIJOS ENTREVISTADOS (CAR-H)

1.2.1. PERSONALIDAD (CAR-H-PER) [personalidad hijos]

1.2.2 ACTIVIDADES (CAR-H-ACT) [Actividades extraescolares hijos]

1.2.3 ASIGNATURAS (NO) PREFERIDAS (CAR-ENT-ASIPRE) [Asignaturas (no) preferidas]

1.2.4 PROGRESO EN ESCUELA (CAR-H-PRO) [Progreso en la escuela]

Percepciones

2. SOCIEDAD (SOC) [Sociedad – no estamos preocupados por el otro; aporte del gobierno, estado]

3. EDUCACIÓN (ED)

3.1 MUNICIPAL VERSUS SUBVENCIONADO (ED-VER) [Si es bueno no importa si es municipal]

3.2 CAMBIO VISION (ED-CAM) [cambio de vision]

3.3 Y FUTURO (ED-FUT) [educación y futuro mejor]

3.4 EXPECTATIVAS (ED-EXP) [expectativas de educación; formación valórica – buena persona; formación valórica - respeto]

4. ESCUELA (ES)

DOCENTES (ES-DOC) [profesoras no son buenas; impacto del docente]

ESTUDIANTES (ES- EST) [ninos buenos en colegios malos se pierden; ninos están abandonados; ninos malos echan a perder al resto; estudiantes echaron a perder el colegio; ninos mas inteligentes; ninos no segregan todavía; ninos segregan; ninos vienen de buen sector]

AMBIENTE (ES- AMB) [Buenos y malos estudiantes en cualquier tipo de escuela]

CONFIANZA (ES-CON)

CONFIANZA COLEGIO (ES-CON-CO)

CONFIANZA PROFESORES (ES-CON-PRO)

COMUNICACIÓN (ES-COM)

ESTILO/FORMA (ES-COM-FOR) [Como se dicen las cosas; apoderados no hablan; profesor ayuda a conversar; puertas abiertas; puertas cerradas; transparencia]

PROPOSITO (ES-COM-PRO) [Se critica para mejorar; criticar; informar a los apoderados; pedir información a los apoderados, pedir soluciones; resolver problemas]

ESCUCHA (ES-COM-ESC) [Escuchar a los apoderados; venir a escuchar]

RELACIONES (ES-REL)

RELACIONES PROFESORES-ESTUDIANTES (ES-REL-PE)

RELACIONES ESTUDIANTES-ESTUDIANTES (ES-REL-EE)

RELACIONES ESCUELAS – FAMILIAS (ES-REL-ESFAM) [Equipo escuela-familia]

INTEGRACION (ES-INT)

INTEGRACION ESTUDIANTES (ES-INT-EE)

INTEGRACION APODERADOS (ES-INT-APO)[Deberíamos estar integrados como apoderados]

CALIDAD (ES-CAL)

CALIDAD – SE APRENDE (ES-CAL-AP) [escuela es buena porque aprende]

CALIDAD – TODOS APRENDEN (ES-CAL-TOAP)

CALIDAD – DAN TAREAS (ES-CAL-TA)

CALIDAD – USAN TODO EL CUADERNO (ES-CAL-CU)

CALIDAD – VOCABULARIO ESTUDIANTES (ES-CA-VOC) [escuela es buena por el vocabulario]

CALIDAD – SON EXIGENTES (ES-CAL-EX) [Nivel de exigencia]

CALIDAD – NOTAS (ES-CAL-NOTAS) [Que las notas reflejen cuanto se sabe; reclamos por notas; notas como indicador de calidad]

CALIDAD – CURSOS PEQUEÑOS (ES-CAL-TAM) [Que los cursos no sigan aumentando; menos estudiantes mejor calidad]

CALIDAD – DISCIPLINA (ES-CAL-DIS) [Hay disciplina en la sala; mala discipline; mala disciplina, muchos estudiantes]

DEBILIDADES (ES-DEB)

SEGURIDAD (ES-DEB-SEG) [Mejor atención en los accidentes]

GESTIÓN RECURSOS (ES-DEB-REC) [salida de profesores afecta a estudiantes; administración recursos, infraestructura]

DIVERSIDAD/SEGREGACION (ES-DIV)

AGRUPAR ESTUDIANTES (ES-DIV-AGR) [diversidad- agrupar estudiantes; filtrar amistades, tolerar amigos diversos]

IMPACTO DIVERSIDAD (ES-DIV-IMP) [diversidad – impacto en niños; niños sufren si están descendidos]

REPUTACION/IMAGEN DE LA ESCUELA EN LA COMUNIDAD (ES-REP) [imagen del colegio en la comunidad; estigma de la población; mala reputación;

Escuela burbuja; Escuela cuica; escuela (no) preocupada por estudiante; escuela (no) preocupada por familias]

5. ELECCION ESCUELA (EE)

SIGNIFICADO (EE-SIG) [significado de escoger]

ESCUELAS CONSIDERADAS (EE-ESC-CON) [escuelas consideradas]

DINERO (EE-DIN) [dinero y elección de escuela]

VALOR DEL PAGO (EE-PAG) [valor del pago]

RAZONES Y CRITERIOS (EE-RAZ) [razon eleccion - cercania física; razon eleccion – cupo; razon eleccion - trabajar en la escuela; razones para cambiarse de colegio; sigo en la escuela por costumbre; sigo en la escuela por no tener otra opción; sentirse bien; sentirse valorada; cercania emocional; colegio familiar; buen trato; buena reputación; información y control al trabajar en escuela; infraestructura --- colegio grande; infraestructura - computacion]

PROCESO DE ELECCION (EE-PRO) [PEE proceso de elección y admisión escuela; proceso para elegir escuela]

ESTRATEGIAS DE ELECCION (EE- EST) [evaluación costo beneficio; diferentes hijos, diferentes colegios; hijos eligen la escuela]

INFORMACIÓN (EE-INF) [tipo de información buscada; estrategias para conseguir información; familiares lo recomiendan; amistades recomiendan]

GENERO Y ELECCION (EE- GEN) [Genero y elección; genero y elección mi marido es quien paga]

6. FAMILIAS (FAM) ---- Vincular con tipología de apoderados

VIOLENTOS (FAM-VIO) [otras familias – apoderados violentos con escuela]

ARRIBISTAS (FAM-ARR) [of- arribistas]

AUSENTES (FAM-AUS) [of – familias ausentes]

PRESENTES (FAM-PRE) [of – familias presentes]

PUDIENDES (FAM-PUD) [of – familias pudientes]

ESFUERZO (FAM- ESF) [of – gente de esfuerzo]

CLASE SOCIAL (FAM-CLASE) [Pobre o vulgar; pobre y preocupada; of – hay de todo]

SEGREGACION (FAM-SEG) [of – segregacion; marcar diferencias de clase social]

CONOCEN A SUS HIJOS (FAM-CON) [padres conocen a sus hijos]

VALORES (FAM-VAL) [of - valores]

PARTICIPACION (FAM-PAR) [participar es signo de interés en los hijos; mayor participación]

ROL DE LAS FAMILIAS (FAM-ROL) [Rol familias; rol del papa]

APOYO ACTIVIDADES (FAM-ROL-APO) [Apoyo en actividades escolares, apoyo en actividades extraescolares; género y apoyo escolar; mamas alumnas]

DEJAR EL TRABAJO (FAM-ROL-TRA) [Dejar de trabajar; trabajo versus crianza; esfuerzos personales para apoyar educación de los hijos]

IMPACTO FAMILIAS EN EDUCACIÓN (FAM-ROL- IMP) [impacto de la familia en educación]

COMPROMISO (FAM-COM) [beca a cambio de compromiso; disponibilidad; falta compromiso padres; me gusta participar]

7. REFORMA (REF)

COPAGO (REF-COP)

COLEGIOS PEQUENOS (REF- COL)

PARTICIPACION (REF-PAR) [Debieron preguntarnos a los padres]

NO PODER PAGAR (REF-NOPAGO) [No podremos seguir pagando]

NO OPCION (REF - OPC) [Nos dejan sin opcion]

RECURSOS Y CALIDAD (REF-RECAL) [Pocos recursos peor calidad]

SELECCIÓN ESTUDIANTES (REF-SELEST) [Selección de estudiantes; va a llegar de todo]

TEMORES (REF-TEM) [Va a llegar de todo; van a cerrar colegios; visión negativa va a quedar la escoba]

8. SELECCIÓN DE ESTUDIANTES (SELEST) [pruebas de selección; selección encubierta]

AMBIVALENCIAS (SELEST-AMB) [es buena y mala]

NEGATIVA (SELEST-NEG) [Selección es negativa; selección es denigrante]

POSITIVA (SELEST-POS) [selección es preferible; nivela hacia arriba]

9. SEGURIDAD (SEG)

COLEGIO (SEG-COL) [Accidentes en los patios; control; profesor; agresiones sexuales; no hay abusos]

CALLE (SEG-CALL) [no estar en la calle]

10. INDIVIDUALISMO – MERITOCRACIA [Trayectoria educativa no es predictiva; no pagar los platos rotos; aprendizaje depende de la persona no del colegio; individuo o escuela?]

Appendix D: Invitation Letter

D.1 Invitation Letter English version

Minneapolis, July 2014
Ms. Mrs. [Principal's name]

My name is Romina Madrid Miranda, I am educational psychology and I am completing my doctorate work in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Minnesota, USA. Her goal is to focus her research study in the commune of Graneros.

The purpose of this letter is to formally invite to the school to participate in a research study on the processes of students' attraction and retention and the process of school choice, both aspects that have gained momentum because the current educational reform in primary and secondary education. One of the goals of this study is to contribute to strength the school-family relationship, especially in primary education.

The research study is supervised by two scholars: José Weinstein Cayuela, chair of the education doctoral program of the Alberto Hurtado and Diego Portales Universities, who until 2012 was manager of innovation in education in Fundacion Chile [Chile Foundation], and Karen Seashore Louis, who investigates the topic of school choice in the U.S

This qualitative research is focused on five schools in the commune of Graneros, two of them municipals and three private subsidized schools; includes the participation of principals, management team, teachers, and mothers; and it will conducted during the second semester of the 2014 year.

Specifically, the methodology contemplates the participation of the principal and four mothers from first grades level in an individual interview, and the participation of teachers of first grades levels and the management team in a focus group separately. In addition, with the principal's agreement, it is expected to conduct some observations and a document analysis (related to the process of recruitment of students). These activities would be developed during September to November of the current year.

The participation of the school is voluntary. The principal, teachers, and family members can abstain from participate or leave the study at any time if they consider necessary. All the information collected is confidential and there will not identify names but pseudonyms to protect participants' privacy.

As retribution to the school, there will be a meeting with the principal and school personnel after finalizing the process of collection of data with the purpose of presenting the central themes that emerged during the process, especially those related with how

school relates with families and how families perceive the school and faced the process of school choice. Any other activity (i.e. workshop) will be agreed with the principal in a meeting in September.

If you agree that the management team, teachers, and family members might be interested in participating, please confirm with me in writing at rominamadrid@gmail.com. I am happy to clarify any questions or concerns that you might have about the research study and look forward to your reply.

I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to this invitation.

Sincerely,

Romina Madrid Miranda

D.2 Invitation Letter Spanish version

Minneapolis, Julio 2014
Sr/a. [nombre director/a]
Directora
Presente

Mi nombre es Romina Madrid Miranda, soy psicóloga educativa y me encuentro realizando un doctorado en Liderazgo y Política Educativa en la Universidad de Minnesota, Estados Unidos. Pretendo desarrollar mi trabajo de campo en la comuna de Graneros.

El motivo de esta carta es extender una invitación formal al establecimiento que usted lidera para participar en un estudio que tiene por objetivo comprender mejor los procesos de atracción y retención de estudiantes de parte de las escuelas, y el proceso de elección de escuela de parte de las familias, aspectos que han cobrado relevancia dada la actual reforma educacional en educación básica y media impulsada por el actual gobierno. Uno de los fines centrales del estudio es contribuir a mejorar/fortalecer la relación escuela-familia, especialmente en el primer ciclo básico.

Este estudio es supervisado por dos académicos: José Weinstein Cayuela, Director del Programa de Doctorado de la Universidad Alberto Hurtado y Diego Portales, quien hasta el 2012 se desempeñó como gerente de innovación de educación de Fundación Chile, y Karen Seashore Louis, quien investiga el tema de elección de escuela en los Estados Unidos.

Esta investigación cualitativa se focaliza en cinco establecimientos de la comuna de Graneros, dos de ellos municipales y tres particulares subvencionados; incluye la

participación de directivos, profesores, y padres y apoderados; y se desarrollará durante el segundo semestre del año 2014.

En concreto, la metodología contempla la participación de la directora y dos o tres apoderadas de primer ciclo básico en una entrevista individual y la participación de profesores del primer ciclo básico (incluido kínder) y del equipo directivo en un focus group. Además, de contar con el permiso de la directora, se espera poder desarrollar algunas observaciones y análisis de documentos asociados con el proceso de reclutamiento y atracción de estudiantes. Estas actividades se realizarían durante los meses de Septiembre a Noviembre del presente año.

La participación del establecimiento es voluntaria. La directora, los profesores y padres y apoderados pueden abstenerse de participar o detener su participación en cualquier momento si lo consideran necesario. Además toda la información recopilada es confidencial y no se identificaran nombres sino seudónimos para proteger la privacidad de los participantes.

A modo de retribución se compromete la realización de una reunión con la directora y equipo directivo después de finalizar el proceso de recolección de datos con el objetivo de presentar los temas centrales que emergieron durante el proceso, principalmente aquellos relacionados con cómo la escuela se vincula con las familias y cómo éstas perciben a la escuela y enfrentan el proceso de elección. Cualquier otra actividad de seguimiento en la que la directora y el equipo directivo estén interesados (por ejemplo, un taller) será acordada con la directora en una reunión presencial en Septiembre.

Si usted está de acuerdo en que el equipo directivo, los docentes, y los padres pueden estar interesados en participar en este estudio, y le interesa reunirse conmigo para saber más acerca del mismo y de la posibilidad de participar en él, por favor confirme su respuesta con un email a esta dirección madr0040@umn.edu

Desde ya agradezco su tiempo e interés para responder a esta invitación. Como exalumna de la comuna de Graneros creo relevante focalizar mi aporte como investigadora al lugar en donde me formé como estudiante.

Esperando atentamente su respuesta,

Romina Madrid Miranda

Appendix E: Presentation and Discussion of Preliminary Results with Schools

1. Presentation of the study [Presentación del estudio]
2. Activities conducted at the school [Actividades realizadas]
3. Main themes [Principales temas]
4. Strengthening the link with families [Fortaleciendo el vínculo con las familias]
5. Discussion about findings and potential lines of action [Discusión y potenciales líneas de acción]

Appendix F: Description of Participants

F.1 Schools Participants

N	Gender	Age	Years at the school	Years participating in the management team	Role
1	Male	38	4	1	Management Team
2	Female	43	12	10	Management Team
3	Female	45	12	12	Principal
4	Female	43	1	-	Teacher
5	Female	47	16	-	Teacher
6	Female	43	5	-	Teacher
7	Female	38	3	-	Teacher
8	Female	62	2	-	Teacher
9	Female	68	35	-	Teacher
10	Female	31	3	-	Teacher
11	Female	32	2	-	Teacher
12	Female	59	34	-	Teacher

13	Female	26	2	-	Teacher
14	Female	50	8	-	Teacher
15	Female	59	8	-	Teacher
16	Male	59	8	-	Teacher
17	Female	65	35	10	Management Team
18	Female	59	34	8	Management Team
19	Female	64	30	10	Management Team
20	Female	58	15	10	Principal
21	Female	50	28	8	Management Team
22	Female	52	30	10	Management Team
23	Female	33	8	-	Teacher
24	Male	47	8	-	Teacher
25	Female	28	10	-	Teacher
26	Female	30	8	-	Teacher
27	Female	29	10	-	Teacher
28	Female	32	10	-	Principal

29	Female	61	5	-	Teacher
30	Female	24	10	-	Teacher
31	Female	29	10	-	Teacher
32	Female	45	4	-	Teacher
33	Female	37	3	-	Teacher
34	Female	31	3	-	Teacher
35	Female	42	13	-	Teacher
36	Female	34	6	-	Teacher
37	Female	34	6	-	Teacher
38	Female	72	12	4	Principal
39	Female	58	1	1	Management Team
40	Male	70	1	1	Management Team

F.2 Families Participants

N	Gender	Age	Activity	Occupation	Years at the school	Children at the school
1	Female	35	Individual Interview	Housemaid	12	2
2	Female	38	Individual Interview	Housemaid Housemaid/part-time worker	1	1
3	Female	28	Individual Interview	Housemaid	2	1
4	Female	29	Individual Interview	Housemaid/part-time worker	1	1
5	Female	47	Individual Interview	Worker in retail	8	2
6	Female	44	Individual Interview	Housemaid	5	3
7	Female	46	Focus group	Worker in retail	12	1
8	Female	40	Focus group	Teacher	6	2
9	Female	36	Focus group	Worker in retail	2	1
10	Female	38	Focus group	Housemaid	2	1

11	Female	39	Focus group	Housemaid	3	2
12	Male (couple)	31	Individual Interview	Work in a real state agency	4	2
13	Female (couple)	29	Individual Interview	Work in a real state agency	4	2
14	Female	36	Individual Interview	Housemaid	8	1
15	Female	55	Individual Interview	Agricultural worker	4	1
16	Female	38	Individual Interview	Agricultural worker	2	1
17	Female	31	Individual Interview	Agricultural worker	10	1
18	Female	24	Individual Interview	Housemaid	4	1
19	Female	30	Individual Interview	Housemaid	1	1
20	Female	38	Focus Group	Housemaid	4	2
21	Female	33	Focus Group	Housemaid	3	3

22	Female	46	Focus Group	Housemaid	10	2
23	Female	39	Focus Group	Housemaid	13	1
24	Female	30	Focus Group	Housemaid	1	1
25	Female	29	Individual Interview	Teacher	3	1
26	Female	35	Individual Interview	Administrative staff at the school	8	1
27	Female	37	Individual Interview	Administrative staff at the school	8	1
28	Female	34	Individual Interview	Housemaid	4	2
29	Female	30	Individual Interview	Teacher	5	1
30	Female	38	Individual Interview	Housemaid/part-time worker	3	1
31	Female	27	Individual Interview	Housemaid/part-time worker	2	1
32	Female	38	Individual Interview	Housemaid	3	1
33	Female	37	Individual Interview	Housemaid	2	2
34	Female	41	Individual Interview	Housemaid	5	1
35	Female	42	Individual Interview	Housemaid/part-time worker	3	2
36	Female	38	Individual Interview	Housemaid/part-time worker	4	2

37	Female	44	Individual Interview	Housemaid/part-time worker	2	1
38	Female	27	Individual Interview	Agricultural worker	3	1
39	Female	32	Individual Interview	Agricultural worker	1	3
40	Female	25	Individual Interview	Agricultural worker	5	1
41	Female	38	Focus group	Housemaid	5	2
42	Female	46	Focus group	Housemaid	1	1
43	Female	31	Focus group	Housemaid	3	2
44	Female	30	Focus group	Housemaid	4	2
45	Female	35	Focus group	Housemaid	1	1