

THE (DE)POLITICISATION OF THE
EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

An ethnographic/genealogical study about
school privatisation in a Chilean city

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

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The thesis, not including bibliography and appendixes, is 76,623 words.

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the agenda of de-neoliberalising education by developing a critique of the socio-cultural changes that the neoliberal turn has generated in Chilean society in relation to education. Framing the locus of observation at the level of a city, the research aim is to explore how school privatisation has transformed the modes in which people take part in every day and re-situated the production of the educational realm, through an analysis of how new practices and discourses gradually became the new truth at a local level. My general question regarding the effects of privatisation is who, in the city context, are allowed to problematise education, and where and how do these problematisations take place.

The thesis draws upon an ethnographic/genealogical study focused on the city of Rancagua, which included twelve months of fieldwork between 2013 and 2014. The study has a double character, that is both to understand the local assemblage of discourses, practices and subjects that were shaping the school problem at this time, and to trace the historical processes that rendered this present possible, as well as intelligible.

While each of the chapters concerned with ‘findings’ focus on specific subjects and urban dynamics affected by school privatisation, together they describe how education gradually ceased to be a public matter –a concern for the polis– becoming instead a de-politicised issue approached privately either as consumer or entrepreneur. On the other hand, the chapters also show that while the political dislocation of the educational question is very evident, both old and new social actors are beginning now to reclaim the right to problematise and make decisions about the daily production of education, as a social field that affects them both individually and collectively.

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Impact Statement

By exploring how school privatisation transformed the mode in which people think, speak of, and experience education in the concrete space of the Chilean city of Rancagua, this thesis provides a critical analysis of the processes and effects of school privatisation not “from above” nor “from within schools” but “from a situated space”. The findings presented can benefit the academic community in three different aspects. First, they provide a new and original *focus* and *approach* to the field of study of school privatisation. The *focus* relates to framing the locus of observation and analysis at the city level and the *approach* uses an ethnographic/genealogical method to study school privatisation at a city level. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to address the problem of school privatisation at a city level based on an ethnographic/genealogical approach. Second, in deciding to conduct my fieldwork in a peripheral site, the specific city, the research moves beyond the hegemony of the sociology of the metropole, giving voice and theoretical value to urban and educational assemblages that do not necessarily fit on the categories that emerge from Europe, North America, or any ‘global city’ –like Santiago for the case of Chile. Finally, and most importantly for me, my thesis attempts to illustrate the pervasiveness of school privatisation in the everyday experiences of people’s urban life and the materiality of the city as a particular social space of interaction where discourses and practices framed under the rationale of school privatisation fabricate a specific mode of thinking, feeling and acting. By exposing the concrete mechanism of how privatisation shapes what Brenner and Theodore (2002) call the *actually existing neoliberalism*, I hope that my thesis contributes to the agenda of de-neoliberalising education. This agenda moves beyond academia, and an essential impact of my thesis is contributing to understanding the relevance of considering the city milieu as a space where resistance to privatisation and neoliberalism can be enacted, for example, through opening spaces to think differently of education not just a private matter but as a vital social relation that shapes our everyday life in cities and as citizens.

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I

Introduction

The Chilean Spring – the research starting point

One day - says Roberto, a 25 year old, talking about 2006 - when I was in the final year of secondary school, we were in the classroom listening to a crowd smashing wood and glass on the street. We had heard that some secondary schools had been occupied by their students in Santiago, and there was the typical TV news reporting of protests with numbers of people arrested by the police but, at that time, you didn't use to pay attention to it nor to make any further analysis of it. There were some rumours about these mates in Santiago and at the most we commented with admiration 'Hey, they are our same age', 'It would be so cool to occupy the school like that', but it was just like a dream, something far away from us.

I remember that shortly before that day, there were things going on at the school like pamphlets calling on the students to strike, which appeared in all the classrooms. But then teachers started to investigate us as *ratis*¹, and the three mates who did this were discovered and expelled. The thing is that about a week later, this mass of students appeared outside the school. They were coming from the Liceo Óscar Castro [a secondary school a couple of blocks towards the city centre]; it was a horde of mad students that fled first from the Liceo Industrial² B-5 and begun to go to the other secondary schools calling their students to get out, moving like a caterpillar through the city. I think my school [Liceo Comercial] was the last one to be liberated. We were really excited! We were really excited, stuck to the windows, shouting like insane that we had to take the building and fight the police. Finally, we all got out running with our backpacks, running without knowing why. We broke through the school front door and went out, all the students together, even the swots, everyone, and everyone was happy and feeling a sense of power, of having defied the teachers, of taking part of the turmoil.

I don't remember having experienced such a massive march before this one in Rancagua. The city centre collapsed, and the streets were paralysed. Imagine that each secondary school has around three thousand students and we were

¹ 'Rati' is an expression popularised during the dictatorship and is a play of words of 'tira', the nickname given in Chile to the agents of the state investigation police.

² Liceo Industrial and Liceo Comercial (Industrial Secondary School and Commercial Secondary School, respectively) are two modalities of vocational/Sixth form education in Chile.

around ten schools [the ten secondary schools that once had been state schools]. You stopped and students passed, and passed, and, passed, and on top of it, everyone was dressed the same, wearing grey pants and blue vests. A sea of people.

In the next few days, things began to get more organised, we started painting placards and we were creating marching songs. We would probably laugh if we read them today. The anthems were basic like ‘We march for education’. When you were asked, you just said that we were marching because everyone did, and then maybe you made up that it was because of free transport for students, or because of students’ rights, but to be honest, nobody had a sophisticated questioning of education. The word ‘profit’ did not exist, neither did exploitation or segregation, nothing, that was still a distant language then.

The occupation of our school started the night after the march, and lasted at least three weeks. I stayed at home at the beginning, but a classmate came on the third day and asked me whether I didn’t want to support the occupation. I talked to my mother, arguing about the need for deep changes in the country, with a speech that started by being politically committed but it was very simple and vague. We even didn’t know what the Constitution was. Anyway, my mum accepted and gave me a backpack full of food and other stuff so I could stay overnight at the school.

We had no leaders in the occupation but we had speakers. We had assemblies and it was there where we learned and started saying that the law, specifically the Constitutional Act of education, had to be modified. We didn’t understand a word, to be honest, but then we learned from the words of a song that Pinochet³ was the same than Bachelet⁴, and because of that we started to understand a bit more about the role of the dictatorship in the privatisation of the educational system. I took part in the ‘operative group’, since the assemblies bored me, but I still read the texts that circulated and got something from them. Some of our teachers came to visit us in the occupation and talked to us openly about Pinochet’s regime, so we heard for the first time about the movements of resistance during those years. Without understanding much, we loved scratching everywhere the clenched fist. Also, a group of academics came from Santiago to give us a talk. I remember for us it was like ‘A talk? What the hell is a talk?’ And when they came, more than the content, I remember the impression it gave me seeing people presenting like that, standing in such a way, as cracks. (Interview, September 5th 2014)

*

³ Augusto Pinochet, the military dictator who led the 1973 Chilean coup d’état, and the military dictatorship between 1973 and 1990.

⁴ Michelle Bachelet, Socialist Party president of Chile between 2006 – 2010, and 2014 – 2018.

The privatisation of education has in Chile one of its most extreme manifestations (Bellei, 2015; Verger, Zancajo, et al., 2016). The structural reforms implemented during the Pinochet's dictatorship that started in 1973, and that were later consolidated by a sequence of democratic governments since 1990, established a system with a steadily increasing proportion of private sector providers, with a hyper-controlled teacher profession under poor working conditions, with families paying for and choosing their schools, and a state funding, guiding and assessing learning outcomes. Over the years, the merchandised system was taken for granted, but suddenly it was no more, at least for some. As from 2006, an increasing wave of social demonstrations initiated by secondary students placed the neoliberal model at the centre of the social and political debate, forcefully questioning the morality of profit, the political origins of the pro-market system and its role in producing inequalities, both in the field of education and in relation to other social goods (Bellei et al., 2014; Cornejo et al., 2012; Garretón et al., 2011; Hernandez, 2019). One of the features of the initial protests against the educational system was that they articulated educational actors geographically/locally wherein cities began to play a vital role in the politics of education. This 'placing' of the debate demonstrated the relevance of grassroot analyses of problems and place-based political organisation. Inspired to a large extent by the (still ongoing) political process of critique and transformation that started in 2006, the general interest of this thesis is to understand the socio-cultural changes that the privatisation of education brought about for the Chilean population, particularly in regards to urban social relations.

Roberto's testimony epitomises how in 2006 the student movement was capable of actively removing what education meant until that moment. Things began unexpectedly in the southern city of Lota (Region of Biobío) when desperate students occupying their school in protest started to upload videos to the internet to denounce their poor school conditions, which was flooded because of rain leaking through the roof and broken windows (Abarca et al., 2009). During the next few days, students from Santiago, Chile's capital city, rallied on the streets in solidarity, adding a list of other problems related to their own schools. The protests then spread to almost all

cities in the country, and public spaces became the sites of colourful dances, performances, and ringing with shouts of protest (e.g. “Porque el pueblo está cansado/De las leyes del mercado”) [Because people are tired/Of the market rules]”. In response, the military police attacked the demonstrators, who were stigmatised by the press as dangerous rioters, but this did not stop the movement. After a couple of months, student protesters had taken over the control of more than 400 schools and the initial demands escalated towards a focus on the derogation of the Constitutional Act of Education (‘LOCE’, for its acronym in Spanish) imposed in the dictatorship period. This Act was seen as the basis of the stark inequalities between schools, and the cutting of costs related to schooling and school facilities that were a consequence of the system of for-profit education (Bellei et al., 2014).

Roberto’s interview, which I conducted in 2014, illustrates why the 2006’s mobilisations were perceived by the population as a ‘Chilean spring’ (Del Campo, 2012) or then the 2011 as the most relevant social mobilisation since the dictatorship (Bellei et al., 2014); that is, a sort of ‘awakening’ after a long period of hibernation. Roberto explains that before his experience of the protests, he and his classmates knew little about the education system and its problems. They joined the protests because of vague feelings of discontent and a wish to be part of collective actions. After months of assemblies and demonstrations, however, a new kind of understanding of their reality emerged. This focused on ideas such as ‘profit’, ‘social segregation’, ‘the privatisation of the educational system’ and ‘Pinochet’s constitution’, which became part of their vocabulary. The students’ movement changed the possibilities of what could be thought, said and imagined in regards to education. Moreover, it was as if the students had suddenly recognised that the *king was naked* and that voicing this truth, convincingly sung and danced by more than one million of them on the streets, eventually enabled them to critically analyse the political, economic, and cultural transformations the dictatorship had brought about. In fact, the protests became a turning point that extended beyond education; a spark that further ignited an ongoing period of social upheaval related to a wide range of social and political issues (e.g. the privatisation of the health and the pension

systems, socio-environmental problems related to extractive industries, the student debt of undergraduates, amongst others). The last significant milestone in this process of recognition and protest was the social outburst of October 2019 (Salazar, 2019), which resulted in the calling of an election in 2020, and the setting up of a constitutive assembly mandated to write a new constitution that would dismantle the neoliberal order established by the dictatorship, both in the education field and the broader political and economic system.

Against this political backdrop, social research in Chile became increasingly interested in the analysis of the neoliberal model initiated by Pinochet's regime and the politics of privatising the education system. These are now seen as part of a global wave of socio-economic reform that found in Chile a place of experimentation (Assaél et al., 2011; Ball, 2017; Bellei, 2015). Until 2006, except for some descriptive studies (Aedo-Richmond, 2000; Almonacid, 2004; Magendzo et al., 1988; Ruiz Schneider, 2010), educational research centred on analysing ways to improve school effectiveness (e.g. Cox, 2003) and on the comparative analysis of school effectiveness and outcomes between the public and the private sector (Corvalán et al., 2009; Elacqua et al., 2006, among others; Elacqua & Fábrega, 2006). However, since 2006 there has been a new body of studies. On the one hand, some of these studies focus on the institutional and legal history of the process of neoliberal change, especially examining the political rationality underpinning the establishment of governmental policies (Bellei, 2015; Bellei & Vanni, 2015; V. Orellana & Miranda, 2018; Ruiz Encina, 2013; Ruiz Schneider, 2012). On the other hand, a group of scholars have focused on the effects that the policies and policy technologies of the neoliberal ensemble have had on the school system and the opportunities and experience of different social actors. For example, the role played by the new public management or accountability policies in shaping teacher subjectivities (Acuña, 2015; Fardella & Sisto, 2015; Sisto, 2012), in producing processes of consumer decision making among parents (Canales et al., 2016; Carrasco et al., 2015), and in fabricating a neoliberal school culture focused on performance and competition (Acuña et al., 2014, 2019; Assaél et al., 2014; Falabella, 2014, 2016, 2019).

Thus, it is possible to find two distinct and interconnected bodies of literature: one describing “from above” the History, with a big H, of the legal, institutional, and political changes implemented from 1973 to the present, and one describing “from within” the different effects that these changes have had in the everyday life of students, teachers, parents inside the school walls. While having different foci of analysis, these studies have in common a de-contextualised and de-territorialised construction of their objects of research. In the first group of studies, the analysis focuses on legal documents or on specific educational policies. In the second group, even though there is almost always a moment to present a brief “context” of a group of teachers, students or a specific school, the “context” is not the focus of analysis or does not play an important role on it. The school culture or the teacher subject becomes a generic space or actor without a history situated in concrete space and time.

This thesis is a contribution to understand both processes and effects of school privatisation not “from above” nor “from within” but “from a situated space”. I focus on exploring and understanding what has been changed from the perspective of the context of practice (Ball et al., 2012) of a concrete situated space, namely, a Chilean city. Indeed, a key and original element of my approach has been both decentring the attention from what happens inside schools and framing the locus of observation and analysis at the city level. More concretely, I conducted an *ethnographic/genealogical study* (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003) focused on the city of Rancagua, which included 12 months of fieldwork between 2013 and 2014. It is *ethnographic* since my main interest was to generate thick local descriptions based on local memories and also from my experience by ‘being there’. On the other hand, the ethnography had a *genealogical* impetus, since its aim was not only to understand the local assemblage of discourses, practices, and subjects that were shaping the school problem at this time, but also the historical processes that rendered this present possible making it intelligible.

Next, I will present and describe the main theoretical tools I have used in this study. I will then briefly explain the process of privatisation which has taken place in Chile

since 1973. Lastly, I will present the research questions of the thesis and provide an outline of the thesis chapters.

Private education as an urban problem – the grounding concepts

This section aims to explain the theoretical approaches to the field of education that inspired this thesis and its research questions, forms of data collection and analysis. The ethnographic (inductive) and post-structuralist⁵ stance eschews the use of predefined ‘big theories’ about neoliberalism or private education through which the data is presented. However, some theoretical tools and notions do underpin the whole research process, including its political motivations. I begin this section by describing the notion of education as an *assemblage* which underpins the focus on social experiences in relation to school privatisation. Then, I will explain the relevance of considering the notion of space in this thesis and why I consider the city as a vantage point from which to analyse school privatisation.

Private education as a contingent social formation

Following Popkewitz (2013) who stated that research and policy fabricate the objects and problems that they address and analyse, this thesis draws on a post-structuralist conceptualisation of education that examines it ‘as formed within a grid of historical practices that makes it possible to see and act on’ (p. 440). Education, therefore, is understood as a social formation that is in constant production; this includes my own work as a researcher inscribing the thesis in such frame. Along with this, school privatisation can be considered as part of this assemblage; a *policy dispositif* (Bailey, 2013) that expresses and performs a neoliberal governmentality and that, through different mechanisms, attempts to govern practices and subjectivities within the educational field. By taking this perspective, my specific interest is to explore school privatisation as a discursive formation (Ball, 1990; Foucault, 2002), addressing

⁵ As I develop in the next chapter, my work is framed within a post-structuralist perspective.

thereby the contingent power relations and material conditions that make some ‘truths’ of education possible.

Within this post-structuralist framework, Bailey’s (2013) definition of education is especially productive. It draws attention to the contingent and historical character of the social formation of education in response to particular problematisations. Education, he states:

is considered as always in a process of becoming, constituted in different ways at different times according to the differential multiplicity of forces, discourses and knowledges which act upon and constitute it as both an idea and a material and governable field of practices, culture and meaning. Thought about in this way, education has an imminent ontology, that is, it is always in the process of being made and remade (...). It has no inherent logic and meaning in and of itself; its logic, meaning and materiality are all a construction and product of reciprocal articulations historically constituted between discursive and non-discursive practices in response to particular problematisations. (p. 812)

What I find particularly useful from this definition is that it escapes from deterministic and reductive notions about the way in which education is organised and works, such as thinking of it mechanically as a predictable state apparatus in the service of the changing needs of capital accumulation (e.g. Althusser, 1995). Or the understanding of education as a set of institutions and ideas that change over time, as traditional historians do (Núñez, 2018; Serrano et al., 2012). Equally, Bailey’s (2013) conceptualisation avoids universalistic, taken for granted, and ahistorical ideas of education. Instead, by placing education as an assemblage of historical forces and discourses of different kinds, it opens the possibility to bring the attention to the actual forces playing an important political role in articulating what education is. For instance, the relevance that everyday practices and local knowledge acquire in order to imagine the emergence of new discourses and practices. In other words, this post-structuralist definition enables us to imagine transformative and relevant processes at a grounded and situated level. At the same time, the acknowledgement of different political rationalities and discourses that might disrupt and transgress conventional forms of governing the education field makes evident that the “meaning, practice and government” (Ibid, p. 812) of this field is always contested; this opens up unpredictable horizons for the future. Finally, the observation that there is a

continual variation in what counts as education and as being educated relates to the understanding that both truths and power relations are locally situated and historically articulated (Bailey, 2013). In other words, it suggests that to understand the development of education as a social formation, it is necessary to scrutinise its context of epistemic influence, not only to analyse the hegemonic rationalities which support it, but to identify and track back the active sediments of its everyday discursive and material production.

Following these ideas I address specifically the privatisation of education. I analyse privatisation as a force that works upon the educational field, a force that entails an epistemic dimension - a rationality, a discourse, a metanarrative - and an ensemble of policies that institutionalise these rationalities, and at the same time, a material and molecular dimension, driven by concrete, corporeal and contingently situated bodies and practices. I approach privatisation as a *policy dispositif*; this is, as Bailey (2013) puts it, 'a contingent formation of diverse discursive and extra discursive elements, and policy institutions, practices and micro-settings as constituted by and enmeshed within multiple relations of power' (p. 807).

In this respect, a fundamental intellectual inspiration for focusing my attention on the study of privatisation is the theoretical and empirical work by Stephen Ball (2007, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017; Ball & Youdell, 2007). Ball conceptualises privatisation as a process of concern that has to be seen in the light of a major and transnational process of neoliberalisation. Three points are involved in this way of problematising privatisation. First, it highlights privatisation as a tactical function within a wider strategy of governance - neoliberalism - which consists of reshaping the state, on one side, and commodifying public services as education, on the other. Second, it generalises privatisation as a response to the crisis of the Western Welfare States, and beyond this as a mode of adaptation of social organisation and the state to the new circumstances of global capital. Third, it describes privatisation as a neoliberal policy that supposes a specific discursive frame - the neoliberal discourse - which gives sense to the private in specific ways. That is, privatisation is not reduced just to a notion of property but is imbricated more generally within the market-form

and its constituents like competition, entrepreneurialism, profit, school choice, among others. Thus, the need to attend to historical particularities is highlighted, whereby privatisation is made intelligible as a trend that became a principle of social and economic policy on a significant scale globally in the 1980s.

From my perspective, Ball's (2007, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017; Ball & Youdell, 2007) empirical contributions on this topic consist, on the one hand, in the mapping and analysis of an extensive range of modes of privatisation that can be observed either in the private or public education sector at a national and transnational level. He analyses the rhetoric of its advocates, the paths by which more and new means of privatisation are introduced, and how new actors enter to the field of education policy. On the other hand, his findings describe the discursive articulations and effects that privatisation involves, examining the ethical and broad social impacts of this process. Drawing on Foucault's idea of discourse, Ball concludes from his empirical data that privatisation is part of the generalisation of a neo-liberal epistemology where the economic logic of the market becomes hegemonic in a whole variety of spaces and aspects (Ball, 2012). It is part, in other words, of a 'new order of things', an 'epistemic' shift, a 'profound change in the underlying set of rules governing the production of discourses and the conditions of knowledge' (Ball, 2007, p. 186). Privatisation is thus an expression and means of the triumph of 'economism', now defining the purpose and potential of education. That is, an expression of and means of the 'commodification of the life course' (Ibid, p. 186), commodifying parenting, learning relations, and knowledge. Ball (2007) explains that privatisation

involves changes in the meaning and experience of education, what it means to be a teacher and a learner, but is also part of a broader social dislocation. It changes who we are and our relation to what we do, entering into all aspects of our everyday practices and thinking – into the ways that we think about ourselves and our relations to others, even our most intimate social relations. It is changing the framework of possibilities within which we act. (p. 187).

Regarding what kind of phenomenon is at stake, he adds:

Privatisation is an ongoing but unstable process which encompasses changing relationships between the state, capital, the public sector and civil society and which connects the grand flows of the global economy to the reworking of the

textures of everyday life, for students and teachers (and researchers), and families. (p. 185)

This process opens the idea of contemporary privatisation as the deployment of varied, multi-layered, and interrelated reforms that are organised into two modalities: privatisations ‘of’ and privatisations ‘in’ education. Ball frequently opts for this internal distinction to clarify that privatisation entails, on one side, the opening up of the education services and policies to private sector participation and, on the other, the reforms aimed at making public education more business-like (Ball, 2007; Ball & Youdell, 2007). These broad ways of privatising education are also indicated respectively as ‘exogenous’ and ‘endogenous’, two widespread categories that are borrowed from Hatcher (2000, in Ball, 2012, p. 94).

Privatisation, therefore, relates to changes in terms of identity and to the notion of education as an experience and its social relations. Privatising policies “exercise power through a production of ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’” (Ball, 1993, p. 14) and, in this sense, they involve changes in how education is experienced by students, families, practitioners, and policy-makers. By focusing my thesis on a concrete and situated space, the city of Rancagua, I want to continue the line of thought and research on privatisation opened by Ball’s work by interrogating the effects these policies have on the configuration of the urban school milieu. I am interested in analysing what sort of urban educational space is configured when an education shift from ‘being seen as a public good to be seen as a private good that serves the interest of the educated individual, the employer and the economy’ (Ball & Youdell, 2007, p. 14) is enacted.

Education and space

In close relation to the understanding of education as a contingent and situated social formation, this research is based on the belief that an adequate understanding of actually existing neoliberal education must explore processes at different geographical scales that contextually articulate specific possibilities for the configuration of both education and the social space itself. Space, therefore, is also

understood as continual becoming, which corresponds with the notion of education as provisional (Gulson, 2011; Gulson & Fataar, 2011; Gulson & Symes, 2007).

The consideration of space as an analytical category for the social sciences is relatively new. However, thanks to the influence of scholars like Lefebvre (1974), Soja (1989), Harvey (1973, 2012), Santos (2005), and Massey (1984, 2005), during the last fifty years it has slowly become a consensus that space is socially produced as much as social formations are spatially produced. That is, both levels can mutually determine the other.

In the field of education research, the interest in education spaces and the role of education in the production of space has increased during the last decades, after a long period where the geographical dimension, if considered, was just a variable to compare in terms of indicators, for instance, schooling provision and its outputs (Hanson Thiem, 2008). In this context, different scholars have begun to raise concerns regarding the lack of spatial contextualisation in education research. Rury and Mirel (1997), for instance, pointed out the pressing need to address the spatial relationships that have shaped the existing conceptions of city schools. They criticise the body of research that takes the urban environment as ‘a given natural setting’ (p. 85), as it excludes from the analysis the significant economic and political processes that determine urban formations. From the point of view of policy sociology, as Ball (2006) pointed out, education policy studies typically lack a ‘sense of place’, ‘either in not locating policies in any framework that extends beyond the national level, or in not accounting for or conveying a sense of the locality in analyses of policy realisation’ (p. 18). Here a ‘sense of place’ is related to a conception of policy set within ‘contexts of practice’ (e.g. school and its practitioners), in these contexts practitioners are both objects of policies, and actively interpreters of policy (Ball, Maguire, et al., 2011; Braun et al., 2011). These interpretations draw in situated histories, experiences, values and purposes (Ball, 1994; Bowe et al., 1992).

More recently, the interest in questioning the relationship between education and space has gone further. According to Gulson (2011), it was after the 2000s that the ‘spatial turn in education’ began to have an impact on discussions of school

architecture, power and classrooms, teacher education, pedagogy, and rural and urban education, cyberspace, globalisation, and most lately, education policy. In relation to this, there has been an increased consideration of the transformation of specific urban spaces by neoliberal education policies, which has drawn attention to new forms of local governance, social segregation and social injustices of a variety of kinds (Bauer, 2015; Collins & Coleman, 2008; Gamsu, 2017; Gulson & Pedroni, 2011; Holloway et al., 2010; Lipman, 2004, 2011). This latter literature suggests that the education field is not only a 'territory' of neoliberal governmentality but also a straightforward means of governing the population through the production of space in particular ways (Gulson & Symes, 2007). In this research, I take this idea as a guiding perspective, using it to explore from different angles the ways in which school privatisation has re-articulated the way that the people of the city of Rancagua inhabit and signify their relationships and the place they inhabit.

The city as vantage point

The notions of education policy and its relation to the production of space mentioned above invite to the exploration of school privatisation in 'different material sites, and across and between different scales of policy practice' (Bailey, 2013, p. 807). Certainly school establishments (e.g. academies) are special sites of interest, since like prisons and psychiatric hospitals (Foucault, 1995) a multiplicity of discursive and non-discursive elements can be traced through the analysis of their subjects, practices, spaces, architecture, objects, and policy technologies in operation. Privatisation, on the other hand, can be analysed at a national scale, as Verger et al. (2016) do this in a comparative way focused on the differences between policy trajectories and intensities of privatisation. Or, alternatively, it can be addressed at a transnational level, giving attention to the micro-politics of its mobility through social networks made up of through conferences, capital flows, think tanks, politicians, and entrepreneurs (Ball, 2008; Ball et al., 2017; Ball & Junemann, 2012; Burch, 2009; e.g. Lingard & Sellar, 2013). With my research, however, I attempt to pursue and contribute to a line of inquiry that focuses on the role of education within the processes of the city (Butler & Hamnett, 2007; Freeman,

2010; Hanson Thiem, 2008), thus placing the city context as the locus of observation of school privatisation processes (Collins & Coleman, 2008; Gulson, 2011; Lipman, 2011).

The main reason for this decision is that cities, as particular social spaces, have acquired a crucial relevance in understanding ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ (Brenner & Theodore, 2002) and its effects on human lives, both in a general sense and in the specific field of education. As pointed out by Brenner and Theodore (2002) ‘Cities have become strategically crucial geographical arenas in which a variety of neoliberal initiatives - along with closely intertwined strategies of crisis displacement and crisis management - have been articulated’ (p. 349).

From the perspective of education researchers and geographers of education, the city is relevant to understand how neoliberal policies shape certain modes of thinking and acting, particularly by restructuring how state policies unfold on the city space (Hanson Thiem, 2008). Furthermore, Collins and Coleman (2008) argue that:

The social geographical importance of schools extends well beyond their physical boundaries. As (typically) long-term institutions, they are sites of common experience within neighbourhoods, which link different generations and provide a physical site for the maintenance of local social contacts. Thus, neighbourhood (e.g. in terms of socio-economic status), but also contribute to building place-based histories and characteristics, and social cohesion. This said, the connection between school and place is not always a positive one – and is, in any case, challenged by neoliberal notions of educational markets and school choice. (p. 291)

Beyond the field of education, Low (1996) sums up the reasons to focus on cities by arguing that in order to understand the shift towards advanced capitalism we need to theorise the city. From the perspective of urban anthropology, she argues that the intensity of the city processes provides a privileged perspective for observation, an argument that also Harvey (1973) and Lipman (2011) embrace. As Low (1996) puts it,

The city as a site of everyday practices provides valuable insights into linkages of macroprocesses with the texture and fabric of human existence. The city is not the only place where these linkages can be studied, but the intensification of these processes - as well as their human outcomes - occurs and can be understood in cities. Thus, the city is not a reification but the focus of cultural and sociopolitical manifestations of urban lives and everyday practices. (p. 384).

Along with this argument that the city is a strategically crucial geographical arena for neoliberal policies, Osborne and Rose (1999) and Brenner and Theodore (2002) focus on cities from the theoretical perspective of governmentality. For these authors, cities are central sites for the reproduction and continual adaption of neoliberalism. They observe that since the 1980s, neoliberal governmentality has been territorialised in an urban form, cities have become ‘strategic targets for an increasingly broad range of neoliberal policy experiments, institutional innovations, and politico-ideological projects’ (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 375). Furthermore, something that is particularly relevant for this research is the acknowledgment that the city can have a strategic role as a site of resistance against neoliberalism. This opens up another guiding question that will underlie my analysis of the city of Rancagua. For, from what I have experienced during my fieldwork, even if the dominance of a neoliberal logic was evident, it seemed also apparent that other forces may play a role in shaping urban practices and discourses. As Brenner and Theodore (2002) state,

even if cities have been subsumed within neoliberal agendas of various kinds in recent decades, they also remain vibrant sociopolitical arenas in which alternative practices of everyday life, a whole range of institutional experiments, and various traditions of political utopianism continue to flourish. (pp. ix-x).

In sum, in this research the city will be approached as a theoretical resource, a category of thought to study the effects of privatisation in the configuration of the current school system of Rancagua.

Privatising policies in Chile

After the systematic review of 164 primary studies on pro-privatisation educational reforms, Verger, et al. (2016) identify six trajectories towards educational privatisation. These are: i) educational privatisation as part of a structural reform of the state (trajectory represented mainly by the cases of Chile and the United Kingdom); ii) privatisation as an incremental reform (with the United States as the most emblematic case); iii) the ‘Nordic way’ towards educational privatisation (in social-democratic welfare states of northern Europe); iv) historic public-private

partnerships (identified in countries with a long tradition of Church educational provisions, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain); v) privatisation ‘by default’ in low-income countries; vi) privatisation through a disaster in countries affected by conflicts and/or catastrophes of various kinds. While diverse these trajectories appears moderated by the culture, politics and economy of each jurisdiction, stressing the importance of understanding privatisation from a comprehensive perspective.

It is important to emphasise, as Sahlberg’s (2016) notion of *Global Educational Reform Movement* (GERM) indicates and the study of Verger et al. (2016) illustrates, that educational reforms based on finance-driven reforms and privatisation-driven changes to the education system are a global phenomenon. The notion of GERM precisely intends to convey a combination of globalisation and neoliberalism. As Verger et al. (2018) argue, GERM is a concept ‘that indicates that most educational reforms being currently adopted worldwide respond to similar problems and priorities, and follow a very similar policy rationale. Accountability, standards, decentralisation and school autonomy, are the main policy principles of the GERM’ (p. 1). Sahlberg (2016) identifies the five most common features of GERM: i) increased competition between schools for enrolment, ii) standardisation of teaching and learning, iii) increased emphasis on reading literacy, mathematics and science, iv) borrowing of change models from the corporate world, and v) test-based accountability policies. Regarding the first feature, he argues that it is ‘perhaps the most visible common feature’, adding that ‘[a]lmost all education systems within OECD have enhanced alternative forms of schooling - private schools, independent schools, international schools, charter schools, and home schooling - to offer parents more choice regarding their children’s schooling’ (p. 133). For Sahlberg, the privatisation of schools and education has been mostly enacted under the logic of ‘competitiveness as a main driver of overall prosperity in our societies’ (p. 134). However, as I have begun to outline, in all the five features described by Sahlberg, traces of privatisation can be analysed.

This is the case of Chile, often described as the first country where an experiment with neoliberal state formation took place (Harvey, 2005) and as the first country to engage in a comprehensive market reform of education (Ball, 2017; Bellei, 2015). Historically, Chile has concentrated most of its student's intake in the public sector, with a minor participation of private schools in the country's school offer. Private schools have sustainedly represented a small fraction of the education provision, with a consistent 8% of the students attending this type of settings (Puga, 2011). These schools, frequently characterised as being at the service of the wealthy, are fully funded by parents, have scarce supervision from the State and are persistently kept outside of the public debate (Barrera et al., 2021).

Since 1981, as part of a larger decentralisation strategy pushed by the dictatorship, school administration was transferred from the Chilean Ministry of Education (Mineduc, for its acronym in Spanish) to more than 350 municipal education departments. According to the data before 1981, more than 80% of schools were public; by 1996, this proportion lowered to 56% (Mizala et al., 1998). Recent analyses give public schools only 37% of the total student's enrolment (Carrasco & Gunter, 2019).

In relation to the decentralisation process, diverse authors agree that the vast majority of local governments were not consulted and were not interest in taking this duty, as they did not have the preparation nor the capacities to properly conduct the administrative and instructional responsibilities (Elacqua et al., 2010; Puga, 2011). Public schools began to be labelled as the Municipal schools.

Alongside the introduction of the decentralisation strategy, market-oriented policies radically transformed the Chilean educational landscape. Stressing the importance of freedom, the slogan '*libertad de enseñanza*' [freedom of teaching] underpinned the introduction of a series of policies that allowed private individuals and companies to created and run schools. Frequently named *Particulares subvencionadas* [private subsidised], these schools received the same state funding as their municipals peers but enjoyed a series of administrative perks, including the possibility of profit; this allowed them to rapidly grow as a business model (Paredes

& Pinto, 2009). Private subsidised schools were allowed to select students based on unregulated criteria, and to pay higher or lower teachers' salaries than the public sector (Puga, 2011). The free selection of students and teachers gradually but consistently promotes socioeconomic segregation, leading to the concentration of poor students in municipal schools (Valenzuela et al., 2016).

A pivotal moment occurred in 1993, as private subsidised schools gained the attribution to access extra financial resources from parents with the introduction of a 'co-payment system that allowed (and encouraged) private schools and secondary public schools to charge a tuition fee without losing access to the state subsidy' (Cabalin & Bellei, 2013, p. 111). This incentive reshaped the educational landscape, accelerating the expansion of the subsidised private sector across Chile. As Valenzuela et al. (2016) noticed, in this period subsidised schools 'increased from 232 in 1993 to 1963 in 2006' (p. 221). However, this expansion was not homogenous as the economic success depended on enrolment, concentrating private schools frequently in high-density territories, while giving towns and rural areas little attention (Elacqua, 2012). An analysis of the enrolment in Chile showed that between 2000 and 2006, public schools reduced their intake of students by a 15%, while the private subsidised sector grew by a 38% (Paredes & Pinto, 2009).

A common argument posed in favour of privatisation lies in the quality of instruction; that is, that an intensified competition among schools - stimulated by the exercise of school choice - will naturally lead to an increased educational quality. However, multiples sources have concluded that the private school advantage in terms of academic achievement is at best minimum when controlling by socioeconomic characteristics of students and their families (Almonacid, 2004; Mizala & Romaguera, 1998). Furthermore, some authors have argued that this competitive environment has gradually shifted the attention of teachers, school leaders and local authorities from instruction towards marketing (Carrasco & Gunter, 2019; Montecinos et al., 2015), a problem that affects the learning opportunities of students across all systems (Almonacid, 2004).

Bellei and Vanni (2015) provide a useful periodisation to describe this Chilean process of experimentation in the educational field and where it is possible to appraise the five features common to GERM (Sahlberg, 2016) described at the beginning of this section. Bellei and Vanni organise the structural reforms conducted by the state in three main periods, as can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Main educational policies from 1980 to 2015

	School Market (1981 - 1990)	Market and the State: the third way in education (1990 - 2005)	Evaluative State: Standards base reform (2006 - 2015)
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralisation (municipalisation of public schools) • Demand subsidy (universal voucher) to public and private schools • Encouraged competition between schools and school choice • Deregulation of the teaching profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensatory programmes for school improvement • Statute for teachers • System of co-payment in private subsidy schools • Curricular reform • Full day school • Monetary incentives for school performance and teachers' individual performance • Teacher evaluation system • Publication of standardised test results (SIMCE) and rankings • Intensification of SIMCE test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferential School Subsidy • New General Law of Education • Educational Quality Agency • Superintendency of Education • Incentives and sanctions related to academic achievements in standardised testing.

Source: Adapted from Bellei & Vanni (2015, p. 195)

As the table shows, the first period began in the 1980s with very concrete policies that enabled, as Bellei and Vanni (2015) argue, ‘the conditions for schools and educational actors to behave according to market dynamics’ (p. 196), which was part of a broad neoliberal reform. From 1990 to 2005, the second period involved a state/market type of educational ‘hybrid model of regulation, which simultaneously operated with two policy approaches in continual tension: market competition and compensatory State action’ (p. 196). Finally, the third period begins with the student movements of 2006, which ‘triggered a new period of institutional change in Chilean education’ (p. 196). The institutional changes which resulted involved the state’s attempt to ‘guide the market with goals, regulations, assessments and audits. The State would produce quality assurance by establishing a greater degree of school

accountability' (p. 196). However, as Bellei and Vanni (2015) point out 'the market dynamics continue to have a critical role' (p. 196).

According to Bellei (2015), the radical privatisation process of the Chilean school system has been produced by a set of market-oriented policies. He argues that 'within the international context, the most outstanding feature of Chilean education is its quick and extended process of privatisation' (p. 13). He adds that 'policy makers have passionately discussed curriculum, teachers' training, school texts, but above everything, students' and teachers' evaluations. However, in terms of discussions about privatisation, there is almost nothing' (p. 13). Bellei's work, as I argue, is a description "from above" of the changes in educational policies, identifying those policies that have led to expanding privatisation. He further reviews multiple findings regarding learning outcomes and segregation, showing how negative privatisation has been in terms of social justice. Ultimately, he understands privatisation as the transfer of activities, goods, and responsibilities from public or governmental institutions to privates, considering three possible dimensions – functions, schools, and responsibilities (Bellei, 2015).

Another illustration of a description 'from above' of key aspects of education systems can be found in what Núñez (2007) has conceptualised as the unfinished process of professionalization of Chilean teachers. Núñez (2007) argues that because of the strong presence of the state between 1940 and 1970 Chilean teachers developed a sense of public service, with the downside of a bureaucratic performance, a keenness to following norms and to uniformity, all of which - as a result - led to a deterioration of the conditions in the working place. Chilean teachers did not achieve legal recognition of their profession in any of the relevant work regulations - neither in the Administrative Status (1960) nor in the Teacher career law (1978) - in spite of having a professional title as other civil servants. According to Núñez (2007), Chilean teachers have been considered as technicians, without having their professional status recognised. Even more, during the military dictatorship (1973-1990) - as Avalos (2006) has argued - the professional status of teachers was extremely debilitated; their salaries were not adjusted, and they had to navigate a highly vertical structure

within the schools, manifested in the figure of a Head and a Technical Pedagogical Unit (UTP for its acronym in Spanish) who were exclusively in charge of curriculum and evaluation. In addition, in the context of the previously discussed decentralisation of Chilean education in the 1980s, teachers were no longer state employees (for example, they could now be directly employed by a private subsidised school), and hence were under the same labour code as the rest of Chilean workers (Bellei & Vanni, 2015). In this way, teachers that once were acknowledged as public servants, were then subjected to measures that deregulated their profession in an increasingly privatised context. This type of analysis shows how the description of the historical changes of a educational actor such as the teacher can be made by following the political and governmental changes and their impacts on the identity of teachers. In this type of analysis, the main principles of a neoliberal educational system governed by the market can be seen as a legal structures that changes from above the way things work in education. With these type constraints, the next reforms of the educational system did not succeed in changing the structural foundations laid down by the dictatorship, and incentives associated to payments and development programmes for teachers were introduced profusely over the next decades (Acuña, 2015), perpetuating a marketized understanding of education.

Even though these types of analyses “from above” are crucial and necessary to organise and describe the field of privatisation of education and school in Chile, as I suggested initially, they are not sufficient to understand the situated transformation put in motion by privatising policies in the educational field. While a cultural shift fostered by privatisation can be enunciated building on this type of analysis, it cannot properly be described and analysed. The approach that I want to stress in this thesis is that privatisation of education has an impact on the meaning and the whole experience of education and on our relation to ourselves and to others, all of which, in general, are being transformed under an ethic of competition (Falabella, 2019).

Research questions and outline

As previously stated, this research is focused on the Chilean city of Rancagua. It attempts to elicit and describe the experiences of its inhabitants regarding the reconfiguration of the education field, particularly those changes related to the process of school privatisation. Placing my attention within the city's limits, I explore and analyse the local assemblage of discourses, practices, and subjects giving life and shape to urban school problem and the historical processes that render the present possible. A central goal within this frame is to describe how privatisation brought about changes regarding who was allowed to problematise or could be 'heard' when speaking about education in the city, and where and how these problematisations took place. Considering this, the research questions guiding this thesis can be phrased in the following way:

On an empirical level: What form of urban school milieu shaped the process of school privatisation in Rancagua? What processes of de-subjectivation and subjectivation gave and give life to this urban school milieu in Rancagua? How to understand the active and current effect of privatisation on the urban school space?

On a theoretical level: What is the urban milieu's relevance to the configuration of educational problems? And more specifically, how do private policies fabricate a specific form of urban school setting?

In order to address these questions, the thesis is organised in six chapters. Chapter 2 *Ethnography/Genealogy: researching school privatisation in the city* is methodological in its scope and presents the core elements of ethnographic/genealogical research. The next four chapters are analytical. Chapter 3 *Privatised schooling and the immanent force of the city-space* has a focus on presenting and analysing the urban school milieu of Rancagua. In this chapter, I deal with the first empirical question. Chapter 4, *Teachers' nostalgia in the urban space: the disappearance of a subjectivity* and Chapter 5, *Teachers that own schools: the emergence of a new subjectivity in the city* work are two faces of one coin: respectively they describe what I considered as the main processes of de-

subjectivation and subjectivation of teachers under a neoliberal regime. Within each chapter, I address the second empirical question. Chapter 6 *The depolitisation and repolitisation of the urban school problem* analyses a specific event that took place during my fieldwork: the attempt of the municipality of Rancagua to close one of its public schools and the way the school community reacted. With it, I tackle the third empirical question. Finally, I close the thesis with Chapter 7 *Conclusion*, where I articulate the main arguments of the thesis, exposing as well some of its limitations and potential lines of future research.

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Ethnography/Genealogy: researching school privatisation in the city

Introduction

As previously stated, this research is focused on the Chilean city of Rancagua and attempts to elicit and describe the experiences of its inhabitants regarding the reconfiguration of the education field, particularly those changes related to the process of school privatisation. Placing the attention within the city's limits, I explored and analysed the local assemblage of discourses, practices and subjects giving life and shape to the urban school problem and the historical processes that rendered this present possible. A central goal within this frame was to describe how privatisation brought about changes regarding who was allowed to problematise, or could be 'heard' when speaking about education in the city and where and how these problematisations took place.

By talking about the reconfiguration of the educational field or *the production of education*, I intend to emphasise that Rancaguean education was studied not as an ahistorical construct but as a social and historical fabricated object (Popkewitz, 2012). In other words, I am understanding education as a social realm that is constantly produced and always occurring within real social and situated relations. Hence, education is not conceived statistically as a state service alongside health or housing, describable by norms and figures (Bridge & Watson, 2010). Nor is it taken to be the site of opportunity for social mobility (e.g. Giddens, 1998) nor as an ideological state apparatus that plays its part in capitalist reproduction (e.g. Althusser, 1995; Rikowski, 2000). Instead, engaging with a critical but poststructuralist approach, I address education as a *discursive formation* (Ball, 1990; Foucault, 2002), which involves understanding the contingent power relations and material conditions that made some 'truths' of education possible. That is to say, I

explore how these truths and the discourses which made them possible articulate specific subjectivities and social/space relations.

The research sits at the intersection of different research fields and methodological lines. On one side, it is inspired by disciplines like history, sociology, anthropology, and geography of education. On the other, it deploys a hybrid methodology that draws mainly upon ethnographic (Geertz, 1973; Guber, 2011; Rockwell, 2009) and genealogical (Foucault, 1984; Garland, 2014; Olssen, 1999) methods. Moreover, during the fieldwork, I included some collaborative research instances since I wished to co-construct knowledge *with* and not only about the study participants.

In this chapter, I give first an overview of what I mean by ethnography/genealogy and then an account of the fieldwork and the writing process in more detail. The fieldwork is described in two stages that correspond to two separate field trips to Rancagua: first, the exploratory phase, which happened during three months since mid-July 2013, and, second, an extended stay, which consisted of nine months from March 2014. In my account, I do not seek only to describe what I did but also provide a context for the coming chapters and raise some ethical and epistemological issues that emerged during the process of research. Lastly, I describe the analysis and writing processes of the research/thesis, focusing specifically on how I managed the produced/elicited data, the challenges I faced in deciding what to write about, and finally, how I constructed the four analysis chapters.

Method Overview: the ethnography/genealogy encounter

The research method(s) consisted of an ethnographic fieldwork which was strongly driven by a genealogical interest in tracing the history of the present, an encounter of epistemological traditions that has been described as ‘dangerous’ (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003).

On one side, the decision to conduct an ethnography was based on my interest in participating in and (in a simple sense) making sense of what was going on regarding social practices —education— within a specific group of people —*Rancagüinos*—, centring on their experiences, on their ‘native’ point of view, i.e. not imposing

theoretical explanations (Geertz, 1983; Guber, 2011). Furthermore, I particular concerned to identify any evidence of cultural changes related to the neoliberalisation of education. Not any kind of evidence, though, but well-contextualised processes; lives and voices of ‘real people’ (Lees, 2003); grassroots experiences and history(ies) ‘from below’ (Holloway et al., 2010; Salazar, 1985, 2000; Sharpe, 1991).

On the one hand, the ethnographic design, as Rockwell (2009) suggests, involves a) a long period in the field and interaction with the locals, b) data collected from a range of sources, mainly from participant observations and informal chats, c) data production that was ‘unstructured’ since it neither followed an initially fixed design nor pre-established theoretical categories, d) a focus on a case, so to facilitate ‘in-depth’ study, e) the production of a descriptive document based on analytical work, where the ‘non-documented social reality is documented’, and ‘the local knowledge was integrated’ (p. 25) and f) the inclusion of a ‘reflexive effort towards transforming the notions of truth from which we look at and describe reality’ (p. 25).

On the other hand, the genealogical umbrella given to the ethnographic approach stemmed from my interest in using Foucault’s (Nietzschean) method to ‘trace the patterns of descent and emergence of discursive systems’ (Olssen, 1999, p. 15). Therefore, I wanted to explain the actuality and transformation of local discourses, practices and subjectivities, situating the emergence of certain forms as ‘always produced through a particular stage of forces’ (Foucault, 1984, p. 83). A genealogical analysis starts by identifying current practices that have been naturalised and then traces the power struggles that produced them (Garland, 2014).

Tamboukou and Ball (2003) discuss the possibilities of bridging ethnography and Foucault’s genealogic methods. However, they did not seek to subsume one methodology to another but rather to acknowledge affinities *and* be aware of tensions needing to be taken into account when taking the risk of drawing on both together. In theoretical terms, in exploring this ‘dangerous encounter’, the authors observe that both traditions have sought to interrogate the validity and universal authority of scientific knowledge; adopt a context-bound critical perspective;

transgress closed theoretical and methodological systems; point to the limits of power/knowledge regimes; recover excluded subjects and silenced voices; highlight the centrality of the body in sociohistorical analyses; and restore the political dimension of research (pp. 4-6). Methodologically, they note that both (genealogy and ethnography) are open projects, inherently uncertain and accommodative; both use a vast amount of data from varied sources, scrutinise them in detail, and work to generate theory from practice.

Nonetheless, Tamboukou and Ball (2003) stress the need to take a clear position when designing research in the intersections of ethnography and genealogy since there are theoretical and methodological issues that distinguish these traditions in fundamental ways. They highlight four points of tensions: the notion of truth, the notion of subject, the notion of progress and power, involvement and distance. Below, I address some of these tensions by giving an account of my own experience doing an ethnographic/genealogical study.

Getting and being there: the fieldwork's trajectory

Exploratory phase

The selection of a cowboys' and miners' city

Fieldwork for this thesis was carried out over a period of 12 months (2013-2014). Rancagua, capital of the O'Higgins Region, has some 240.000 inhabitants. As can be seen in Figure 1, it lies in the Central Valley of the country, a fertile area, crossed by many rivers and enjoying a mild climate, pressed between the Andes Mountains and the Coastal Range. The city was founded during colonial times, it is some 90 km from the capital of Santiago, and since its founding has kept an intermediate position in regional administration and intercity development. Therefore, on the one hand, in its region, Rancagua controls localised services and bureaucratic functions; while on the other, much of its development depends on the globalised political economy mediated by the nation's capital (Maturana & Rojas, 2015). These contradictions, as well as the local and regional loyalties and attachments pulling the city in different opposing directions, are a prominent feature of life in Rancagua today. Despite the

recent move of economic activity towards commerce and services, the city is typically described by its own inhabitants as fundamentally *huasa y minera*, ‘a cowboys and miners land.’

Figure 1: Location of Rancagua in Chile



Source: Adapted by me from Google Map

The history of Rancagua, as indeed its social structure and culture, are strongly shaped by both of these dynamics: an agrarian economy run by *huaso* customs and the looming proximity of El Teniente, the largest copper mine in Chile. The mixture has sometimes been described as ‘a résumé of Chile’; or, as some local intellectuals like Ortiz and Valenzuela (2012) have called it, being in a permanent ‘identity crisis’. In their words, Rancagua ‘is not easy’, as it’s ‘neither rural nor miner, neither just valley nor just hills, neither a town nor a metropolis, neither colonial nor modern, neither nice nor tough, neither dull nor happy, neither so holy nor so sluttish’ (Ortiz & Valenzuela, 2012, p. 5, my translation).

Besides this general data, at the start of my fieldwork I knew very little about how the city worked, its history, or how its inhabitants felt about their home. Although I

had some clues from what I had read and because it was the city where my former partner spent his childhood, the city did not mean anything special to me. I had lived most of my life in Santiago and for me Rancagua was nothing other than a milestone on the way to the lush and wooded South.

Thus, the decision to focus on Rancagua was not based on the consideration that the city was particularly ordinary or exceptional, nor on the fact that I had a personal history with the place. Instead, I chose Rancagua in response to a general intuition of how I wanted to contribute to the sociology of education. In this sense, a first element was becoming sensitive to the problem that Connell (2010, p. 78) poses as ‘the hegemony of the sociology of the metropole’. I acknowledged this problem by working upon my understanding of the neoliberalisation of cities and education while studying in London. I solved this tension by deciding to collect ethnographic data from a peripheral site, giving voice and theoretical value to urban and educational assemblages that do not necessarily fit on the categories that emerge from Europe, North America, or any ‘global city’ –like Santiago. Studying Santiago would not have been peripheral enough. Hence, I headed to an intermediate city.

A complementary criterion of selection was the possibility of increasing my chances to ‘defamiliarise and denaturalise’ (Guber, 2011, p. 122) my views in regards to present discourses and practices. I suspected that ‘in the regions’—as we *Santiaguinos* call any place beyond the Metropolitan Region surrounding the capital, everyday life related to schools and education could be different to what I have experienced before and I was genuinely interested in becoming aware of such differences. Throughout my fieldwork, it was indeed fruitful that despite my shared (national) experiences with the research participants, I was evidently not ‘a native’. This enabled me to ask in an honest manner, ‘how things work here’, and be genuinely surprised with the answers. It further helped that Rancagua offer conditions that made ethnographic study relatively easy. For instance, almost everything is the city in walking distance and is usually secure, thus I was free to explore hundreds of streets and all kinds of neighbourhoods. And the cost of living

was relatively affordable, so it was possible to rent an apartment right in the city centre for a long period of time.

Getting a first sense of Rancagua

I arrived in Rancagua for an initial three-months of fieldwork in mid-July 2013, after which I returned to London to analyse what I had found and more closely specify the research project. A main goal of this stage was exploring and preparing the conditions for a longer fieldwork stay that would start in March 2014. Just as important was the aim to get a first *sense of the place*, which would allow me to provide written descriptions and quotations that, as urban ethnography has shown, can move the readers *inside* the world under study (Schwanhäusser, 2016).

I was warned by some *Rancagüinos* that the city was not a cosy and dull rural town like Santa Cruz nor a dirty and exciting port city like Valparaiso, but maybe something in between, which was noticeable from the first approach. Entering the city from the Pan-American Highway and with the monumental Andes as backdrop, the capital of the O'Higgins region looked like a disruptive spot of cement in the middle of the Cachapoal valley. When getting closer, low buildings of corrugated tin roofs and streets stitched with hanging cables predominated, composing a rather grey and even skyline only interrupted by pylons, a couple of water towers, the cathedral towers, the stadium, a dozen tower blocks with peeling paint, and many TV antennas. To be honest, the image reminded me of some videos I had found on Youtube, in which Rancagüino youngsters made fun of the unattractiveness of their city, joking with the idea that 'Rancagua doesn't exist'. Fortunately, my concern that the city could lack interest (which many friends and researchers from Santiago had said to me), rapidly disappeared when I started knowing people and discovering the city.

As mentioned previously, I decided to stay in the city centre. This was a sector of eight by eight blocks, usually called 'the historical dashboard'. Laid out by order of the governor of the General Captaincy of Chile in 1743, for almost two centuries it represented the entire city map. However, a series of earthquakes had left only a couple of colonial buildings as reminder of those days. By 2013, the Spanish grid of

narrow streets was mainly occupied by commercial, finance, and bureaucrat offices whose architecture was a patchwork of styles covered with advertising and cables. As my apartment was on the seventh floor, this patchwork became my everyday view. Always contrasting with the frame that the Andes provided in the distance, from this perspective Rancagua resembled many other middle-sized cities in Chile.

Because I lived there, I needed to grasp for myself the dynamics of the historical dashboard, which involved from identifying its particular services and buildings – including a numerous concentration of schools and all sorts of educational administrative offices – filled with constant traffic full of people, clearly different from the mixture I was used from Santiago's city centre. Here, the traffic included horses, clapped-out cars, latest model jeeps and a chaotic, insufficient and polluting public transport system. Pedestrians, managed the streets with a sense of purpose but without rushing, notably well-disposed to spontaneous encounters that might retain them for a chat or a slight head nod. Amongst them, one could easily recognise uniformed students, retail sellers and civil servants, as well as many peasants using the typical *chupalla* (a Chilean cowboy hat), or robust miners getting in or out of their 4x4 pickup trucks. Additionally, there was a world of noisy street sellers, artists, volunteers and beggars, who appeared in their places with such perseverance and punctuality that one could easily notice any absence.

By talking to people on the streets, going to different places to observe or just running errands, I learned that many of these street people did not live (sleep) in the city. Indeed, as Rancagua concentrated administrative offices, cultural, religious, health, educational and sport centres, all sorts of shops, and a variety of jobs, it attracted thousands of daily visitors coming from towns and rural areas of its Hinterlands. Likewise, thousands of *Rancagüinos* commuted to Santiago daily, either to study, work or find certain services. The centralisation and functional dependence on Santiago, similar to other cities in the Central valley, has led to considering Rancagua as a functional part of the major conurbation that the capital of seven million people leads (Romero, 2014). Rancagua, therefore, was perceived by its inhabitants under the permanent shadow of the metropolitan capital, something that was a common

complaint in idle chats. One day, at the bus station, a local teacher explained to me the feeling in the following way: ‘What outweighs is a certain sense of inferiority, which arises from a range of situations, from the fact that we need to move to go to the university or a specialised doctor, to being used to listen on the radio the daily weather report and the accidents of Santiago’ (Field Note, August 22th 2013).

Apart from the central dashboard, there were two other urban sectors that was daily thronged by commuters. On one side of the city, on the west side of the city centre was the train station. Built by the end of the 19th century, it was close to the mills that processed wheat for export. Its existence rapidly promoted the emergence of food markets and new local dynamics. Later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, up in the Andes, the North American Braden Copper Company industrialised the extraction of copper and opted for the Rancagua’s rail station as a principal node: both to bring human and material resources for the mine, and to move copper to ports. Thus, Rancagua, but in particular the station sector, became what it is still today. A mix of warehouses and machinery workshops, hostels, brothels, bars and shops, all small businesses that welcome hundreds of miners descending after their tough shifts, ready to spend their recently hard earned money.

On the other side of the city, a couple of kilometres to the east from the historical dashboard, another and very different pole of commerce and offices had recently emerged. Unlike the station’s neighbourhood and the city centre, this spot was never swarming with people and was usually visited by car. Its development started in the early 2000s, when the wealthier families began to move from their old traditional houses in the centre and to buy bigger and more isolated properties in more rural sectors. In the year 2000, a supermarket catering to middle class consumers, and a new shopping centre with international brands were opened, symbolically initiating access to the same objects of consumption that rich *Santiaguinos* had, McDonalds and H&M included. During the same decade, many private schools were opened in this zone.

Figure 2: Map of Rancagua



Source: Adapted by me from Google Map

In addition to the aforementioned sectors, about two hundred residential neighbourhoods make up the rest of the city, as can be seen in Figure 2. The names of most of these neighbourhoods or *barrios* were well known by people, knowledge that the transport system, local newspapers, the schools' and shops' names, and neighbourhood's associations helped to maintain. Since the *barrios* were a very common point of reference (necessary for my daily movements and overall to understand anecdotes and events), I had to buy a map and quickly learn them.

Barrios were much more than geographical references, of course. They were clearly differentiated, and from what *Rancagüinos* themselves explained, the differences were mainly related to the labour of their inhabitants (e.g. public functionaries, miners, teachers, retail workers, seasonal workers, informal workers, policemen, liberal professions, etc.), something that determined their status, type and size of the buildings. Locals usually knew about the history of and reasons why certain *barrios*

emerged. For example, everyone knew that some barrios were built by specific unions during the 60s-70s (i.e. Manso de Velasco, El Teniente, the Teachers' neighbourhood), or that they emerged as peasants' occupations during the same period (i.e. February 25th, Esperanza, El Manzanal). Some were much older and were built for some special occasion, like the barrio Centenario which was built by the state for the centenary of Chile's Independence in 1910, or Las Viudas, built in the 1940s for the widows of 300 miners who had died in a terrible explosion underground. Almost a third of the barrios were built after the 1990s, mainly as private development projects aimed at low-income workers applying for state subsidies. However, the differences between the barrios did not entail a huge physical distance, in comparison to Santiago and other megapolises in Latin America (Sabatini and Brian, 2008). Thus, if one started walking from Rancagua's old city centre, in a minute one could be crossing the teachers' neighbourhood' of terraced houses, and some blocks later would reach the *barrio* 'El Tennis' with of detached houses with swimming pools, and a bit further, on the river side, one could find the slum 'La Ribera', where people who work carrying sand, live on dirt floors.

Finding a role

During the first months, and in addition to building a map to enable me to move easily around Rancagua, I also focused on exploring whether my research interests made some sense to the locals. Furthermore, following Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) recommendations, I explored the accessibility of individuals, groups and institutions and their willingness to take part in the research, establishing a number of contacts and points of entry that would help me when returning for the second and longer fieldwork period. During these initial months, I was able to conduct multiple formal interviews, but more importantly, I started building an honest and comfortable role in my interactions: a position that allowed me to ask questions, take pictures and notes, while also gradually participating more actively, offering opinions and developing a degree of agency in certain spaces.

The process of meeting people and having first conversations about my research were – with few exceptions – much easier than I had thought. When introducing

myself as a PhD student interested in the history of present education in Rancagua, my general experience was finding open doors to talk, to visit spaces and to make new contacts. When the setting was a formal interview and after dealing with a consent form, I started the conversation explaining my general aim to understand from local experiences how things had been changing in the education field, conveyed my interest in listening to personal and illustrative anecdotes, and the reconstruction of the interviewees' life histories. These were interwoven with the history of educational institutions and dynamics on the local level. Usually at the end of each conversation, I also asked people for help in clarifying a map of actors involved in the local education field, explaining that I was still in a research design stage and that I would come back to stay for several months the next year.

During this first period of fieldwork, 15 formal interviews were produced following a snowballing technique (Noy, 2008). Among the interviewees were the director of the main local newspaper, the president of the regional teachers' union, the regional director of the environmental department, the president of the communal union of neighbourhoods' associations, peasants' and miners' leaders, municipal and ministerial chiefs, along with teachers and intellectuals of different ages. My general impression, both from interviews and more informal chats, was that many people were very willing to share their memories and their contacts with me. Thanks to that, only in some cases I had to call or visit some institution to ask for an appointment, since I mostly contacted my interviewees on their personal mobile phones or emails after having been introduced as a trustworthy person by someone else.

Simultaneously, there were two instances which allowed me to better understand the city dynamics. One of them was a free photography workshop which met every Saturday morning in a self-organised cultural centre that was close to my apartment. By joining this group, I met people of different ages and occupations who enjoyed learning this art together, and with whom I walked through the city several times looking for good photo opportunities. The other instance was the monthly meetings of the Neighbourhoods' Associations Union, located in the middle of the train station area. In these meetings, I was introduced by the president as a new neighbour

researching about Rancagua, who was interested in joining the meetings to get an idea of the problems of the city. I used to remain silent, just taking general notes of what was said, but took advantage of the coffee breaks to talk to and ask questions of the local leaders. My main observation in this space was that neither education in general or schools in specific, were a matter of discussion. The only exception was when the union leader asked me to talk about the impact of standardised tests on the school system, an idea that he proposed to me in an informal conversation, an issue that concerned him as a grandfather. I understood that the invitation to get fifteen minutes of attention in the assembly related to the necessity of clarifying my presence and somehow making a contribution to the space, by showing some reciprocity.

The initial positive rapport was very encouraging for my second fieldwork period. Moreover, it provided insights into the context and a better understanding of 'doing' ethnography. First, it gave me the idea that when I openly asked Rancagüinos about educational matters, people were strongly engaged and had something to tell about the history of education in the city. There was something that they had experienced collectively and thus, it made sense to them to think about what had happened and to research it. Likewise, I perceived that local education issues also made people think about their life histories motivating them to continue conversations I had initiated. Second, I experienced the effect that a long-time fieldwork has over research participants (Rockwell, 2009). Very different to my previous experiences of doing interviews for qualitative studies, in which I inevitably felt that each interviewee was doing me the favour of sharing his/her opinions. In Rancagua the possibility of other kinds of relationships, and more space for thinking together, or of political and intellectual collaboration, or of friendship, made things different. Thus, I had the pleasure of being allowed to be a researcher without feeling a complete outsider to the community, or being concerned that I was cheating or instrumentalising people for my own sake.

Narrowing the research focus

Another relevant outcome of the preparatory fieldwork was the narrowing my research questions and foci of observation. I first arrived in the city of Rancagua with the project of studying the educational realm in a wide sense, thus opening my eyes and ears to anything that seemed related to educational discourses, practices and subjects. Indeed, in order to stay ‘grounded’ and to avoid the blindness of ‘strong theories’ (Gibson-Graham, 2014), my commitment was to explore life in the city without getting attached to obvious educational categories, even those almost inevitable like ‘teachers’ or ‘schools’. Influenced by poststructuralist readings, I wanted to avoid an uncritical reproduction of common-sense discourses through my method and in my historical analytical categories. I was also concerned, to remain attendant to the practice of everyday life from ‘above’ (de Certeau, 2011), thus losing awareness of the disruptions of hegemonic power relations in the everyday practices of life. Consequently, during the preparatory fieldwork I took daily notes of almost everything that I could related to education, including what I observed, listened to on the radio, read in the newspapers or on Facebook, heard from others’ conversations in the public transport, among other things. By doing so, I was being sensitive to new ideas and connections; whilst hoping to grasp the total realm of education that the boundaries of a territory could offer to my ethnographic experience. I felt like a detective, attentive to unpredicted clues and committed to the task of connecting the seemingly unconnected. As crazy as it sounds, despite the challenges of this fantasy and the backgrounding epistemological problems of this goal, I was fascinated with the freedom to pull threads and raise questions about education in each pleat of the urban fabric I had access to. This became a form of living and, by the end of those three months, I had filled several notebooks.

To give a concrete example of this, on a weekend I went to a market that is mounted twice a week in the población Rene Schneider, a social housing neighbourhood in the north-east side of Rancagua. It was around 3 pm, a time when sellers started disassembling their stands. I approached a flowerstand, where a woman in her 60s was starting to sweep leaves and petals from the pavement. I bought a bunch of

chrysanthus and we talked about their origin. I told her I was doing a study about the history of education in Rancagua. She replied that she had learned everything about the flowers' trade from her mum. Just as her mum used to do, she explained—, she went each market day at 5 am to Rancagua's central market where she bought her products from different lorries that came from Santiago. She rode a bike with a cart, in which she transported the flowers in buckets.

What is my opinion about educational changes?' - she then asked, echoing my own question. 'I am actually worried. I was raised and I raised my children with clear rules and a firm hand, but now... We are not allowed to touch them anymore. The government made up this thing about children's rights, the law protects them, and they can even call the police on you and detain you. It's a disaster. The parents don't know how to educate them anymore, and more and more youth are falling into dealing drugs. The children are beating the parents now! (Field Note, July 6th 2013)

When I went back to London and read all that I had written, I highlighted this and many other similar observations, also drawing, on the side, a big question mark. Were the florist's view and experience threads I wanted to follow if I aspired to understand education from the ground? Arguments in favour of including them were, for instance, that the florist undoubtedly spoke to me about education, change and everyday life. She mentioned the impact of laws and a rights discourse, and rejected the police force for intervening in upbringing practices. Besides, she mentioned her mum passing on her knowledge and a way to earn her living. However, I realised that such a project of being a *flaneur*, trying to grasp the present of education in this way (from below), was not practicable nor reasonable. It was simply too much. Even though I was discovering exciting new questions about urban life and education, and despite the fact that I could see how I was becoming able to problematise education from angles that were very different to the ones I was used to, I knew that I had to narrow the research focus and rely at least on some categories that allowed me to think and say something by the end of the study. My decision to narrow the focus came after reviewing my notes: I had to admit, the world of schools was certainly a common structuring topic of my conversations and personal reflections, which meant overall that I cared about them, despite their unfixed and historically defined meaning. The next fieldwork period began with the assumption

that when I talked about the configuration of the education field, I was actually thinking of the schooling field, at least in regards to the data I was going to produce.

The long stay

I arrived back in Rancagua in March 2014 with the intention to stay for the whole academic year (March to December in Chile). This time, my fieldwork focus would not be getting acquainted with the city, nor trying to grasp all the possible angles of the local production of education. Rather, it would be aimed at participating in, observing and asking about the circumstances of everyday life related to the local schools. I knew as well, that I did not want to provide detailed descriptions of the inner dynamics of schools, nor the school lives of Rancagüinos. My focus would stay at the surface of the dynamics of the urban space, searching to identify, for instance, illustrative characters and anecdotes, daily routines and unusual events incarnating recent changes in the urban assemblage of schooling. This was where I expected to find traces of the new neoliberal truths about education that had become hegemonic in Chilean society, thereby contributing to what was already known in regards to the reconfiguration of policy contexts and its enactment inside schools.

Again, the data production plan was not fixed in detail beforehand, but there were specific research tools I wanted to draw upon in this personal experiment of combining ethnography with genealogy (as mentioned earlier in this chapter). In the following sections I briefly describe the three means by which I produced the data which were most significant for my understanding of the urban configuration of education and played a key role in the upcoming chapters – walking the city (observation), interviews, and collaborative research. Each method involved interacting with a great amount of people, but with different levels of implication. It was different, for instance, my relation to those anonymous people that I observed in the streets than those that I interviewed. Only the latter I consider as research participants. In order to count with an overview of these participants and navigate easily through the multiple mentions and quotations of them along the coming chapters, a detailed list with their names, age, gender and main occupation can be found in Appendix I. Real names are used only in case it was explicitly allowed in the

consent form, which was the general case of local authorities. Otherwise, pseudonyms were created.

Walking the city

During my second stay in Rancagua, I continually walked the streets of different neighbourhoods, many times getting lost. However, getting lost was difficult because it was a small city and I had the Andes always reminding me where the East was. I mostly walked to think, not necessarily observe, but this habit became a useful source of information when I unexpectedly witnessed some curious interactions, whether it was hearing a conversation, or discovering an event I was not aware of, like a demonstration or a parade, a municipal activity, or a traffic accident. After some months in Rancagua, I began to experience what I had observed of others – encounters with friends or acquaintances that meant that the feeling of anonymity, over time, began to fade. Indeed, even a street trumpeter with schizophrenia began to recognise me, playing each time he saw me the same first notes of the Pink Panther theme.

I used to walk around schools and sit for a while in the squares close to some of them, alternating simple observations of the environment and the social interactions of people of different ages, genders, outfits and attitudes, taking time for writing notes, reading or just thinking. However, as time went by, I became less of a flaneur and increased my time spent walking with others. The reason behind this was not a lack of purpose when walking *a la derive*, but the blindness of the meanings that the city, its routes and places had for its own residents. As Kusenbach (2003) argues, participant observation has this limitations. As an outsider, one can make efforts to make sense of one's observations and comparisons, but they say little about how the inhabitants of the place perceive and interpret their local setting.

To illustrate Kusenbach's (2003) point, my relation to distance is useful. Riding my bike or taking a bus to for ten or fifteen kilometres to arrive anywhere, either in Santiago or London, was normal for me. Thus, the human scale of Rancagua was wonderful. I had plenty of time, so I usually commented on the pleasure of being able to walk everywhere. On the contrary, for Rancagüinos this was nothing special.

Rather, it was common to hear how uncomfortable and expensive the public transport was, so much so that the city was plagued by shared taxis which cost less than a bus ticket. To my surprise, most people used them to travel for less than ten blocks, a ten minute walk.

Walking along with others - which Kusenbach (2003, p. 456) calls 'the go along' -, was a research tool that became one of the best ways to understand the local experience of distance. I walked with many different people by chance, taking advantage to ask questions and to understand. But with some people I was able to organise the walk with clearer purposes. Yorma, a teachers' union leader who became a close friend, was one of the first people to accept an invitation to walk, and we walked together more than once around the last public school where she had worked, as well as her own neighbourhood. The other person who gave me tours of the city, sometimes walking, sometimes in his car, was the neighbourhoods' association president, Hernán, who insisted that I needed to understand the socio-economic differences in the city. A third person with whom I walked with was a secondary student, Elena M., who was key in the organisation of the Winter School, an action-research workshop that I will explain later in the chapter.

My feelings, foci of attention, conversations and reflections nurtured by these walks filled about six notebooks, many audio-memos and were complemented with hundreds of pictures taken during these months. These were important sources for the upcoming chapters, especially for chapter 3, in which I seek to convey a set of first impressions of the urban experience of a privatised system of education.

Interviews

Similar to what I did during the three initial months of fieldwork, in this second period I sought to coordinate and conduct interviews with specific informants, accumulating a total of 60 individual and 5 group interviews (see Appendix 1). Of these, about 60% were with males, and a similar percentage were teachers, headteachers or other types of professionals related to the school system. In regards to their ages, there was a large range of variation. The ones I ended up formally interviewing were mostly people over their 60s. This was partly by choice as they

could provide stories illustrating life in Rancagua during the 1960s and 1970s, and I was interested in historicising the present using these local accounts. Likewise, the topic engaged older people more easily, and this facilitated a snowballing process (Noy, 2008) that enabled me to contact more people with similar characteristics. This process also produced a second bias related to the social background of my informants. Albeit I contacted and talked to some Rancagüinos that belonged to both upper- and lower classes, the majority of people to whom I talked to were either professional or well established workers, as e.g. miners. This is a very important factor to consider when reading the findings chapters, as the evidence is limited and cannot be generalised to the whole population.

The group interviews aimed at the following profiles: a) teachers that belonged to the local political caucus *Movimiento Pedagógico 6th [Region]*; b) secondary students of different backgrounds and types of schools that were taking part of a Winter School that I organised; c) grassroot leaders of different ages and backgrounds that were participating in a workshop that I helped organise with the caucus *Movimiento Pedagógico* and the *Mesa Territorial 6th Región*; and d) Parents of a school that the Municipality decided to close.

All of the interviews were recorded at least in audio (some also with a video camera), and included the signature of a consent form which distinguished between those who wanted to stay anonymous or with their real names in any publication. There were many other conversations I had that ended up containing relevant issues for the thesis but I did not record. However, I kept an open notebook to write down ideas that I also used as part for the analyses, protecting people's identities. Furthermore, there were many chance conversations as part of my everyday life in which the other person did not even know I was doing research, thus I only took notes afterwards in case something was of interest, also protecting the identities in the case I used some quote.

The formal interviews differed in format, mostly depending on time availability of the interviewee and my specific research focus at that particular moment in time. The shorter the time, the more structured and thematic the interview was. When the

interviewee, instead, mentioned that they had plenty of time or that we could meet again another day, I relaxed the semi-structured guide of questions and moved towards Guber (2011) calls an ethnographic or non-directive interview, in which the topics jumped from one to another following the normal rules of a conversation. Despite the differences, in all the interviews I used the same strategy as in the preparatory fieldwork, which involved explaining at some point the general goals of the project and my interest in listening to their perceptions on change regarding either the general school system, their personal schooling experiences, or their participation in the decision-making process.

Among all the interviewees, there were some that were especially relevant for the whole research process. In addition to being key gatekeepers, these were people who allowed me to go deeper into the subjectivities of certain characters and strongly affected my perception of things. One of the interviewees was Yorma A., a retired primary teacher, about 65 years old, who in 2013 was elected president of the communal teacher association (see chapter 4). I met her in April 2014, the day in which I interviewed her for the first time, and from then onwards I saw her at least once a week until I left the city in December 2014. The first five encounters consisted of a continuation of the initial interview, something that I saw as a process to produce her life history and which she called her 'free psychotherapy'. After these 'sessions', she invited me to interview the group of teachers that had nominated her as a candidate. It was a local caucus called *Movimiento Pedagógico 6th [Region]* which in that year was focused on publishing a critical pedagogy journal, organising a second version of a political-unionist seminar, whilst also maintaining a space of contingency analysis. After having interviewed the caucus, I was invited to join their weekly meetings, which allowed me to observe from a very close angle the enormous difficulties that a politicised group faced to engage other teachers. Furthermore, Yorma, who had an office in the *Casa del Maestro* (the union's headquarters), offered me their facilities. Hence, it was thanks to her that I realised the viability of organising workshops with students and other social actors. Finally, it was she who informed me of every important meeting or event related to education in the city,

something that gave me the chance develop a first-hand account of the process of resisting the closure of the School Manuel Rojas, which occurred in October-November 2014 (see chapter 6).

A second participant important to mention is Roxana P., a teacher and school owner who was suggested to me by the catholic vicariate of education (see chapter 5). Roxana, who was about 60 years old at the time, was the president of the regional section of the older Chilean association of private schools, FIDE. Roxana was very similar to Yorma in terms of energy and enthusiasm, but very different in terms of her political and educational agenda. The latter, however, did not prevent her from inviting me to talk with her on three different occasions, with a genuine interest in developing together an in-depth understanding of what it meant to run and develop private schools in the city. At some point, her enthusiasm for collaborating with the study, offering both her time and multiple contacts even made me feel as if I was betraying her, as I had not been clear about my own criticisms of privatisation. As a consequence, I told her the story – my story – about why I was doing this whole study. In response, though, she mentioned the relevance that she saw in having a dialogue while also being aware of different positions. She maintained an open attitude towards collaborating by introducing me to actors from the private sector that I had found difficult to contact, some of whom I had chased for months without any luck. Roxana, who died suddenly of cancer in 2017, was along with Yorma my most significant relationship in the field. Beyond their generosity and how grateful I feel towards them, I want to emphasise here is the following: People like them, two very different characters who experienced the process of school privatisation in completely different ways, confirmed for me that placing education as a significant shared local problem made sense.

Collaborative research

As I suggested in the introduction of the thesis, by doing this research I have not only been motivated to describe and problematise discourses, practices and their conditions of possibilities, but also to transform them. In this sense, although I consider writing genealogies and ethnographies a worthy and useful production of

knowledge, when the process of research itself becomes collective, then critique can become even more productive in challenging or transforming discourses. Through conversations and partaking in political initiatives as a participant observer, I got the subtle sense that I was achieving more than simply collecting information to analyse, since sometimes new ideas and projects emerged from these interactions.

As a result, as well as engaging with the enthusiasm of others, I realised there was a chance to complement the more traditional ethnographic work by organising spaces of collaborative research that might foster social change. Hence, inspired by a strand within the field of education which emphasises ‘collaborative inquiry’ with a focus on social justice (Klein, 2012, p. 2), I began to look for opportunities to organise this type of space without losing sight of my research goals.

The first attempt took place in June 2014. It was an action-research workshop targeted to secondary students. From a couple of encounters I had had with student leaders from the oldest public school in the city, I realised that broad topics like inequality and profit in education were part of the youngsters’ concerns, and that some of them might well be interested in participating in a research team to study the local school system. With this in mind, in May 2014, I joined a student march organised in support of a strike of the municipal schools’ administrative staff. I received some Facebook contacts and mobile numbers, which I later used to invite more formally a group to participate in a research workshop related to my thesis. Two female students immediately answered my emails, consequently we met to define the aims, schedule and target of the workshop. After a couple of weeks in which I assumed the costs and organisation, we had a plan and a name: ‘*Winter School for Education: What education do we have? What education do we want?*’

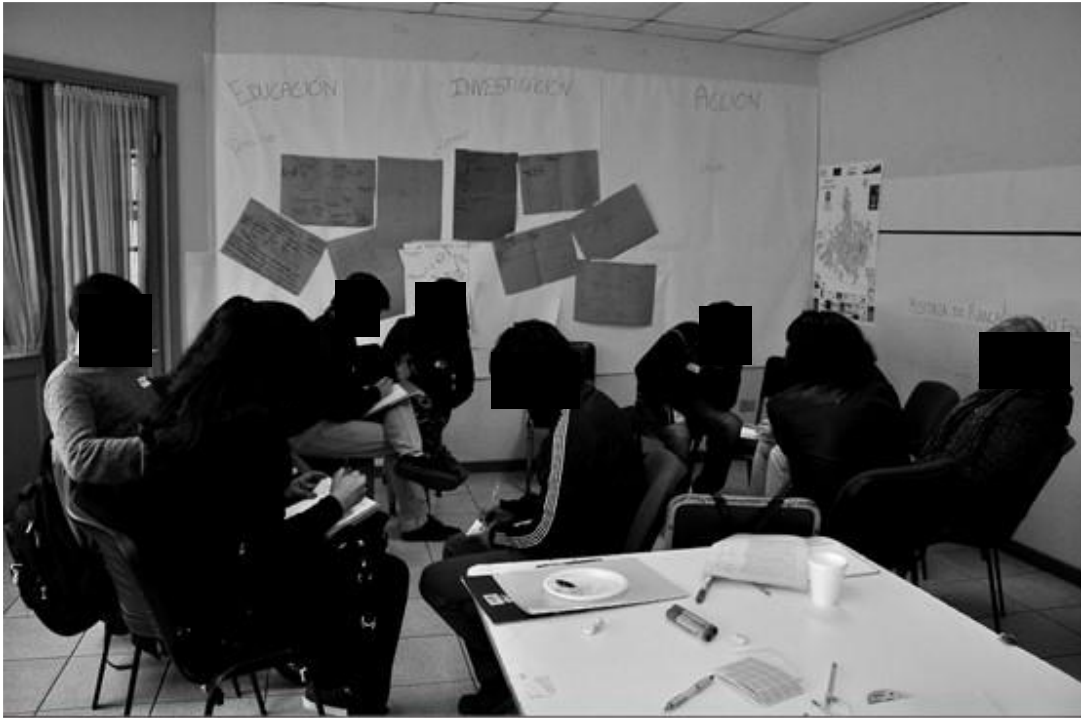
The aim, as we established together, was ‘to research, learn, and analyse collectively the history of Rancagua’s education and the future that we want for it’. The idea of naming it a “winter school” came from the fact that it would take place during winter holidays, at the end of June. The female students considered that their peers would be able to spend an entire week on such an activity. The strategy to invite youngsters from the city was mostly undertaken by these two female students, who used their

creativity to publicise the winter school in public spaces (schools and social networks).

Eight other secondary students, aged 16 to 18 years, joined us after they read the framing of the activity (my PhD research) and signed a consent form. The group consisted of five men and five women, from different types of schools: two from paid private schools, four from subsidised private schools, and four from municipal schools, either vocational schools and or schools aimed at university access. They lived in very different neighbourhoods – there was one from a town outside Rancagua - and their social backgrounds also differed. Only two of them knew each other beforehand, from school, but the rest met for the first time at the workshop. All of them declared on the registry form that their motivation was somehow related to the wish to understand the educational crisis of the country.

Following up on Yorma's offer, to use the *Casa del maestro* for my research, I was able to develop the workshop there. It lasted six days, from Monday to Saturday, from 9 am until 1 pm each day. The programme basically consisted in learning about research tools (e.g. observing, listening, comparing, critically analysing newspapers, conducting focus groups, among others), and practicing their use within the analysis of personal and collective experiences. Additionally, the participants applied and analysed the tools with other educational actors visiting the winter school. During the week, the walls of the room where we worked were filled with handwritten posters expressing different syntheses, as can be seen in Picture I. For instance, there were posters with illustrations of their personal school trajectories, or of a milestones timeline of the city's recent education, a map of educational actors and educational policy agents; and, most importantly, the educational problems that they identified as group and featured the city (In chapter three I will draw on this data).

Picture 1: Workshop with secondary students. Session aimed at developing interviewing skills



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

The ‘action’ dimension of the workshop was more spontaneous and driven by the students. On the last day of the winter school I asked: ‘Now what? What would you like to do now?’ The group reached the following conclusions: First, they felt and acknowledged themselves as a fully formed group, which in their view, was a first action that responded to the social fragmentation that school segregation produced in the city. Hence, they wanted to keep working together, for which they would found a student caucus and invite new members. Second, they wanted to motivate the inhabitants of Rancagua to critically think about the educational present. They wished to participate in the next student march as a caucus, handing out pamphlets with provocative questions, and raising a flag with the slogan ‘Education is ours’. Third, they would apply as presenters in an upcoming student congress about arts, social sciences and humanities. They wanted to present the analysis of the focus group conducted during the winter school, and its main finding: the unacceptable distance between school experiences of different students in the city (Field Note, June 27th 2014).

The second instance where I was able to promote collaborative research emerged from the interest that the Winter School generated among the teachers of the caucus *Movimiento Pedagógico*. After discussing together the options, we designed a two weekend workshop inviting in leaflets ‘any citizen or organisation interested in defending the right to education’. The caucus would be the hosting organisation. The product of this workshop, less ambitious than the one with the students, sought ‘to identify collectively the questions and needs of access to information about the current education system in Rancagua, and the direction they desired’. The conclusions of this instance would be aimed at facilitating a next stage, this time focused on working on a communitarian assessment of the educational problem in the city.

This workshop took place during the two last Saturdays of November, from 10 am to 5 pm, also in the teachers’ union’s headquarters. About 30 people participated, combining students, teachers, artists, intellectuals, miners, and leaders of some parent’s associations. I will not present further information on the programme, since I decided not to include it within my study, rather I focused on giving support to the group. Notwithstanding, I consider it relevant to mention it, since it helped me triangulate data and to confirm some people’s willingness to create spaces to think together an issue that concerned them beyond their personal necessities.

Finally, I will mention a third form of collective research, developed amid the turmoil that the closing of a municipal school produced in a sector of Rancagua. It was the end of October, I was preparing my last interviews and my way out of the field, and suddenly this extraordinary situation exploded and a grassroots battle to reverse the decision to close the school began. I was able to support the emergent organisation by creating a research team which would serve the requirements of the committee of parents, teachers and neighbours, formed to defend the school. The research team consisted of the mothers of two students, one teacher from the caucus, one student who had taken part in the Winter School and me. Our specific tasks were two: First, we documented what was happening by recording the events and meetings, while also doing short interviews with students, teachers and parents to

follow up on their feelings and perceptions of the process. Second, we reconstructed the history of the school, thereby finding relevant antecedents to keep the school alive. I dedicate chapter 6 to describing in detail what happened and how fruitful it was to share in this context the genealogical question of the history of the present.

The process of analysing and writing

Ethnographies (as studies with a genealogical orientation) are a method of knowledge production that cannot be understood without attending to and accounting for its two fundamental parts. One being the fieldwork developed for an extended period to learn about a specific social group *in situ*; the other, the writing, in which the researcher places on record his/her descriptive, analytical and interpretative efforts (Guber, 2011). This section aims to describe the process of writing. Specifically, I will tackle the following topics: the preliminary analysis of the data, the selection of school privatisation as the main focus of the thesis, and the choice of themes and structure of the finding chapters, which I call intensive analysis.

Preliminary analysis: organising the data

During the fieldwork I kept a general level of organisation by roughly labelling the contents and sources of the different elements. However, I found it difficult to stop collecting data and sit down to think analytic categories during this time. Hence, contradicting suggestions for conducting ethnographic research (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2007; Guber, 2011; Rockwell, 2009), I analysed more carefully my data only when I had finished the fieldwork.

Back in London, I had a vast corpus of data which included various sources: field notes, recorded interviews, pictures, videos and my initial interpretations (memos). Further, I collected local newspapers and novels, academic books, statistics, official reports and legal documentation, which complimented my own production of data. I digitised most of the evidence (field diaries were scanned, and interviews were transcribed). In appendix 2 it is possible to see one example of each one of these different sources.

The process of reading and clearing the elements of the corpus, and then organising them by sources and contents took me about seven months. I used the program NVivo 8 to organise the fieldnotes and transcribed interviews. Following the first steps of a grounded theory research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I coded and worked on emergent categories that related to my general research question about changing subjects, institutions, practices, discourses and events that were related to education. Apart from expected categories such as ‘school choice’, ‘private schools’, ‘segregation’, ‘teachers’ organisation’, I coded references of the use of space in education, such as ‘students’ parades’, ‘commuting to the school’, ‘schools’ sectors’, among others. As result, I developed an idea of the density of different themes within my corpus, and so, which themes could be developed drawing upon more perspectives and richer accounts. However, I also became aware of the disadvantages of spending a whole year in the field, of choosing a whole city as an object/locus of study and the rejection of ‘strong theories’ (Gibson-Graham, 2014) to follow predefined hypotheses. The process was overwhelming and it was very difficult to identify what was relevant (to my evolving focus) and what was not. The amount of categories and codes was so big that it reflected similar problems to those faced by the cartographers of an ancient empire that Jorge Luis Borges (1972) narrates in the short story *Del rigor en la ciencia* or On Exactitude in Science. In their obsession with precision, the cartographers created a map of the empire with the same size as the empire. The map, Borges tells, was so cumbersome that the new generations abandoned it to the rigours of sun and rain. For me, my ‘giant’ map was not only cumbersome to use but also made it very difficult to select what was ‘really’ important. In order to write a dense description of the social experience of education change in the city, it was not enough to have these grounded categories and codes, I still needed an analytic focus to structure my findings, and my broad initial aspirations were not sufficient to facilitate this decision.

Narrowing the research focus again: the eye on school privatisation

My next step on the analysis was comparing my codes under the light of my initial literature review about neoliberalism and education. In particular, I centred on the

critiques of the use of the category of Neoliberalism that arose a couple of decades ago (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; J. Clarke, 2008; Larner, 2003; Ong, 2007). On the one hand, Neoliberalism had become the explanation of everything, even of neoliberalism itself; on the other hand, the concept was treated as ‘an ensemble of coordinates that will everywhere produce the same political results and social transformation’ (Ong, 2007, p. 3). The theoretical discussion led to arguments for the need for research into the processes of neoliberalisation that would avoid reifications and monolithic conceptions (J. Clarke, 2008) and that would capture the workings of the neoliberal assemblage and how it is re-contextualised in different spaces (J. Clarke, 2008; Larner, 2003; Ong, 2007). In the same line, Peck and Tickell (2002) suggested making efforts to describe ‘actually existing neoliberalism’. This, according to the authors, involved paying particular attention to how neoliberal changes articulated with prior practices and other political projects in each space. Thus, pretty convinced by these arguments, I sought to explore my data with an openness to identify other possible diagrams of power relations and discourses intertwined in the local assemblage of actually existing education, but not only those which evidently fit with a neoliberal logic.

This decision did not help me simplify choosing a focus to write about, rather the contrary. The problem, I can see now, was that I started distinguishing and analysing the manifestations of different rationales co-producing the present of Rancagua and urban education. These rationales, which I codified as ‘colonialism’, ‘industrial capitalism’, ‘popular sovereignty’ and ‘neoliberalism’, suddenly seemed unavoidable to interpret the small cowboys’ and miners’ city dynamics. Moreover, being able to ‘see’ other discursive orders was so compelling that I considered abandoning my initial concerns regarding the marketised education system. The analytical exercise had changed, and I found myself engaged in a project of composing chapters for each rationale of power operating in the city and the disputed educational field.

In sum, this attempt to structure the analysis and the chapters took too much time, did not convince me entirely, and through up a set of specific problems. One of these

problems was that instead of observing how in the same practice different discourses articulate contingently, I highlighted the fragmentation of the life in the city for analytical purposes, reproducing the problem of reifying a particular social order (e.g., Neoliberalism) but now multiplied by all the discursive orders I wanted to describe. Furthermore, the attention put on the more recent socio-cultural changes in education had become minimal. This meant not only losing the original focus, which could be expected as is the case in many classic ethnographies (Rockwell, 2009), but also meant discarding the main concerns that my informants had raised within the fieldwork, which had much more to do with school commodification than with, let say, the influence of the Freemasonry. Because one thing was to understand the relevance of other diagrams of power in the configuration of the educational problem in Rancagua, and another was to dedicate the thesis to the analysis of these other forms. Therefore, I decided to maintain an awareness of the different discourses articulating the present assemblage of education, but to focus my analysis on disentangling the manner in which the everyday production of education had changed in the context of a deep neoliberalisation of the Chilean society.

This shift brought me back to the initial uncertainties that I had about the project itself, i.e. about the implications and fruitfulness of placing the locus of observation on a city to analyse the production of the educational assemblage. I did not know whether there was something relevant to see at the level of the urban life related to the structural changes that the educational system had suffered. I did not know whether I would find something like a localised problematisation of education in the city of Rancagua to analyse. Therefore, it was engaging again with these broad doubts that I finally chose what to describe. Indeed, the more general answer, after spending a year exploring what was going on within the city's limits, was that there was an evident absence of discourses, subjectivities and practices problematising education as an urban, public matter. This absence, experienced as an obstacle and limitation of my research, became the focus of my attention. As Foucault (1984) argues, 'genealogy must define even those instances when they are absent' (p. 76). The analytical question became what enabled me to trace and understand the historical conditions of this absence.

The primary condition present in my data to understand the absence of a public discussion of educational problems was its privatisation. Therefore, I decided to focus my thesis on the process of school privatisation and on understanding its relation with the *depoliticisation* of the educational field.

Intensive analysis: writing the chapters

The relation between school privatisation and depoliticisation worked as a specific guiding question organising a second review of the empirical data, the codes and categories I already had. In concrete, I grouped the codes related to privatisation in new categories and analysed those categories that more clearly illustrated the descent/emergence of practices, subjectivities and discourses in the schools' realm of the city. In doing this, I identified three categories that were strongly associated with privatisation and depoliticisation: urban school milieu, teachers' subjectivity, and community engagement. These dimensions then became my four analytical chapters.

The analytical category of 'urban school milieu' refers to the effects of the schools' realm upon the city life, including aspects such as the use of spaces, commuting, architecture, amongst others. In Chapter 3, I provided an analysis of this category to describe the process of school privatisation and depoliticisation. I did this by describing present-day practices that are both taken for granted and problematic. The primary empirical data of this chapter draws on my experience of walking around the city and the work with students.

The category of 'teachers' subjectivity' refers to what teachers are and what they do. It included codes that referred both to the descent and the emergence of teachers' subjectivity. This distinction became a central piece in my analytical chapters. I then decided to present in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 these two sides of the category. Chapter 4 provides a genealogical analysis of a specific process of descent, that is the subjectivity of traditional teachers. As a counterpoint, Chapter 5 develops the production of the entrepreneurial teacher subjectivity. Both of these chapters rely primarily on interviews and local anecdotes.

The category of ‘community/family engagement’ refers to the relation that parents and general neighbours establish with specific schools or the general realm of schooling. It included aspects such as school choice, parents’ associations, expectations, *inter alia*. Chapter 6 provides an analytical account of this dimension by describing a very singular event: the attempt of closing a public school.

The way to elaborate the analysis in each of these four chapters follows a similar strategy, using and including the varied range of sources I had produced in my fieldwork. Besides, they are thought as ethnographic and genealogical at the same time. What I mean is that I wrote them trying to balance both approaches in my interpretations, aims and emphasises. This enabled me to experience at first-hand what Tamboukou and Ball (2003) called the ‘dangerous encounter’ between ethnography and genealogy. My analysis, as they argue, is based on ‘subjectivities rather than subjects and conceives human reality not as an original force, but as an effect of the interweaving of certain historical and cultural practices which it sets out to trace and explore’ (p. 10). Thus, instead of only focusing on the experience of privatisation lived by different social actors, the following four analytical chapters aim to analyse the effects of privatisation on the urban school space of Rancagua. These effects are examined as discourses, practices and forms of resistance that articulate specific truths, subjectivities, and ethical attitudes in the urban realm.

Finally, the chapters are also similar in terms of its structure. First, they all start with a vignette, that is, a narrative composition of one or two pages that captures a situation or point of view using quotes from interviews and my own observations. The aim of these vignettes is to evoke the main argument of each chapter and situate the analysis of a certain aspect of privatisation in the local dynamics and history. Then, I move to situate the chapters’ argument within the literature of the field concerned with its specific theme. The aim is to provide the reader with the authors and discussions with whom I am dialoguing, showing the relevance of the chapter from this perspective. Later, I develop the argument by analysing my empirical data following a descriptive analysis, i.e., I try to describe in depth the main argument of the chapter and support that argument with different sources and data. In appendix

3 I provide an example of how a particular topic such as ‘teachers as neighbours’ is analysed by using different data sources. Finally, each chapter ends with a conclusion that contributes to the main argument of the thesis.

3

Private schooling and the immanent force of the city-space

Introduction: ‘Why didn’t we meet earlier?’

Winter School, final day, June 26th

Standing all in a circle, I gave the students a time to reflect together about what they learned in the workshop and to assess it. The mood was very different to the previous days, in which there always would be laughter and enthusiasm. On the contrary, in this closing moment the environment was tainted with seriousness. Albeit they only knew each other for a week, it seemed like the separation produced sadness in them, despite they had become "friends" on Facebook, and they also were meeting in a couple of weeks to organize an urban intervention.

To my surprise, Elena and Juan had written something and wanted to read it out loud. Elena studied in a municipal secondary school. She was 17 years old and had a daughter of two years. Juan was the same age, but he came from a catholic private school, the local elite.

Elena started by summarizing what was meaningful to her. Among other things, she mentioned: "Here we analysed our personal experiences, what we experience every day in our different schools: public municipal, state subsidized and private schools. By sharing these experiences we discovered that all our schools are commodified, that we are numbers and that we're used to improve the status and profit of the schools. We're taught to compete in different ways, to compare each other by our scores, to look for ways to win over our peers of the same school and of others too. In our schools, students have problems relating to their classmates, as well as with teachers. There are issues with teaching approaches, which don't make you think and focus on memorising. But in schools they're obsessed with the SIMCE and PSU and they give us prizes like cakes or grades. Private schools are compared with other privates, and we, the ones coming from municipal secondary schools, have to fight against academic or vocational schools. (...) In our discussions we discovered that we care about good schools, that they're of quality, but not a quality that segregates, rather a quality that ensures that we learn in a collective manner, not individualistic" (Fragment of Elena's text).

Then, Juan took out the text he wrote. It was an essay titled: "Give me a kilo of education", in which he talked about understanding education as a

commodity. He said that the SIMCE “is capable of making us cross the city because we think that we’ll buy better quality education. He suggested that the FIDE, the private school organization led by priests of his school, defended an educational system that was not appropriate, because it only benefited the interests of a few, and strengthened segregation through the payment of school fees. Lastly, he argued that it didn’t make sense to assess if education was good or bad by only measuring singular experiences. “The quality of education cannot be measured person by person, nor school by school. Rather, it can be observed to what degree the person integrates herself in society. The better the education of a country, the more empathy and conscience about others exists, and the more chances people have to find their vocations”.

The other youngsters applauded their peers, both approving the content and the fact that they were so diligent in bringing their ideas in writing. Then, they started talking about one of the things they most liked doing during this week: learning about research. “Listening, observing, making questions”, said Leo, explaining that “asking questions is researching and acting at the same time” was a revelation for him. Manuel added, “Looking at everyday situations, constantly asking questions, suspecting about situations that in the light of day seem normal”.

I asked, if we could repeat this workshop, what recommendations would they give? Isabel replied: “I don’t really know what to improve, but what we could do better is motivating others to participate more in these types of things”. Everybody seemed to agree, and they started having ideas on how they could invite more peers. Their faces showed enthusiasm again and the group's mood changed. I didn’t say it, but I thought that the question opened the possibility of keeping the group with me, as an organiser, at its head. It gave them hope to not let go, something that made them happy while also relieved. José, a very creative and extroverted guy who attended a vocational secondary school, asked the group: “Why didn’t we meet before?” And, as if for the first time he was taking his question seriously, he said that the best part of the workshop was having met each other, which was a strange thing in Rancagua. “We all come from very different schools, and although some of us live nearby each other, and we probably have passed each other over a thousand times in the square, it was impossible for us to meet.” (Field Note, July 26th 2014).

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The scene described here was the last activity of the Winter School for Education, an action research workshop I organized for youngsters coming from Rancagua secondary schools. The requirements to participate were: to be interested in education in the city; and to be aged between 16-18 years. Consequently, the possible student combination was unpredictable. It was by chance that there was a balance between male and female participants, as well as the types of schools and social

classes they belonged to. Amongst the participants, there were some who attended the oldest municipal school of Rancagua, others attended the most traditional private school in Rancagua, and others went to vocational schools which prepared mechanics, early years education assistants, and cooks. Juan, Marisol and Leo were children of parents with professional degrees, while José's mother was a seamstress and Vicente's mother worked as a cleaner in the Teacher's Union. The correspondence between types of schools and participants' social class, was a dramatically accurate microcosm of what studies about school segregation in Chile show (Allende et al., 2018; Bellei, 2013; H. Santos & Elacqua, 2016).

The workshop promoted listening to different experiences, so throughout the week we got to know each other. What I heard, from an external position, was that going to school in Rancagua meant very different things, depending on each school. One of the important differences was cost. While for some, schools were free, for others it meant paying for everything, study visits, uniforms, evening dress for the end of year gala, therapy for dealing with the pressure of results, etc. Another difference was the education itself. For example, Vicente always insisted that the essential thing at his school was the encouragement to be good and honest people. Meanwhile, Juan and Elena, both coming from schools oriented towards university entrance, were encouraged to stand out academically, which did not necessarily imply learning to think, but, over everything, memorizing. Vicente constantly avoided any written work, and only on one occasion I saw that his writing seemed like that of a ten-year-old. On the contrary, Elena and Juan had written four pages of reflections about the workshop, without anyone requesting it.

Despite these and many other differences, the dialogue, the interviews, and the collaborative analysis of problems done in the workshop led them to identify and denaturalize a series of 'normalities' of the Rancaguan educational context, which affected everyone. By comparing what was happening in different schools, they identified, discussed and critiqued two phenomena: On the one hand, the constant competition to which the teachers subjected them, either through comments, training for standardized tests, or the award of prizes. On the other hand, observing

the city as a whole, they noted the segregation arising from the capacity to pay, and that everybody knew which schools were more expensive or more desirable than others.

In addition, the participants' final reflections meant suddenly understanding something that now seems obvious to me: the practical implications of social segregation between schools. Whilst designing the workshop, I knew that if we developed a good environment, participants would be able to make a transversal analysis of their educational experiences. However, I did not know how profound the distance between each other could be, nor how strange and new it would be to listen to each other. Each participant had ideas about others' education, but in fact, had never heard directly experience coming from the other's voice. For instance, Juan's father threatened to put him in the state secondary school around the corner, if he decided to study theatre. But Juan had never met somebody going to that school. The participants coming from municipal schools observed with sarcasm the religiousness of private schools, but they never had the chance of even setting foot in one of them. There was curiosity on both sides, and in the workshop they explained each other how it was, both the good and bad.

In this chapter I analyse the everyday experience of fragmentation and commodification of school life, by taking into consideration students, teachers and the general population. The social segregation at its root, as well as the permanent insistence of performance comparisons between schools and the pressure to compete on this basis, is taken as a normalized truth in contemporary urban education. But it is a problematic truth which produces discomfort, but also has such a reproductive strength, that it seems inescapable.

I analyse these phenomena/experiences/mechanisms as part of a governance strategy of the population, which configure urbanity rules -ways of being in the city-, and create different subjectivities and particular life trajectories. I did not focus on the exploration of the mechanisms such as accountability or school choice, but in the production of a certain context, and the effects of privatisation on that context, which in turn becomes a force within the educational assemblage as a whole. Based on

Foucault (1984, 1995) and Osborne and Rose (1999), I understand that the city is a way of diagramming human existence, conduct and subjectivity, that is, life itself. More concretely, I will argue that education, alongside health and social welfare, is a fundamental field of urban governance. Education is a means of governance that acts upon the population by configuring the urban milieu, i.e. not only through the institutions of schools.

In the following sections, I describe how two forms of schooling and the city coproduce each other. First, I analyse the imminent force of the neoliberal city and the school privatization/commodification, which is experienced simply by living in the city. Second, I analyse continuities and changes in the way schooling is configuring the city landscape.

The immanent force of educational privatisation

An urban diagrammatic

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) suggests that social medicine developed in France along with the expansion of urban politics in the 17th-18th century. Besides analysing the architecture of enclosed institutions as a form of control over the body, Foucault shows how medicine became a bio-political strategy that operates directly in the organisation of collective life (Elden, 2003). He notes that in this period a collection of modes of intervention appeared, which, beyond therapeutic criteria, were concerned with modes of life, food, dwelling and environment, posing questions of spatiality and the surveillance of population at the centre of the art of government. To illustrate his point, Foucault (1995) compares the treatment that European towns gave first to leprosy, and then to the plague, by explaining the differences as a shift in the general rationale of the government. For whilst leprosy had given rise to rituals of exclusion, the plague gave rise to disciplinary strategies that required careful surveillance, order and spatial partitioning.

Following Foucault's reflections on contemporary strategies for population control, Osborne and Rose (1999) speculate about 'the different ways in which government has been territorialised in an urban form' (p. 737). They argue that the Greek city –

the polis – was possibly the first exercise of ‘diagramming’ human life in the name of government, understanding it as a set of rules and regulations – a *politia* – arranged in order to make the polis work as a ‘spatial milieu of immanence’ (p. 738). According to these authors, during the Enlightenment, Western cities recovered from the Greek polis the benefits of the immanent force by drawing on the idea of ‘police’ (*politia*). It was signified as an ensemble of mechanisms through which order was ensured without the need of a coercive force. They go later on to discern ‘operative rationales’ of different urban formations, suggesting that current ‘advanced liberal cities’ developed as ‘a milieu for the regulation of a carefully modified freedom’ – a ‘laboratory of conduct’ ‘to govern through rather than in spite of individual liberty’ (1999, pp. 739–740).

The conception of the city as a milieu of immanence, suggests the possibility of analysing schools as key features of the urban rationale, and Rancagua as ‘a milieu of self-fabrication’, as a space that embodies ‘a tendency to a natural government’, as Osborne and Rose (1999, p. 738) put it. In other words, it seems productive to think of the educational apparatus from the perspective of urban governance, that is, to understand the *dispositif* of education as a force that shapes behaviours and subjectivities through its influence over the spatial milieu of the city. In concrete terms, this helps us to understand, for instance, that the participants of the Winter School were impeded in ‘knowing’ each other, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. The formation of this milieu does not rest on explicit rules, nor of coercive ones. On the contrary, nobody would have prevented these secondary students – who lived relatively close to each other and had similar interests – from talking to each other. However, the circuits of schooling in the city and the general educational politics of the city produced specific kinds of interactions, which meant that the students rarely found the place or time to interact, and even fewer opportunities to discuss together their school experiences and their political dreams. In addition, this perspective helps me to make a range of experiences intelligible, as I lived in Rancagua during my fieldwork. Especially, in regards to the inescapable reminder that education was commodified, and an essentially private matter.

Privatised education, indeed, was not something needing to be revealed or discovered, but was a visible statement, a truth of the city, easily experienceable as a regularity in the public space. Moreover, privatised education had an ‘urban diagrammatic’ (Osborne & Rose, 1999), and it was possible to map its ‘codes immanent in forces and their relations, the abstract machine comprising hundreds of little points of emergence’ (p. 739).

Little points of emergence

Living in and walking through Rancagua’s city centre, provided a particular perspective on the immanent power of the educational form. The urban politics of privatised education was present in buildings, commercial flows, routes, and signs, forms of authority, objects, problems and means of action, things that could be said, done or seen, as well as power relations, bodies, outfits and gestures giving flesh to certain subjectivities only possible in this milieu. The message seemed simple: education is a key element of contemporary life and has the form of multiple services that different providers offer and individuals consume attending to their specific needs, tastes and possibilities.

I would like to mention some examples that may illustrate how urban life changed in the most unexpected ways with educational privatisation. Approaching any news kiosk is one of them. Newsagents still survive in Chilean cities despite the digitalisation of newspapers, and people in Rancagua considered them part of their normal life. They offer all sorts of basic products, from magazines to newspapers, from sandwiches and fruits, to mobile phone chargers, in addition to the newest comments about local or national contingencies. Thus, I got into the habit of stopping by the kiosk in front of my building, to read the headlines and then buying either “El Rancagüino” or “El Tipógrafo”, the local daily newspapers which everyone seemed to prefer over national publications. Unlike in Santiago, where single schools only became news if there was an explosion or a paedophile case, Rancagüinos were informed every week about news involving one school or another. The articles seemed to deliberately alternate the coverage of activities of different schools, but there were some schools that appeared more than others – the more traditional ones.

The news' content usually raised positive topics, such as tournament winners, the expansion of some construction, or an anniversary party. The manner in which news was described sought to attenuate the fact that some of the schools belonged to the municipality and others to private owners. Even in articles referring to a municipal school, there was no attempt to convey a sense of collective (communal) belonging in the narrative of events. Overall, these news items seemed to be aimed at the community of each school, rather than articulated in terms of a local identity. The news operated as a reminder that a school was successful at something, and as a concrete form of promotion of schools, making them into an attractive product for everyone.

The tiny world of newsagents provided even more specific points of emergence and production of privatised education and its related fears and desires – the selling of lottery tickets and scratch cards. As can be seen in Figure 3, one of the most popular scratch cards of the National Lottery, called “Education for your whole life!”, thrilled everyone with the payment of twelve years of compulsory education and/or four years of post-school studies. The scratch card clearly identified the rules of the education game, while also becoming a micro-builder of it (or, at least, a contributor), since it suggested in a very simple manner, that education was purchasable, and if you lacked the income, you could still have some education if you were lucky.

Figure 3: Scratch Card - Education for your whole life!

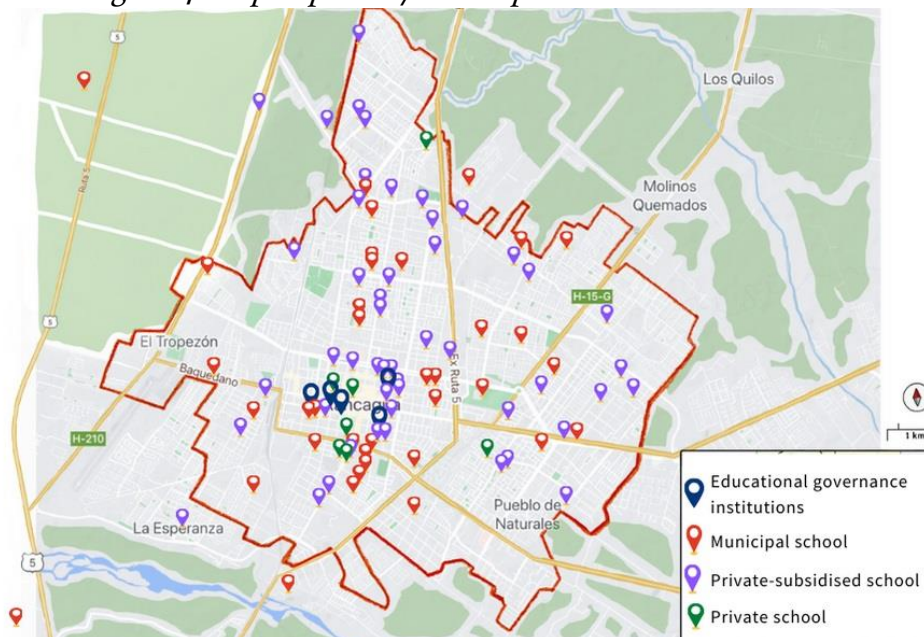


Source: www.lasegunda.com/Noticias/Nacional/2013/03/827788/La-Polla-lanzara-un-raspe-que-pagara-la-educacion-escolar-y-universitaria

Schools, façades and commuters

These small elements of urban life were situated and occurred in a broad material context. The city centre itself was a huge market with multiple brands of choice, a place where comparing schools was as feasible as comparing shoe stores or restaurants. The sector of eight by eight streets was not only the public service and commercial sector of the city par excellence, but it was also a sector with a high concentration of schools, as can be seen in Figure 4. This related to different factors – e.g. transport access –, but above all, to the fact that Rancaguan families still valued studying in schools ‘from the city centre’ rather than in schools ‘de barrio’ [neighbourhoods’ schools]. This, in turn, related to the prestige that oldest schools that were situated in the centre maintained, and which explained why during decades many new private schools tried to locate themselves within this sector. Therefore, when walking through the city centre, it was impossible to ignore that the school organisation in the city was not based on a spatial distributive logic related to the different neighbourhoods where students came from, outside the city centre. It was also evident that there was something to choose among all these alternatives, they could be compared by various criteria including the sorts of students attending.

Figure 4: map of private/municipal schools in the downtown



Source: Adapted by me from Google Map

Before describing the schools, it is worth mentioning what other significant buildings were part of the educational landscape in the downtown – the educational governance institutions. Officially, the most important building was the *Secretaría Regional del Ministerio de Educación* (SEREMI). By then, its main responsibility was to implement national decisions on curricular matters that were measured yearly with standardised tests. Two blocks to the north-east was the regional headquarters of the *Superintendencia de Educación*, a government institution created in 2012, fundamentally in charge of inspecting the adequate use of the State-provided resources through the voucher system, both to private and municipal schools. In the same street was also the office of the *Vicaría de la Educación*, the agency of the Archdiocese of Rancagua responsible of orienting and coordinating regional schools that applied to the official category or Catholic schools (seven of these schools were in the city of Rancagua). Very close by was the Corporation of Municipal Education. This entity, also called ‘*sostenedor municipal*’, was created in 1980 to administrate former state schools. In 2014, the corporation was in charge of 33 schools in the whole city, 34% of the schools in Rancagua. In contrast, there was no building (nor entity) coordinating the private offer of 57 ‘*sostenedores privados*’ and their schools in the city, that is those which were not part of the Catholic Archdiocese and had nothing to do with the municipality.

In the map of Figure 4, one can observe that the downtown schools occupied key spaces of the city. Neither their distribution nor their visual aspect conveyed the idea of a network of schools. On the contrary, schools seemed isolated projects, since each school evidently had a different trajectory, different types of names and architectonic styles. For historical reasons the most important places in the urban plane were still occupied by the oldest municipal schools (former state schools), one on either side of the main square, like the first Ladies’ secondary school from Rancagua (founded in 1906); or very nearby, just a couple of blocks away from there, like the first Men secondary school in the city (founded in 1846, current Liceo Óscar Castro) or the first boys’ primary school (founded in 1791). Other long established schools in the area were two confessional schools aimed at the city’s elite since the beginning of the 20th

century - the school Instituto O'Higgins (founded in 1915, see Picture 2) and the Nun's School for ladies (founded in 1923). In addition, there were nine other private schools that did not have a long tradition, but that had achieved the status of central schools. In Chapter 4, I will further describe the emergence of new private schools.

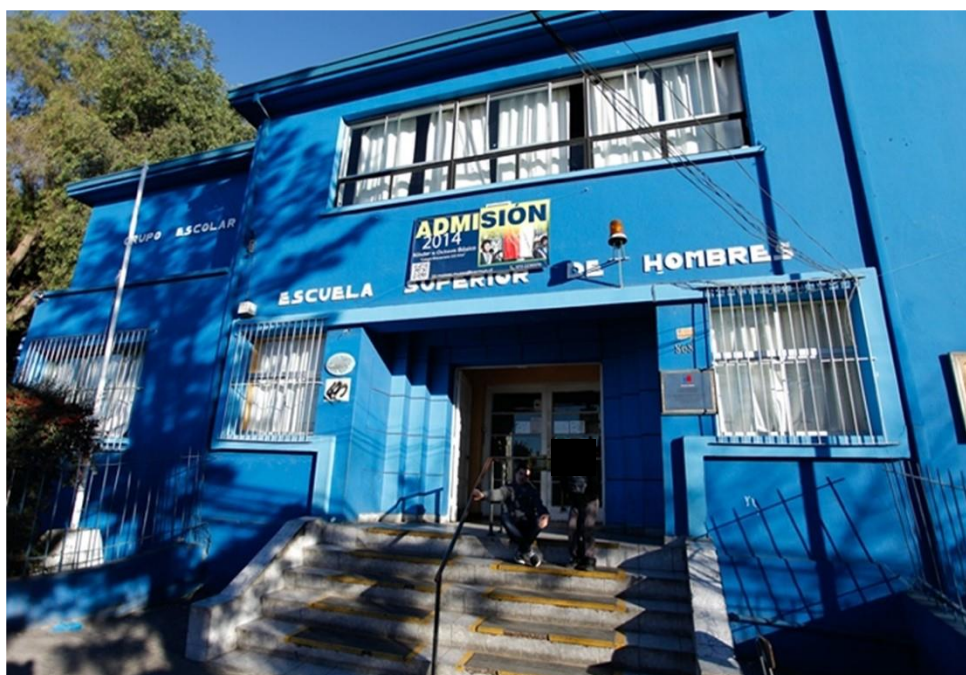
Picture 2;: Primary and Secondary Private School "Instituto O'Higgins"



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

As previously mentioned, the buildings of the centrally located schools were architecturally very different. While the municipal schools had an evident state seal of construction or refurbishment of different periods, the old religious schools resembled convents (e.g. compare the private and municipal school in Picture 2 and Picture 3)

Picture 3: Primary Municipal School “Moisés Mussa”



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

Most of the private school buildings were constructed after 1990, and displayed various designs, as can be seen in the set of photos on Picture 4. The newest buildings conveyed, through their façade, differentiated ideas of their educational project. For example, one school building had white columns in its entrance, showing influences coming from ancient Greece. Meanwhile, just down the block, there were other buildings that could be confused with any public office occupying an old adobe house, or which looked like a massive green prison.

Picture 4: Private subsidised schools in the city centre. School “Santo Tomás”, School “ElBosco”, School “Instituto Regional de Educación”, School “Nazareth”



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

As the establishments were so different in terms of style, colours and size, it was not easy to recognise them as schools with a quick glance. The way to be sure that they were actually schools, was by focusing on the entrance signs, which sometimes were large or in other cases were small plates, usually only with the name of the school, without specifying the type of administration. Frequently schools publicised their offer with giant posters that included smiling white children or self-determined uniformed adolescents, “outstanding” outcomes in a standardised test, or a list of attractive facilities (i.e. laboratories, English classes, sports).

Referring to the purpose of publicity and signs, September and October were months in which schools were particularly keen on citizens noticing them, in the run up to the student enrolment period in March of the following year. All the schools in Chile depend economically on their enrolment rates, both in the case of private paid schools, municipal schools or private subsidised schools. Financially, the more applicants the better. Each school had their own requirements for application, normally including previous academic records, knowledge tests and parent

interviews. The more applicants, the more opportunities a school has to choose students, something considered important for getting good results with lower costs. Simultaneously, in September and October of each year the Ministry of Education released the national results of the SIMCE tests, which reported performance in different curricular areas and for different grades. The results are made public by municipality, type of school (municipal, private subsidised and paid private) and for individual schools, both through the press – as rankings – and an information sheet sent by the Ministry to parents. During September and October students could try to move from one school to another, it was a period for attracting applicants and, therefore, schools with outstanding results typically hung a large poster communicating their achievement.

‘March is haunting you?’

The architecture, the distribution of schools in space, the subtle practices like daily reading about private schools or thinking about the possibility of winning the lottery to spend on education, are all elements that composed a stable and repetitive scenario of commodified education for urban life. However, the rhythm of the educational market in the city is stronger in March, the month in which the Chilean school year begins. It was also the month in which I arrived in Rancagua in 2014 to start my second and longer period of fieldwork.

In direct contrast to the northern hemisphere, in Rancagua, March meant fresher nights announcing that the summer was ending and that everyone who left the city for summer holidays was back. From one week to another, the city forgot its summer slowness and started swarming again with people and traffic.

The streets revived with a massive movement of uniformed students crossing the city to get to school before 8 am. Most of them walk, some of them use public transport, or yellow private buses or family cars. Looking at the scene from above, they seem like rows of ants that, coming from multiple origins, combine into broader columns to disappear into different holes. In the afternoon, the same aligned bodies come out into the public space, reminding the city that children and young people have not

disappeared from the urban life for good. In the main square, where many clusters of little ants made their appearance after school, it was easy to distinguish different species by their outfits. For instance, municipal school students were recognisable by their navy blue uniforms that could be purchased in Rancaguan retail shops or on any high street shop of the country. Meanwhile, private school students stand out for having uniforms with particular colours and styles that could only be found in small local shops. Uniforms and school emblems on the garments enable one to sense whether their parents paid fees and how high they are. In the square, the wearers of outfits of different colours rarely mixed.

Meanwhile, during this particular period parents were buying all sorts of things related to school, and it seemed they had left this task for last. As they had organised themselves to do what was necessary, they spread throughout the commercial streets to hunt for diverse items such as school uniforms, tracksuits, shoes, office and art supplies, notebooks and books, schoolbags, lunch boxes, cocoa milk and multivitamin cereals, computers, magazines with parenting advice, news about good and bad brands, and so on. Trade –advertisements, display cabins, new products and offers – appeared in March as a central educational actor, perhaps the main voice announcing to the whole city that families with children were facing the annual milestone of starting a new academic year. In fact, the concept of schooling as an opportunity for a boost to sales has become established in Chile as much as the national parties that take place in September and the birth of Jesus in December. Even chicken and toilet paper sellers feel tempted to accompany their products with signs welcoming kids to the classrooms.

There was no doubt that schooling was a social practice capable of intensively mobilising people and commerce. It was also a source of concern and for many, a reason to get into debt. The slogan ‘*¿Se te apareció Marzo?*’ [‘Is March haunting you?'] appeared everywhere: on buses, bus stops, newspapers, radio and on TV. It was a self-evident and catchy phrase to express the budgetary concerns that many citizens felt when the summer holidays were coming to an end. Coined in the early 2000s by Bank Santander, it was still used to advertise loans specifically aimed at

'relieving' households of the extra expenses they faced. In addition to the payment of estate and car licence taxes, and school supplies, 70% of the families in Rancagua also paid enrolment and monthly school fees. The latter varied from \$10,000 to \$200.000 per month, that is, from approximately ten pounds to two hundred (or a basic income in Chile), depending on the school and any possible "special deal" for a whole annual payment or for enrolling more than one child into the school.

These loans are aimed specifically at families which: first, had many school expenses; and second, could rely on stable salaries enabling them to pay the debt in instalments, throughout the following months. Stable salaries were not a reality for everyone in Rancagua, but the association of March and education-related budget problems were a concern that crossed social classes in the city. Indeed, anxiety was a shared experience which had been perfectly captured in the bank slogan. It was also a strong reminder that education was a private matter that each family had to face according to their choices. Besides the school fees, there were multiple possibilities to differentiate between consumers in a segmented market. For instance, arriving at school. Most students walked, but there was a higher status associated with arriving in a yellow (privately paid) bus. Purchases were also differentiated: some people bought in *ferias libres* [informal street markets], others in the shops of Chinese imports, others in the big retail outlets in highstreets and shopping centres; and others in the newer and more expensive shopping centre nearer Machali, in the east of the city, the new site for wealthy family households, private schools and offices.

In sum, what I want to illustrate with these everyday experiences of the city is the pervasiveness of school privatisation in people's urban life and the materiality of the city as a particular social space of interaction. Schooling, as the city conveys, is both a shared and a private matter. It is an issue that interpellates almost everyone in the city, and it divides practices and subjectivities. It expresses itself at the urban level through different points of emergence, some seem anecdotal, like short stories in the newspapers, or the division created by the possibility of paying or not paying fees. Privatisation also entails disciplinary mechanisms, like the existence of different

types of schools, the system of school funding, and a centralised form of school accountability which operates to influence and control the practices of the urban population. But privatisation also entails mechanisms that work by relying on forms of freedom, whether in choosing schools, walking or commuting by car, buying certain products and placing specific expectations for formal education. Hence, as one of the fibres composing the fabric of education, privatisation shows its effects in shaping ways of thinking about and acting towards one another and toward themselves. In particular, what interests me here is that through education the city becomes a space where a continual comparison of and anxiety regarding schools is allowed and fostered, where fragmentation is taken as a natural truth, and conceptions and perspectives in relation to the social realm of education are reduced to the opportunity of choosing and forms of consumption. Thus, the city that education policy composes, produces the conditions, the ‘networks of existence’ within which entrepreneurial and competitive conduct is possible. As Osborne and Rose (1999) suggests,

the fabrication of the self is not a once- and-for-all matter, accomplished in family or school, nor does it rely on exterior transcendental sources: it is continuously maintained in the very act of participation in the networks of existence. If the city is a useful milieu for these processes of self- fabrication, this is insofar as it is within the city that the networks of association form that will shape and stabilise this relation of the self to itself and to others. (p. 750)

Continuities and changes in the urban politics of education

From a Chilean flag to a poster with the SIMCE’s scores

The ethnographic fieldwork showed that privatised and commodified education was territorialised in different urban forms. It also evidenced that practices and discourses configuring the city and its educational realm were not reducible to one simple and monolithic rationale of educational governance, which fits with Osborne and Rose’s (1999) argument regarding the analytical exercise of an urban diagrammatic. On the one hand, these authors urge for the need to diagnose, for specific cities, the diagram that gives consistency to ‘the multitude of local, fluid,

fleeting endeavours, stratagems, and tactics that characterise the forces seeking to govern this or that aspect of urban existence' (p. 758). However, on the other hand, they warn that this does not imply an homogeneity in the elements giving life to actually existing cities. Indeed, they argue that diagrams are constantly decomposing and recomposing, since they are 'nothing more than the regularities immanent in their instantiations—they are internally agonistic, continually fragmenting, splitting off new configurations of forces, generating new potential diagrams, some of which will stabilise, while others decompose' (p. 758).

In this section I want to show that educational privatisation in Rancagua was not the only truth at play. The practices of urban governance outlined previously are set over and against other imaginaries and government rationales, some of which are conditions of possibility for privatisation. In particular, I want to refer to the declining presence of a schooling logic based on the construction of the Chilean nation, which implied a very different form of urban governance.

A way to analyse the shift from the predominant mode of city governance through education is by paying attention to how schools presented themselves to the public space. As I described in the previous section, schools interacted with commuters through their façades, specifically the architecture, plaques and posters advertising their 'added values' (as educational experts liked to say). In the context of school choice and competition, these displays can only be interpreted as an attempt to distinguish themselves from others, while expecting to be chosen or at least desired. In this arena of competition, municipal schools operated at a disadvantage, since the discourse that private education was better was deeply ingrained in common sense. Therefore, when a municipal school had the "privilege" of becoming a "good" school according to standardised test results, they would immediately hang a large poster at the front of their building proudly announcing these results, as can be seen in Picture 5.

Picture 5: Sign at the entrance of the Liceo Óscar Castro, 2014.



Rancagua, October 2014. Sign at the entrance of the Liceo Óscar Castro: “Congratulations to our students and teachers for leading the scores from the public education sector in Rancagua. SIMCE 8th grade: Reading literacy 310 points, Maths 316 points, Natural Sciences 321 points

Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

As I already mentioned, local newspapers tended to cover news about the schools in the city, which sometimes included anniversary celebrations. This was how I found in the daily *El Rancagüino* news about *Liceo Óscar Castro*, the oldest secondary school in Rancagua. Given the massive annual student application, this *liceo* was the only municipal school with a selective admission. It was one of the few public schools that presented itself as a “leading” school with excellent results in standardised tests, placing on its frontage a huge poster with details about its rankings’ position (see Figure 5).

The commemorative article, which briefly summed up the history of the school, founded in 1846, included the following picture, taken in 1911:

Figure 5: Picture of Liceo Óscar Castro, 1911



Source: El Rancagüino, July 28th 2014

Besides the impression that the building was nicer in 1911 than the current anti-earthquake version, the big Chilean flag fluttering above the school's main entrance caught my attention. Just as it is today, the *liceo* was at that time considered a prestigious public secondary school, both in the city and region. However there was no milieu of market competition, nor any system of comparable results to provide the basis for a formal ranking. Indeed, in 1911 this was the only men's secondary school in Rancagua, thus any "real" competition was impossible. In the city, at least, it was 60 years ahead of any other institution. It was not until 1906 that the first Lady's Secondary school was founded, in 1915 the first religious school for men was created by the Marista Brothers, a Spanish Catholic congregation. As explained by its own historians (Gajardo & Loyola, 2012), the Marista Brothers were requested by the Chilean Church to challenge the dominance of Free Masonry in the provision of elite education. The Masons had captured the growing state apparatus and appealed to the lay culture of the emerging professional classes (Serrano et al., 2012). Hence, a form of situated competition between schools began here, but it was led by different projects of society, not by enrolling students to secure the state vouchers funding as one can currently observe.

A second point that I want to highlight with respect to the presence of the Chilean flag is that, in comparison to the present, it reminds us that public schools were

fundamentally a point of entry of the nation-state into the cities (Canessa, 2012; Rival, 2002). The flag was a proud sign of the state character of the school institution and, at the same time, an expression of the political project that since the Independence of Spain in 1810 had sought to drive public education in Chile. In fact, the creation of state schools was considered highly relevant to emphasising discontinuities with the colonial past, and therefore education was one of the first policies of the new Republic (Baeza Ruz, 2010). At the beginning of the 20th century, when the centenary of the Independency was celebrated and as the school system began to expand, the use of the flag became compulsory for every school, so also was the celebration of the national ephemerids, the use of the Spanish language, and the reaffirmation of the patriotic values through the curriculum (M. I. Orellana, 2009). Schooling was much more than the teaching of literacy and numeracy, it was ‘about the teaching of citizenship, about engendering a sense of national consciousness’, as Canessa (2012, p. 190) argues.

By reading old local newspapers, chronicles and interviews that describe how Rancagüinos lived in the 20th century, one can notice that despite the important expansion of the school system and the multiplication of primary and different types of secondary schools in the city, schooling as a whole maintained a central role in situating education within the idea of national and local progress. Hence, the city seemed to hail its citizens to feel proud of its different schools and its youth, since they represented a common and optimistic horizon of development for the Chilean Republic. Moreover, the ‘republican culture’ (Ruiz, 2010) that schooling fostered was not only compulsory in forms dictated by the central government, like flags and patriotic ceremonies. On the contrary, there were multiple practices, spaces, rituals, subjectivities and signs co-producing an urban life that re-instantiated this new form of citizenship. For example, as I have already mentioned, there was the solemnity that gave the presence of the public schools in the main square. Or the emergence and consolidation of a teachers’ culture, recognised by everyone as a social group that took responsibility for raising the education level from the city. And so, to give some more examples, instances like the Spring parties, the election of the beauty

queen, city sports tournaments, and the celebration of the last day of school in the main square were all activities where students from rival schools and the entire city could meet and rehearse a shared local (and national) identity and sense of community.

The parade of soldiers and living forces of the city

When the school system was privatised, Chilean flags, the old metal placards of state schools and the concept of ‘public school’ painted on the front of the educational buildings slowly began to disappear. As I am going to analyse in detail in the following chapters, this was not the effect of an imposition of some decree, but a consequence of the ways that the schools adapted to the new rules of the local market. However, it would be a mistake to think that the republican diagram of the schooling landscape in Rancagua was simply replaced by a neoliberal order of things. There were multiple elements that I observed during my fieldwork that were unintelligible without considering the strength –however declining– of other modes of governing the urban life through schooling. The following passage of fieldnotes details the clearer experience I had in Rancagua regarding this complexity.

The parade of the Battle of Rancagua

According to the local newspapers, around ten thousand spectators were there this Wednesday on the streets, standing like me to view the civic-military parade that since 1914 commemorates the anniversary of the Battle of Rancagua, one of the key combats fought during the Independency process. The air was cold for October and dark clouds threatened with rain, but the atmosphere was festive enough to maintain the public enthusiastic and loyal until the end of an act that would last at least three hours. There were elderlies and young couples with children around, as well as some groups of youngsters and lonely adults, especially women, maybe relatives from the cadets and students marching this day. Moreover, as a natural complement of any popular street party in Chile, lots of street vendors, either shouting through the crowd or standing at their trolleys, were selling colourful windmills and balloons, hats and Chilean flags, sopaipillas, and all sorts of cheap industrial snacks.

I had found a good position in the crowd and could see the grandstands especially constructed for the attending dignitaries. I recognised the regional governor, the major, the MPs of the zone, and Rancagua’s bishop. At about 11 am the Minister of Interior and the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, side by side in the middle of the street, inaugurated proceedings before going to sit with the rest of the official visitors. The procession was initiated with

about two thousand uniformed men and women. The public, meanwhile, were kept at a cautious distance by police on foot or on horseback. They took pictures with their mobiles and cheered the soldiers with admiration. A presenter announced the names and specialities of each troop and when the last one passed, he pompously announced the entrance of ‘the living forces of the city’. Then, after some organisations like the Fire brigades and the Ladies in Red, about 2.200 students took the street representing the 44 secondary schools of Rancagua.

The way of marching and the attitude of the students made it difficult not to associate them with the soldiers. Concentrated and visibly proud, they attempted to maintain their lines forming compact sections for each school. All the delegations were perfectly uniformed, with the institutional emblems sewed at breast level on the left. The outfits from both boys and girls were similar to their daily school uniform, but in a more ornate version, including different kinds of accessories – like white gloves – that reinforced the military image of the performance. Moreover, some schools included brass bands and drums guided by a student with a mace. These figures were by far the most attractive ones for the people on the public, who enjoyed comparing the school performances and outfits, and were especially expectant when it was the turn of their own school or that of their relatives or friends. So, along with what I read as an expression of local organisation, discipline and patriotism aimed to give a good impression to the authorities and outsiders, the parade also seemed to be a statement of schools’ identity and differentiation for the locals.

As the school delegations passed by, the speaker introduced them solemnly pointing out the schools’ names and their year of foundation, a brief description of the establishment, and the name of the student caring the banner. The descriptions, I found out later, were written by the head teachers of each establishment, and the turns of appearance decided by the municipality.

The first school that marched this year was “el Liceo”, the first state men’s secondary school in the city, once the cradle of the local elite.

“Liceo Óscar Castro makes its entrance. Founded on July 29th 1846, it maintains since then its tradition as a Scientific-Humanistic school, leading the academic positions of the municipal schools in the region. The banner is carried by the student Cristian Madrid, and escorted by the students Camila González and Pamela Navarrete”.

The other seven municipal liceos marched immediately behind while the speaker kept talking with deep voice:

“Founded in August 1906, the Liceo María Luisa Bombal lies in the Heroes’ Square of Rancagua. The Girls School shines as a lighthouse for the young ladies of the city and the region, where the families find female, traditional and excellent education...”.

“The Institute of Mining and Technology Bernardo O’Higgins, founded first as a primary school in 1946, counts now with 900 male and female students and gives three specialities: Mining exploitation, Geological assistance and Electricity...”.

The list and short comments continued in this way, with secondary schools of different curriculum and labour orientations. Then, behind the public schools, a large section of all the privately administered schools came, as if it were a different category in a competition. This division mixed in the sequence the 29 subsidised schools and the 7 totally privately paid schools. The spoken presentations sounded very similar to the municipal institutions, with the only difference that most of the private schools were created after 1980.

“The Einstein Institute is a private subsidised school created in 1982 in the sector El Manzanal. It is characterised by placing the student at the centre of its pedagogical work...”.

“La República, founded in 2002, is a secular not-for-profit school, which underpins its action with the principles of the freemasonry...”.

“The Instituto O’Higgins is celebrating 100 years dedicated to the formation of good citizens and virtuous Christians, responsible for building a fairer society by integrating faith, culture and life...”.

Talking to the people who were standing like me on the side, I met Francisco, who was taking pictures of his son. In his opinion, the 2nd October had been always felt an important event by the schools and the whole city. Himself had marched many times for the Instituto Inglés in the 1990s, he said, then adding that

“The most important military authorities always come. I even marched ones for Patricio Aylwin [the first president after Pinochet], which was felt like an honour by us. And that has been so for many generations. My father, for instance, who went to the public liceo, always tells his experience of having marched in front of Charles de Gaulle in 1964”.

(Field Note, October 2nd 2013).

*

The parade of the 2nd October illustrates well the continuities and changes in the immanent forces that are possible to map in the city. But its analytical value does not lie on its regular character. On the contrary, it works as an exception to the rules, a very specific event that actually disrupts – as any carnival does – what is allowed to happen, to say and think.

Based on my daily experiences of and participation in the city’s routines, my impression of Rancagua was that schooling was anchored to the logic of competition

and privatised experience, supply and demand, the commercialising and consuming of differentiated educational products. Moreover, I observed that there were no discursive or spatial conditions that allowed students and teachers of different types of schools to interact, since even the *fiestas* or tournaments were divided according to types of schools. The only encounters between different school communities, when they existed, responded to the fact that they all belonged to a particular administration (e.g. the municipality or the group of Catholic schools) or that the school owners were part of some private school association (e.g. FIDE). The one experience that was shared was that of fragmentation. Furthermore, during my year in Rancagua I systematically looked for spaces and groups where there were discussions about education as an urban and collective matter, without any luck. Neither the political parties, nor the unions, nor the neighbourhoods' associations nor the municipality nor the Church approached the schooling issue as something that had a relation to their political projects for the city.

The parade, as a dense and disruptive event in the spatial milieu of the city, in effect enacts an absent presence that is visible for a fleeting time. In first place, the parade breaks the sense of fragmentation, recovering instead a form of integration. In name of the nation, and after the military force, the speaker introduces the troops of students as complementary forces – ‘the living forces of the city’. Hence, beyond other analyses, something exceptional is going on here, for this one day the city is celebrating its schools and secondary students as a matter of its concern and pride. And so it also happens that the schools and their students feel proud to contribute to the city, and to represent loyalty for the nation in name of their city.

Secondly, the parade contrasts with the normal dynamics of the urban privatised school realm within which competition becomes secondary to collaboration. Even though one could argue that each school's delegation is competing with the others according to their outfits and their performance, what is significant is that each school takes part in the commemoration with full commitment, somehow understanding that a good performance of their school is relevant for achieving a good performance at the gaze of the authorities looking at it.

Thirdly, a topic that I will address on Chapter 5 is the relevance that privatisation has as a symbol and enactment what is new and innovative. The parade, however, disrupts the celebration of the new in the unfolding of a memorial ceremony that pays tribute to the country (independence), the city (the battle of Rancagua) and the history of the schools of Rancagua (as noted the announcer offered a brief story of each of the 44 secondary school that participate in the parade).

This parade is an exceptional event then. There are traces of privatisation but I want to emphasise that there is more than this single logic of power and government at play. Even though, sometime other logics are more implicit or less visible. It is the articulation of all of these different logics which make up the actually existing city. The parade, in this sense, acts as an event that enables us to think about other logics that are “absent” at a first glance. The city, more than a mere scenario of schooling, honours and is honoured by the schools. The parade illustrates that the city has an important place in understanding urban education beyond the idea of context. The relevance is to remind us that education already was an urban governance apparatus, just different before privatisation.

By recognising these other logics of power, as Coldron et al. (2010) and Clarke and Mills (2021) do, I want to highlight that privatisation entails a rationale of government that is not enough to explain what has been going on in the city. This assertion is relevant to not glorify the past and to maintain clarity of what needs to be changed, thus avoiding oversimplifications. For instance, when Coldron et al. (2010) studied social segregation in English secondary schools, they conclude that overcoming segregated schooling is not simply about improving or disrupting the market rationale, as parents’ motivation to differentiate from their social class is one of several deep mechanisms at play when understanding school segregation. Similarly, Clarke and Mills (2021) develop a genealogical reading of public education in England and argue that ‘schooling in England has never been public in any deeply meaningful sense’ (p. 1) precisely because the idea of ‘the public’ as never been opposed to ideas such as inequality or exclusion; on the contrary, they have gone hand-in-hand..

In this chapter, I have not analysed in depth prior rationales at play in shaping the city, but I acknowledge them as possible lines of inquiry that opened for me. To be precise, the line of research I have pursued relates with Graham-Gibson's (2014) and Brenner and Theodore's (2002) idea of studying the complex articulation between neoliberal practices and other practices that are not necessarily part of the same epistemic discourse.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that schooling can be understood as a way in which the urban experience is shaped. I particularly focus on the immanent forces that configure the privatised school scenario of the city and its *politia*, i.e., the set of rules and regulations arranged in order to make the polis work as a 'spatial milieu of immanence' (Osborne & Rose, 1999, p. 738) which works through processes of self-fabrication.

In order to describe the immanent force of education, the first issue that I address is the immanent force of educational privatisation. Following Foucault's (1995) and Osborne and Rose (1999) ideas I argue that every urban formation involves operative rationales, discourses and practices that shape the order of how things work within that specific formation. For the case of liberal cities such as Rancagua, one of the distinctive futures of regulation of the city life is 'to govern through rather than in spite of individual liberty' (1999, pp. 739–740). I then analysed different points of emergence of the private logic in education. These points enable me to describe privatised education not as something to hidden, but as part of city's truth, written, literally on its surfaces (billboards, advertising, posters, banners), and experienced as a regularity in the public space. These little points are complemented with the analysis of the broader material context of the city schools, like their architecture and distribution of schools in space. I then analysed March, a moment of the year where the educational market of the city is more intense. School privatisation is a strong rationale organising and regulating the everyday experiences of the city both as a shared and a private matter. The urban politics of privatised education is a

rationale, I argue, that works by relying on forms of freedom present in different forms, spaces and times, buildings, games of chance in a newsagent kiosk, specific months of the year, things that could be said, done or seen.

A second aspect explored in this chapter were the continuities and changes in the urban politics of education. The function of this aspect is to situate the rationale of school privatisation in a broader historical context. I first argue in favour of the presence and relevance of this rationale above others by comparing two different symbols at the entrance of Liceo Óscar Castro in two different historical moments (in 1911 a big Chilean flag above the main entrance and in 2014 a sign with the scores of a standardised test). I then argue in favour of the continuities of different operative rationales that can be seen in the dense and disruptive event of the parade. The city, then, following Foucault (1978) can be understood as a ‘multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization’ (p. 92). These different immanent forces, as I suggest with the example of the parade, are ‘unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, and tense’ (p. 93). School privatisation is one among other rationales of government shaping the urban milieu. However, even though different rationales of government cohabit in tense relationships co-producing the city, I argue that privatisation is the major force of urban governance in relation to schooling.

Whereas in the previous chapter I sought to give a sense of city life on a general basis, in this chapter I have provided a first analytical trace of the urban schooling landscape and its privatisation. By doing this, the chapter works as situated context for the next three chapters that focus on disappearances and emergences of different educational figures and subjectivities within the city milieu.

Teachers' nostalgia in the urban space: the disappearance of a subjectivity

Introduction: The teachers' city house

The local headquarters of the National Teachers' Association was located in O'Carroll street, parallel to the main street Avenida de Independencia. It was a terraced brick house with a narrow façade and an extended back; essentially a typical 1950s house still common in the country's city centres. I rang the doorbell punctually at 11 am and just a few seconds later a tall woman with grey hair and glasses came to let me in. She welcomed me smiling, apparently pleased about my visit and with my interest in interviewing her. 'I am Yorma, I've been expecting you', she said. Following this, as a sort of presentation, the communal president of the association offered to show me around the rooms and halls of the building.

'It was here where I dropped by in December 1986, when I lost my job as a primary teacher', she said, turning suddenly serious. She clarified that back then, the main organisation of teachers was precisely 'the Teachers' Association that we have now', an officialised entity created in 1974 by the military regime to eliminate and replace the previously belligerent union. Amid state violence, exonerations and exiles, all teachers were compelled by the government to become affiliated to the new association and 'forced to accept that the traditional teachers' organisation shrank to a kind of mutual benefit society characterised by banal apolitical activities conducted by allocated bureaucrats'. Hence, when Yorma received the sudden news of her dismissal, as sure as she was that the government-controlled institution would do little to defend her, she still walked straight to here, at least to get some information about official routes of redress.

It was quite a surprise when she arrived at the house, she remembered. It was there where she discovered 'how many of us there were and what exactly was going on'. She spoke to me as if she had seen a ghost of the past – precisely as if she were seeing herself entering again the hall with all the anguish of finding about forty other teachers in her same perilous situation. This day, she added, they were informed that the Pinochet regime had abolished the contractual protections for teachers. In the early 1980s, teaching jobs had been transferred from the central state to the municipalities, but general regulations, at least on paper, were maintained. Now, without the most minor pretext from their

allocated superiors (their new employers), hundreds of teachers up and down the country were being legally fired.

‘It was particularly because the economic effects were so desperate for us that we ended up occupying this headquarters. Here, during three months, apart from having daily assemblies to see how we could get our jobs back, we organised activities to entertain our children and raised a soup kitchen [“olla común”], with food that the sellers from the street markets brought to support us. Here, as well, we played the guitar and discussed things, I met Ernesto, a teacher from the Technical School who would later become my husband. The atmosphere was combative, but also gentle, since entire teachers’ families came to share a meal, and even other people from the city started coming too. O’Carroll transformed therefore into a key place of solidarity and resistance for our cause and against the military regime more broadly’.

But the house had been built before the dictatorship which made Yorma remember things from much earlier. When I asked her about the origin of the house, she told me that it had been built specifically as a union headquarters in 1960; a time, she stressed, when the large majority of teachers in the country used to work for public schools, which permitted the consolidation of centralised trade associations into one strong national-wide institution, the National Federation of Teachers [Federación Nacional de Profesores, FENAP]. Yorma, who was a child then, had heard from older colleagues about those years of comradeship and about the tradition of teachers’ unionism in Rancagua. ‘I have the stories fresh in my mind, since the older teachers usually felt proud about how they would contribute a percentage of their salaries to build this house and to sustain its maintenance. They also used to tell us how much fun they had had organising raffles and fairs in the very same rooms that we are now looking at and walking through’.

Additionally, although she was studying in Santiago by then, Yorma still connected the years of pre-coup political activity with the house. So, I learned that in 1968 the house had already become a dining room with a common cooking space, set up at the time to support a large and successful national strike; and that later, in 1972, FENAP became the General Union of Education Workers [Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación, SUTE], which meant the organisation was open to all kind of school employees – not only teachers. It was also an explicit incorporation into the working-class movement. That same year, Luis Almonacid, a known communist teacher from Rancagua became the provincial union’s president, and shortly thereafter, the local representative for the Workers’ Single Union [Central Única de Trabajadores, CUT], the umbrella organisation for all trade unions in the country.

Both of us were well-versed in the abrupt end to this period, so it did not feel at all strange that Yorma stopped short, before inviting me to move to her office. It was as if she were finishing a brief tour of an archaeological site, I thought, then realizing that we had been pacing around a house that seemed altogether

too big and more than anything too empty. Instinctively I asked her about the current use of the headquarters. Her answer began with a sigh and a tone of irony that then oscillated to a tone of commitment to the task in hand from someone senior. In short, she told me that despite the restoration of democracy in 1990 and the gradual reactivation of some political facets, many factors converged to prevent teachers from becoming a truly strong organization. In fact, given the steady drop in the membership of active teachers, since about 2000 retired teachers had become the majority within the organisation. One of the reasons for this tendency is that more than half of the teachers in the city now work in the private sector, and thus almost none of them is affiliated to the association, since its main concerns were those of the municipal sector. Further, almost all the battles they had led during the last time had been lost, causing dwindling interest among municipal teachers too. Therefore, apart from the three or four members of the elected board that regularly went to the teacher's house, the building was being mostly used by retired teachers interested in participating in activities like yoga, creative writing, and the choir, mainly aimed, according to Yorma, at helping people 'relax or to mourn the old days'. The house remained standing, but from what she said, it was clear that it didn't have a central place in the social and political life of the city anymore. (Field Note, April 15th 2014).

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Picture 6: The teachers' City house



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

Teachers were the main voices in my fieldwork, since besides being key witnesses and actors in the process of school privatisation, they were extremely willing to *revisit their experiences in enthusiastic and engaged chats*. In these conversations, especially with the more senior teachers, I heard various anecdotes that were contradicted the teachers' culture from the post-dictatorial Rancagua as I was able to understand it. Yorma's story illustrates this and works as a perfect example of the visceral sense of how a glorious past for teachers had been suppressed by the dictatorship and the subsequent neoliberal turn. Indeed, old and young teachers used to convey a nostalgic idea of what they used to be politically and professionally, describing the present as a time of loss, decline and fragmentation. More specifically, they missed the relationship they had with the students and the local community, perceiving that there was no longer clarity of purpose which brought them together or made them stand out in particular ways as a distinguishable social group in the city.

In this chapter I will further expand on the understanding of school privatization in Rancagua by paying attention to how teachers' subjectivity changed throughout this process. Drawing on interviews with teachers of different ages and also on my fieldnotes, I will analyse in particular those changes that have an impact at a local scale in the city of Rancagua. Therefore, rather than focusing on the discourses and practices enacted inside schools, I will widen my attention to different social spaces that teachers inhabit, emphasising the multi-dimensionality of their lives and the diversity of contexts in which they produce and dispute meanings about who they are and what they do. Keeping loyal to the feelings and the narratives of my informants, I will not look to interpret the new practices of the present, but rather the present absences in relation to the past, that is, ways of being a teacher in the city that have disappeared.

I will argue that - at least in the context of a medium-sized city - understanding the progressive destruction of community ties and the local and national cohesion of the teachers' sector is fundamental to understanding this deep transformation of teachers' subjectivities that the neoliberal experiences and truths has involved.

Along with this, I will suggest that the urban reconfiguration of teachers' experience has played a major role both in what I describe throughout this thesis as the privatization of the education problem and, more broadly speaking, in the production of a neoliberal city. By doing so, I advocate considering situated teachers' subjectivity as an extremely important dimension when analysing the scope of education and its role in urban governance.

Neoliberal turn and teachers' subjectivity

My concern with teachers' transformation in the context of school privatisation partially fits into a large body of research about the impact of the neoliberal order on teachers' lives and work (Ávalos et al., 2010; Ball, 2003; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Compton & Weiner, 2008; Cribb & Ball, 2005; Day, 2012; Hara & Sherbine, 2018; Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991). This issue became a subject of debate and deep concern in the 1980s, in response to neoliberal reformists who explicitly saw teachers as 'a group of interest' in need of intervention to allow these modernizations to be effectively carried out (Bellei, 2015). In effect, during the previous decades the world of teachers has been subject to considerable interference, mainly through public policies that have resulted in changes in their working conditions and the meaning and practices of work itself, being different variants of privatization, managerialism and accountability - the main motifs used to push this agenda (Ball, 2003).

Within this literature, many researchers have explored the subjective and experiential changes of teachers in depth, in an attempt to understand what it means to be a teacher in this new context. Research has also shown a concern about issues that repeat themselves regardless of the case/place under study: a shift in the teaching profession towards technification (Ball, 2003; Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010; Maguire, 2009; Robertson, 2016; Tardif, 2013), entrepreneurialism and competition (Ball & Youdell, 2007; Ozga, 2008), the experience of being under siege, tired and fatigued (Cornejo, 2009; Guerrero, 2008; Leaton Gray, 2005; Penteado & Souza Neto, 2019; Woods, 1994), fragmentation and depoliticisation (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013;

Robertson, 2002), and also strategies of resistance against neoliberal subjectivation (Assaél et al., 2014; Ball, 2015b; Perryman, 2006; Perryman et al., 2017; Smith, 2019).

Broadly speaking, one could divide this field into two fundamental interpretations of the problem, which in my opinion can also be complementary. A structuralist interpretation - concerned with the change of teachers as a class and social force - and a post-structuralist perspective - concerned with the transition of teachers as an expression of new forms of subjectivation through social control. Both perspectives make a critical analysis of the current situation, but are distinguished by their contrasting visions of the future of teachers.

From a structuralist perspective, on the one hand, the problem of teachers' subjectivity is based on the category of workers or working class (Compton & Weiner, 2008; Robertson, 2000, 2002). From this approach, the loss of power that unions have experienced and the fragmentation that teachers have experienced as a class is due to the increasing flexibility of contracts and creeping privatization. Concern for subjectivity or teaching culture is understood both as an effect and as a facilitator of processes of re-form that render it impossible for teachers to think of themselves or act as an organized social force. What is observed from this viewpoint is that teachers no longer feel like a fraction of their social class, which hinders their cohesion and capacity for political action. Consequently, as Robertson (2000) points out, the possibility of change lies in the ability to construct and fortify a class identity with sufficient purchase to prosper. For this, it is pointed out that, unlike in the times of industrial capitalism, the space for alliances, identity and struggles should not remain only in national politics, but must be "multiscale", which implies, mainly, pointing out that organization and identity should also have a global dimension. In Chile, this line of work is present mainly in intellectuals and educational leaders who participate in the organization of teachers (González, 2015).

An instructive example of a poststructuralist perspective, on the other hand, is the work of Ball (Ball, 2003, 2015b; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Working from a governmentality studies approach that see the productive aspects of all discourse, the neoliberal and privatization project is framed as a project of new

governance, one where individual responsibility and competition are understood as a clear attempt at control which operates through subjectivation. The new subjectivity, therefore, is not only an effect or facilitator, but rather a fundamental objective of neoliberalisation. From this perspective, an insistent focus on results, the form of incentives and accountability devices have effectively produced a new teaching subjectivity, one where teachers see themselves as entrepreneurs and managers of themselves. These investigations, which show the discursive force of neoliberal politics, have also shown that teachers do not mechanically reproduce what politics seeks, but always reinterpret based on nuances of the institutional culture and context, and on many occasions incorporate discreet instances of micro-resistance (Ball, Hoskins, et al., 2011). From this point of view, a strong conclusion by Ball (2015b) is that, since the self is the main locus of control of neoliberalism, the self must also be understood as a site where resistance may take place. This line of work has been especially important in the Chilean context (Reyes et al., 2010, 2014; Sisto, 2012).

Although these perspectives diverge, both are fundamental to understanding the most important subjective construction dimension of the teaching subject: their productive work at school. In fact, as Ball and Olmedo (2013) argue, attention paid to the resistance of the self does not call into question the relevance of union organization or collective work, but rather adds a new form of problematization that positions care of the self as a central task. I think that both to understand how neoliberalism operates and to generate effective resistance strategies, these investigations map both the struggle for position and the dispute for meaning and being. However, from both perspectives, researchers have paid little attention thus far to the changes in the daily extra-curricular life of the teaching subject, making it difficult to imagine and understand forms of subjectivation that are related to their living conditions outside the classroom and school. Indeed, even if the call is to join forces in a transnational organization (Robertson, 2002), teachers have tended to be problematized as outside the normative 9 to 5.

An example considering the daily extra-school life of teachers comes from Lomnitz and Adler (1991), carried out in Chile in the late 1980s. In it, the authors collect and analyse fifteen individual biographies of professors, highlighting as the effects of neoliberal policies on being a teacher the ceasing of being public officials and the job insecurity that this process entailed. In the five biographies that are presented in detail, dimensions of life outside of school are reconstructed: in general, time with the family is precarious due to work overload and distances from work, close ties of trust are cut and political links are actively discouraged, punished or even prohibited. Another example is the work of Czerniawski (2011) where he compares teachers' professional identities of newly qualified teachers in three different countries. In this case, the author gives particular relevance to the situated context of practice, defining countries and their policies as the locus of attention.

In both examples, the study of identity/subjectivity is placed beyond the school. I contribute to this line of inquiry by locating the 'beyond the school' in the city. It is in this scenario that I think it is possible to address the transformation of the family and social relationships of teachers, which account for areas of re-subjectivation that have been significantly less explored. In the reconstruction of teachers' life located in the city, my informants recognised profound changes in their ways of feeling, thinking and doing as teachers.

These changes were lived with nostalgia, often with an idealization of a glorious past. Authors such as Goodson et al. (2006) and Ümerik and Goodson (2018) have studied the strength of teacher nostalgia in contexts of radical changes in educational systems. Unlike these authors, here I seek to address nostalgia (absences) as a tool, rather than analyse its usefulness to plan successful changes, as those authors do. Rather I wish to observe the nonexistence of the present and the way in which they are reproduced, asking what prevents certain subjectivities or practices today.

Thus, identifying the absences of practices and discourses of daily life in the urban context, I would like to present a broader panorama of the spaces in which teaching subjectivity and neoliberal truths are produced. In this way, I want to show from a new angle the impossibility of sustaining a public discourse (common / political) on

education under these circumstances. With this, I seek to contribute an additional strand of thought to the existing literature.

The city as a context of remembrance and lost practices

Next, I consider the context of the city, understanding it as a specific scale of socio-spatial relationships where teachers have also been subjectively "trimmed", as Acuña (2020) has it. Knowing that there are other areas one could investigate, here I refer in particular to three roles or ways of being a teacher that have been lost: teachers as neighbours, teachers as cultural missionaries and militant teachers.

“We had our own neighbourhood”

When I arrived in Rancagua and began to ask about the local history of education, many people recommended that I speak with Luchito R., a senior teacher who was still seen participating in local activities and who fulfilled the typical trilogy of being "radical, a Mason and a Firefighter". Ricardo, the father of a friend, told me that the teacher must be over 90 years old and that no one could know more about what has happened to the Rancagua schools than him. Having heard the same recommendation by several others, I decided to look for him. I asked for his contact number, but no-one knew. I was told that it was common to come across him in the centre of Rancagua, after lunch, walking or having coffee in the plaza with other retired teachers. If I didn't see him, it would be possible that he was sick, they also warned me with a hint of concern. As I did not know him and had no way of recognizing him on the street, I asked if it was possible to go and see him at his house. The answer — as was habitual in Rancagua when anyone wondered about the location of a place — a gesture of an outstretched arm, pointing towards the address: "He lives there, in the teachers' neighbourhood." 'Street, number?' 'Nah, it will be 10 minutes from Plaza Los Héroes, everyone knows which is the neighbourhood of the teachers, surely by asking when you're close you will find it'.

With just these vaguest of directions, finally one day I decided to go and try my luck. Walking from the plaza to the East, leaving the centre, I entered an entirely residential area. After a few blocks, I went past Maipú street, and I found a lady watering the plants and timidly asked her if she knew where Luis R. lived. Quite naturally, she pointed to the end of the street: "Next block, the house with a bougainvillea and wooden windows." Like all the houses on the block, the bougainvillea house was a bungalow and had undergone renovations that slightly distinguished it from the others. I rang the bell and a woman came out - his wife, I later learned - who ushered me in without asking too much. When I told her a little surprised how easy it had been to get there,

she explained that they had lived there for more than 50 years. (Field Note, March 20th 2014).

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As had been suggested, Luis “Luchito” R. seemed to me to be a living local heritage, and thus a kind of window into a past (and partially lost) way of life. Unlike this retired teacher, most of the teachers today that I had come to know lived in neighbourhoods with different occupations, in very different conditions from each other, and I am pretty sure it was not common local knowledge where they walked or where they lived.

It was evident that the teachers' way of inhabiting the city was related to the socio-spatial configuration of the city. Before the coup and mass privatization, Rancagua's configuration was strongly defined by the social division of the workers and their modes of organization. The teachers' neighbourhood, in particular, had earned that name in the mid-1960s, when the teachers' union had it built through the Public Employees Fund. Luis R. had been one of the important union leaders pushing for the right for teachers "to their own home". In this way, he and his wife (another teacher) became one of the families that had acquired a house in the new neighbourhood.

When I was there, retired teachers or their heirs or new people lived in it, but in its beginning, the neighbourhood was only occupied by teachers, which give it a particular flavour. The specificity of this type of inhabitant was not at all strange, since in those years urban development and housing construction were matters of great concern, and practically all the unions in the country incorporated this issue into their demands. Moreover, Rancagua, was then preparing for the forced transfer of around ten thousand families from the mining camps of Sewell and Caletones into the valley. In the middle of this process, the teacher unions at the El Teniente mine joined the Rancagua teacher union, and together they planned, paid for and built their houses. They bought a piece of land adjacent to the urbanized area, so that their neighbourhood contributed to the expansion of the city to the east. Something similar, meanwhile, was done by the miner unions, the groups of private employees

and those of other public officials, who erected new buildings or neighbourhoods of houses of different sizes, depending on their means. Further, at the same time, although with self-construction, there were several waves of peasant families as well, who seeking better living conditions, moved from the haciendas, where they had worked the land, and settled in huts on the margins of this growing city.

During the 1960s, in addition to the new miners' neighbourhoods, schools were also built, which implied the transfer of several dozen state teachers to the city. These teachers had also lived in spaces intended for them in the mining camp, so it was easy for them to import existing community practices. Nitza C., a teacher who was the daughter of teachers and a teenager at the time, summed this up:

Look, when I arrived in Rancagua, the thing is that I always lived in teacher housing centres, because I lived in Sewell in a building with only married teachers and all the children were friends and we played in that building together. It was a wonderful thing because, for example, in one house we painted, in another house we played the piano, in another house we listened to music and the parents were great and they played with all of us, including my father, everyone. So it was like a super beautiful community and then we came from Sewell, I came here to the neighbourhood of teachers, so we were also detached to some extent from what was happening to the rest. (Nitza C.)

In addition to the teachers' neighbourhood, there were other neighbourhoods organized by the unions of administrative employees of the mining industry, where some teachers were also active. This is the case of the Manso de Velasco neighbourhood, and also the Rancagua Norte neighbourhood. The particularity of these neighbourhoods is that their construction was a coordinated effort between the unions and the State, built by Corvi (a state company) and closely supervised by the future occupants, so the houses were very well built and that instilled enormous pride in their inhabitants. Ruperto, a teacher who was around 65 years old when I met him in 2014, still lived in one of those houses with his wife. As shown in the quote below, the houses were "solid" and also very well located, close to the centre and close to other important recreational areas of the city.

We came [from Sewell] with my family in 1971 and fortunately the State gave us houses. A copper law assigned, to let's say, 25 houses for Sewell teachers. We were just married practically. With a single Corvi quota at the time it was enough for you to register in a house and they gave us a house here in the

Rancagua Norte neighbourhood (...). It is a solid house, therefore we still maintain it with some arrangements that we have made, but it's a solid house without any serious problems. It is near the Media Luna, in the North Rancagua area. There we have several other teachers who live nearby (Ruperto G.).

It is conceivable and indeed probable that the teachers, sharing specific spaces in the city that they themselves had contributed to securing and making, to live in with their families, would further strengthen those ties in their daily lives and routines. Knowing that there were other teachers living nearby, even if they were not closely known, had a special meaning and was evidence of many common experiences, including being public school teachers. These neighbourhoods also had a good societal status. They were not neighbourhoods where doctors, lawyers or senior company officials made their exclusive homes, - the houses of the union populations were in principle all the same, not showy but of good quality and functional - they were quiet neighbourhoods, with squares and sidewalks that soon had many trees, and thus a good reputation with the city's working class.

Picture 7: Yorma at the teachers' house, 2014



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

The teachers not only slept and spent their weekends in these neighbourhoods, but they also contributed to produce the city-space by moving through its streets. As the city was relatively small and these neighbourhoods were close to the centre, it was normal for teachers to walk to their places of work. Likewise, as Yorma recalled in the introduction to this chapter, it was normal for them to attend union meetings or parties on O'Carroll Street (see Picture 7). The headquarters, like the neighbourhoods, had been not only an expression of the teacher union's need for a physical place to meet, but also of a capacity for collective action in the name of the common good. The house, where the place and architecture of the teachers' houses were discussed and defined, was built in 1960 in the centre of the city - a centre that was still central, as was also the case with other unions, such as the of the workers of the El Teniente mine (with different headquarters depending on the branch of the union), those of the officials of government entities, bakers, firefighters, farmers, etc. The centre had these institutionalized meeting places in buildings that occupied a physical and visible space, with a sign at the entrance, proudly offering itself to the progress of the city. These were present for each specific worker's identity. In other words, the teachers had been builders of the city and made visible use of it, with a strong sense of pride and identity.

The destruction and persecution of the unions from the outset of the dictatorship brought about the gradual disappearance of these important communal union buildings, leaving only some standing as a monument to a lost culture. In the case of education, the headquarters did not disappear, but their usage and meaning did. They became a place that evokes the past in the same way that a few blocks away does the old and abandoned Apollo Theatre. In the process, other urban reference points of the educational field appeared, such as the offices of the municipal Department of Education and the numerous private schools. In this way, the reference points and movements of teachers outside the schools declined in significance or disappeared. This, was especially true for teachers who had to look for work in private schools, because for them the union headquarters and the municipality were no longer part of their daily lives.

Within the teachers' neighbourhood, on the other hand, only the name remained. Similar changes occurred within the towns built by other unions. During the dictatorship, a housing subsidy model was installed that totally replaced the support model for organizations with housing projects developed by the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism. The new model meant targeting the application for housing subsidies to the most impoverished sectors and opening a huge business for the construction of social housing in the hands of private real estate, financed by the State. As a result, the regional capitals had a rapid expansion based on much lower quality neighbourhoods, with scant regard for access to services or transportation (López, 2010).

In the 70s and 80s, the new generations of teachers faced job instability individually, low salaries and, to top this off, the new problem of housing. During this time, many had to live as best they could in houses of relatives or friends, and the rest had to live in houses anywhere in the city where they could afford to pay the rent, bearing in mind it had been more than halved. Out of necessity, many teachers had to take on jobs in two or three schools, rushing from one place to another, in a city that was growing in a new configuration. Consequently, the experience of the city became more hostile, more demanding, making the balance between time, travel and survival infinitely more difficult. Yorma, an elementary school teacher who had two young daughters in the 80s, remembers her pace of life becoming crazy to the point of unmanageable.

[In the early 80s] I was working like a zillion hours. In Machalí, 30 hours, a few hours of language in a private school in Alameda, where the Whipple School is now, and I worked in the school that is now named Manso de Velasco. I had 15 minutes to get from Alameda to the Manso de Velasco, just to get from one school to the other. And no money was enough for me, because my daughters were super sick. (Yorma A.)

In this new scenario, where teachers no longer had a designated neighbourhood and sense of community and in which they often had to split themselves between more than one workplace on a casual basis, the car - in a context where public transport was also chaotic and insufficient - became a much desired consumer good for every teacher, perhaps the primary reason for indebtedness and an apparent change in

status, driven by need. This was at least Nitza's opinion, who commented that "having a car was rare, but today, all teachers have a car ...". She felt she was witnessing the teachers' turn towards a new lifestyle, precarious and with little time, on the one hand, but more "modern" on the other.

By the time I was in Rancagua, although the salaries were better than in the 80s and the teachers were not obliged to work in more than one school to make a living, the idea of a teachers' neighbourhood had not reappeared. Moreover, it was really unusual for teachers to walk to their schools. Teachers arrived in their own car or in that of a colleague who was picking them up at best, they parked inside the schools, which now had all gated parking lots. The younger teachers I met rarely knew the neighbourhoods of those schools at all.

The diversity among teachers regarding housing and daily mobility was wide, as it was for the rest of the inhabitants of a highly segregated city. I met several teachers who lived in social housing neighbourhoods. These were neighbourhoods with the stigma of being poor neighbourhoods, which currently meant that they were viewed as peripheral and possibly that they could have a high crime rate, little access to public transport and services, that the houses were paid for with state subsidies and were very small.

I live in a house that is a little bigger than this downstairs (12mt²) and upstairs it has two bedrooms and a bathroom and that is the house, they are the social houses, the social housing that exists now. (Nitza C.)

At the other extreme, there were professors with an excellent financial situation, generally due to having received family inheritances or being married to high-ranking employees in the mining industry. The difference was such that it was a necessary issue of comparison and reflection within teachers.

The teacher who is married to a Lieutenant here in Rancagua is upper class, can you imagine? She has a house in neighbourhoods called Golf or Polo. And she has a house on the beach, they are going to spend the summer in Punta Cana. They are-, they come to live at a different level, for example, of a teacher who is the head of the household. But one cannot judge those things, it is what the system delivers. It is nice to be able to live well. (Yorma A.)

There were also many variants in between these extremes, such as Yorma herself, who at just 55 had managed to obtain a house of her own by joining one of the few unions (not teachers') that still organized the construction of houses. "It's almost social housing," she told me, implying that, while it was not a state-subsidized house, it had the same stigma of being a working-class, suburban neighbourhood.

Having multiple private employers certainly made it difficult to perceive a common employment situation and crucially to re-establishing some kind of strong union organization. Differences in terms of housing and living conditions, on the other hand, further removed that possibility, since such problems had ceased to be perceived as common issues related to the greater good.

"We were sowing culture"

A second missing characteristic of the teaching staff that I want to highlight is that of being activists and cultural reference points in the city, a role that predominated in reality and in the social imaginary for much of the 20th century. Teachers fulfilled an educational function that went far beyond the classroom and its specific students, including parents and the entire locality as their focus of interest. Indeed, it was common for them to participate in various different types of local organizations, where in addition to establishing out-of-work ties between them, they generated further links with other neighbours with similar interests. Through artistic, sports or political organizations they sought to bring life to the city outside the family home and outside of working hours and to contribute to local development.

The authority and enthusiasm for organizing for developmental purposes had several origins. Perhaps the main one of these was the education received, either by the Pedagogical Institute, in the case of secondary teachers, or Normal Schools, in the case of primary teachers. The training programs of the state had a particularly high academic prestige at this time (Pérez, 2017), which imbued them with the status of educated people, and with a strong identity stamp, of being actively engaged in a 'crusade' or 'mission' to better the educational function (Núñez, 2004). Thus, the sentiment of a recently graduated professor was comparable to that of a priest, a soldier or a doctor destined to fulfil their duty at any point of the territory on behalf

of the country. Their particular mission, for which they had been prepared, was, in some sense, to “civilize” the population (Núñez, 2004). They themselves, in most cases, came from families with little or no formal education and had been selected for basic schools to continue studying and help in the task of lifting others out of poverty and ignorance. In this way, the commitment and clarity of the task were great, and it represented a truly altruist mission and spirit. Hugo L., a retired teacher who had graduated in 1959, explained to me the feelings of a recent graduate. “I finished my degree at about 22 years old,” he explained, “and I immediately began to compete in national public competitions, with that desire that all new graduates have to conquer the world, to conquer spaces, to go out and to show...”. That is how he had come to Rancagua, a city where he felt that there was much to do.

The crusade to raise the overall cultural level of the population was a dream that had been intensified since the beginning of the 20th century throughout the country, both by the growth of the organised labour movement, influenced by anarchist and socialist thoughts, and by the spread of Freemasonry and the gradual growth of a professional class steeped in European high culture (Faletto, 2015). In the case of Rancagua, it also seemed to be driven by a sense of inferiority or subjugation with respect to the city of Santiago, which was idealized for having museums, universities and theatres capable of bringing international shows, among other markers of (supposedly high) culture. Given this, the most educated groups interested in the culture of Rancagua made significant efforts designed for the city, such as generating artistic-cultural events, getting printers to create newspapers, creating reading groups or managing to organise the visit of an illustrious intellectual to the city. Perhaps the most emblematic in this sense was the group "Los Inútiles", founded by professor and writer Oscar Castro in 1934. The group, influenced by Dadaism, organized gatherings and literary contests, created a night school for miners, wrote in newspapers, among other activities. Regionalist people but fierce self-critics, saw it as an especially difficult task to "sow culture" in a mining town. In their memoirs, they summarized their mission as follows:

We fight against misunderstanding, the closed stone wall, the aridity of the environment in which they were able to train. “The purpose was to plough. We had to cut down the bush and bundle the mist. And without fuss we began to sow (...) We always knew that the harvest would be squalid; perhaps barely even perceptible. But persistently, drop by drop, like the water in the cave forges stalactites. This is what has been done in favour of culture, in a mining city. (1977, p. 3, my translation).

In this context, local teachers were a natural leading actor, both for their various concrete contributions to the cultural development of the city and for sustaining a strong cultural group identity. The ethos was reproduced in the daily routine of their activities, in neighbourhood and union life, as well as in the relationships between families of teachers. Furthermore, it was reinforced by the contrast with other groups, in particular with that of miners and merchants, typically characterized by being wealthier, but less learned. Nitza, who was a teenager in the 1960s and whose parents were teachers, explained this cultural gulf to me:

The miners were the ones with the largest incomes, they were the ones who earned the most, even if they did not have the best educational background. I belonged to a sector of teachers who were civil servants and public servants had a regular, medium income. There were other people who had businesses, who were merchants here in Rancagua. For example, I had uncles who had businesses and had a different economic situation, they went to the United States for a trip, they had another... a better standard of living. But the truth was that for us that was not so important, for us the most important thing was the cultural elements, sharing ... For example, there were many concerts or if there were few, we all knew what concerts there were, we went to painting exhibitions, they had literary movements, writers, all things where teachers participated (Nitza C.).

The “civilizing” zest (Núñez, 2004) of the mission of most state teachers also involved concerns for the health and living conditions of the students, that was made possible due to a deep knowledge of the families with whom they worked. In this way, it was quite common for teachers to take a community leadership role, as they were able to identify social problems and do things about them.

Conversing with Yorma A., I learnt about a couple of situations that illustrated, that even in the 1980s, teachers had considerable discursive and real purchase in this regard. She told me that for normal teachers like her, the normal thing was to be linked to the community, to get to know the students' houses and work side by side

with neighbourhood organizations, mothers' organizations or unions. They had learned this in the training program practices and also during the summer jobs there were organized by the students. Such training was very useful in the work of the schools, which had quite formalized channels for working with parents. For example, in the parents' meetings, which were monthly, there was a section called School for Parents, where teachers work on different topics about parenting and education. The Schools for Parents had materials produced by the Ministry of Education and they continued to exist even into the first years of the dictatorship.

[Inside the school] we functioned for several years like in a bubble, like there was no dictatorship on the outside, like there were no eyes looking at us, and that cost us quite dearly at some point. For a while we were able to function quite well, I would say, with some great parenting schools, with high parent participation. We did social dramas, for example. They were like little plays, where someone acted out something of what had happened at home. That the father drank, that there was domestic violence... Then after the performance, we would analyse it as a group: 'Have you seen something like this in your neighbourhood? How would you deal with it if it touched you?' (...) It was what remained of the old Ministry's way, which was not to disassociate the family from education. (Yorma A.)

The schools for parents were added to the teachers' office hours and it was expected that teachers got into the local community, hence facilitating the belonging to the same social fabric. This changed much after the coup d'état, as most of the families, politicized or otherwise, turned to the most immediate concerns of their family, both due to a fear of repression and the experience of economic precariousness, which in the case of the teachers forced them to work really long hours each week just to earn a living wage (Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991). However, the breakdown of the social fabric was not an absolute or immediate process. The teachers' concerns for the children's families and the ability to articulate actions in the community continued to be possible, despite the fears of the dictatorship. An example among many other teachers was Yorma, who told me what the situation was like at the beginning of the 80s, when a severe economic crisis hit bringing with it extremely high levels of unemployment and the first protests against Pinochet.

Along with the protests here, the protests, the chains on the cables, the blackouts that began to take place more or less in '82, '83, I began to approach

people where I think I am needed. For example, here there was an epidemic of scabies, of high unemployment, of hunger. Here in Rancagua it was clearly evident, because it was not a city where people were so needy. But we [teachers] began to see it in schools. Children began to arrive with scabies, lice, some little ones with infected scabies. So I would take them to the office and then we would go to have a good breakfast with my mom, who was on the way. There we started working with some common situations. In these other teachers appeared and from there more ideas about other forms of organization and action began to emerge here in Rancagua. (Yorma A.)

A central aspect of what Yorma narrates is that many teachers, seeing the serious problems of poverty and health of their neighbours and the families of their students, turned to do what they had done before, that is, they took the initiative and they started to organize. Another professor, Hugo, a little older than Yorma, confirmed this, telling me that the fight against the dictatorship was a powerful motivation not to let go of each other, despite the fact that everything pointed towards fragmentation and a focus on individual problems.

However, with the dictatorship defeated, there was very little left of the role of cultural missionaries in the city. Again, there have been a variety of reasons put forward by the teachers themselves to account for the decline of this role: the new teachers were no longer trained by the normal schools or the Pedagogical Institute, since both state systems had been eliminated and replaced by a new and growing market for private higher education. Added to this, from the mid-90s onwards, evaluation and accountability policies aimed at teachers were increasingly intense (Czerniawski, 2011). The workload, the burden and the supposedly accountable mechanisms of measurements no longer leave room for a teacher to take the afternoon to drop off her students at the office, if that is the case. On the other hand, young teachers are often so in debt as a result of the marketisation of higher education that their greatest concern is to not get fired or to ensure that they increase their working hours, making it even more difficult to have educational practices that go beyond what is strictly requested and formalised. Therefore, in the eyes of older teachers, it was impossible for teachers to feel part of a community today. "Today", Nitza told me, "people are all individualistic, everyone ends up working to pay for

the cable, pay for the internet, the cell phone, blah blah. Before those things did not exist, but now they do, and it has changed our lives profoundly”.

The view from young teachers is, understandably, less harsh, since they do not necessarily feel individualistic, although they do acknowledge that they do not have an interest in politics, nor does it seem to them that it is their role to work with families. In fact, it is quite common to hear them complain that families are no longer present or that they are treated as clients of a service where they have no responsibility. On the other hand, indeed, the lives of the young teachers were subject to enormous stresses as a result of a lack of time and by financial difficulties. This is how a 35-year-old teacher who worked in a rather expensive private school described it to me. She told me of her joy at having received her house with subsidy, but the tragedy of having bought the artifacts and furniture that she wanted to have to live: “I got hurried. I bought a dining room, a refrigerator, I rushed because I did not want to see my house empty. It was a mistake. Five years have passed and I am still in debt. I work just to pay the debt”. For this teacher, her job fulfilment took place in her classroom space, there she would go out of her way to “bring her children forward” with both love and creativity.

Another perspective is exemplified by the case of Manuel, a 40-year-old teacher at a municipal school. Manuel was a history teacher and, unlike the aforementioned teacher, had an interest in critical pedagogy and had wanted to work on the links between the school and the neighbourhood through a history project with his students. First, it was difficult for him to carry out the project due to the resistance of his colleagues, who felt threatened by his excessive initiative. In 2013 he managed to start an elective course in the afternoons, with which they discovered that just 40 years ago the school had no bars, the food was prepared in the neighbourhood's mothers' centre and the students were all from the same area. The workshop opened up many new questions, but it only lasted one semester. The school's students no longer lived in the same neighbourhood and returning home at a later time meant missing the municipal bus and having to pay for public transport. On the other hand, the school director began to pressure him to prepare his teacher evaluations and to

have the daily plans for the inspection visits, suggesting that this workshop took him out of focus. "It's not easy being a different kind of teacher," he told me, adding that he was thinking of studying Law instead.

Whether due to teacher training, standardization and accountability, job insecurity, debt, the fact that interests me is the marked absence of a role that existed before: to be missionaries and sowers of culture beyond the school. This is the second great absence.

“We were all politically engaged”

No, not now. Now [teachers] have no [influence on discussion about education]. That is, until twenty years ago, perhaps ... In general, all the institutions that had strength and power have now totally lost almost everything. (Alejandro G., Director of the local daily newspaper El Rancagüino).

One of the absences that the teachers spoke about with the greatest passion was the stark political irrelevance and de-unionisation that the local teachers had experienced. This was corroborated across fieldwork notes as well as interview material. It was not only that young teachers no longer seemed interested in the political dimensions of teaching (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013), but also that the few who were, were almost powerless. The teachers had the teachers' association and their "teacher's house", a membership system and periodic elections, however, for many years the few things that were done or said from there seemed to be just going through the motions, without any real intent or force.

The nostalgia for the old teachers of Rancagua was in some sense justified, since the irrelevance of the present contrasted strongly with what the teachers once were in the national political arena, both in union and educational matters and in society at large (Ljubetic, 2004; Núñez, 2007; Reyes, 2014). Teachers who had been active in the 60s and 70s highlighted the fact that as soon as they began to work in the educational system, they were received by a solid union structure with an illustrious and meaningful history, with important struggles and achievements, which made the incorporation into this almost automatic. Hugo L., for example, became a member of the union of secondary teachers as soon as he was hired, in 1960, largely

because “it was normal”, a normalised social role which meant holding an opinion and harbouring a commitment to make a difference to “political events”:

The normal thing was to belong to a guild of teachers. Depending on the title, all the teachers were associated with what we called grassroots organizations in the establishments: the Teachers of Basic Education, which was called primary at that time, belonged to a union association of basic teachers, those of technical education to an Technical Union, those of professional education, another one. There were in total four or five national teacher organizations and all of them were grouped into a National Federation of teachers, FEDECH, the Chilean Federation of Educators. The FEDECH was the one that united all of the teachers in their general demands, which were generally made to the governments of the day. The federation that represented us all nationally held congresses every two years, it was a very lively movement, very active and it was used to having a voice on all issues in the country, a citizen's gaze, concerned about the republic, pedagogical issues and education, of course, but he also had an opinion on all political events. That is why teachers have always become accustomed to being a union participant not limited to just the confines of the official requirements with their work. (Hugo L.)

Luis R., older than Hugo, also recognized that an interest in politics was a given scenario for teachers, in which certain people with a special vocation, like him, once found a role that was comfortable for them:

I was born with the vein of a leader, I was the president of the elementary school, then the centre for high school students, everywhere I was a leader and when I arrived in Rancagua as a teacher I stood out in terms of union activity. (Luis. R.)

In Professor R.'s experience, the Normal School had served as an important politicizing factor. There, he recalled, most of its teachers were affiliated to some political party, influencing the students. From the beginning of the century until the 1960s, without a doubt the most important party within the educational world was the Radical Party, which was founded on the principles of Freemasonry and had a central concern for education. The year Luis R. began working as a teacher, Chile chose Pedro Aguirre Cerda (1938-1942) as president, who, with the motto "to govern is to educate," was the first professor to reach such a position in the country. Luis R., like many other professors, also joined the Radical Party.

[Until the coup] the teachers in general were a politicized union. The normal schools that trained primary teachers were attended mainly by teachers who were of a radical affiliation, a party whose fundamental principles are those of

Freemasonry, which is based on freedom, equality and fraternity, which are the principles of the Revolution. French. They are actually the basic principles that I tell you, that we are helping the community, making society more just, more tolerant, that society is more at peace. (Luis R.)

In the 1960s, while radicals were still important, much of the teaching staff across the country turned further to the left, increasing their militancy in the Communist Party (PC), the Socialist Party (PS) and also the Revolutionary Left-wing Movement [*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, MIR*], parties that targeted the youth. That is why Yorma, who studied at the Santiago Normal School between 1967 and 1973, said that the students were "flirted with by all the left parties". Together with her friends, she decided to enrol in the Socialist Youth, where she had the role of being in charge of adult literacy in the volunteer work that the party organized every summer in Rancagua. "I wore the party shirt and a beret with a Che pin, and I became full of myself", she said laughing. Similar to what was narrated by Luis R., Yorma said that, in her experience, the one who had the greatest influence in choosing "to be a person of the left" was Ruth, a literature teacher at the Normal School whom she greatly admired and whom was her reference to build her own identity as a teacher.

She taught us by her example, by her way of seeing and treating us. She shared the afternoons with us. When she realized how we were in boarding school, she provided us with a stove, she brought us eggs and other things. She took us to all the concerts of the Symphony Orchestra ... she got us hours of classes, so I worked in the Workers' University Department. I mean, she wanted to bring us up, really nurture us. (Yorma A.)

All this effervescence of young teachers for actively participating in the country's development project through their school, union and political work reached its peak during the Popular Unity period (1970-1973), a time in which, according to teachers, "they were all politically committed". However, as the story about the teacher's house in the introduction warns, the coup in Chile and the repression produced a radical rupture with that seemingly consolidated political culture. The organization and the capacity for work were subjected to other emotions, mainly fear. It was fear of the police and the military, on the one hand, and also of the mayor and of the neighbours, who were called upon to denounce any possible supporter of the "Marxist cancer," as Pinochet called the country's left-wing tendency (Valdivia, 2010).

The dictatorship involved the assassinations, imprisonment, exile, and sacking of hundreds of teachers nationwide, so most teachers had to focus merely on survival for the time being. As Luis R. told me, during the dictatorship there were few, "the most persistent," who continued to be actively involved in the front-line of political agitation.

When the dictatorship arrived, you will understand that all these people who had these libertarian principles were sacked, imprisoned, exiled, pulverized, and most of them, I will not say the most courageous but the most persistent managed to regroup the people. (Luis R.)

In Rancagua, in particular, the case of teacher Luis Almonacid and his tragic end can be considered as the local synthesis of the causes of the depoliticization of teachers. Almonacid was a communist, many times elected leader of the teachers in Rancagua and, in 1973, made the provincial president of the Central Workers' Organisation, a position that until then used to be held by leaders of the mining union. He was a hugely respected and esteemed man. Three days after the military bombed La Moneda and announced the coup, the police went to look for him at his house, which was in the Manso de Velasco neighbourhood, one of those built in the late 1960s by the union organization. Almonacid was dragged into the street and machine-gunned by the police in front of his pregnant wife, his children and the neighbours, who watched the scene in terror. During my time in Rancagua I could see that the traumatic events were recalled in the local press and that around 100 teachers held a pilgrimage every year that started on foot from the Alameda to the general cemetery, where they sang for justice and made speeches pleading 'Never again' (Field Note, September 13th 2014).

From the conversations and interviews that were carried out, my impression was that the repression experienced by teachers during the dictatorship had a distracting effect, in the sense that it focused and narrowed concerns greatly. This happened because the brutality of the dictatorship was such that the greatest effort of mobilized teachers were not so much focused on addressing the moves towards privatisation and the end of the working conditions for which they had fought as a union for decades. Rather, the focus was on recovering democracy and resisting repression.

The organization, as Hugo L. told me, was mainly between teachers ("we worked in teacher cells, of course"), however, "basically we were in anti-dictatorial politics."

This decision meant that at least some of the teachers, "the most persistent," as Luis R. said, maintained active political and social work, generally in a clandestine fashion, articulated with the community. Indeed, the reorganization of the Rancaguean teachers grew in the early 1980s as poverty became unbearable and the despair of marginalised sectors erupted into street protests. Thus, when in the mid-1980s the teachers began to organize *ollas comunes*, the response of the Rancaguean inhabitants was one of full support, just as when they began to organize the first marches against the dictatorship. Teachers, in the 1980s, were still respected and valued as community and political leaders at that time.

Once the dictatorship was over, however, the strength of the teachers focused on improving their precarious working conditions, entering into a tense relationship with the anti-Pinochet parties that turned towards the so-called Third Way (Ljubetic, 2004). As various authors have described (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013; Cornejo & Reyes, 2008; González, 2015), various factors related to the privatization of schools and labour fragmentation were gradually eroding the mystique and the interest in participating in the union's political and union work. In addition, in the public sector, a new relationship began to emerge between the teachers and the mayor, as benefits and bonuses suddenly became inextricably linked, with teachers becoming vulnerable to patronage.

Speaking about teachers in municipalized schools, Hugo L. described this new type of relationship that occurred between teachers and mayors, a relationship where the teacher felt a certain possibility of control that could benefit him/her individually in a more tangible way than the collective force of union organization.

Nowadays the teacher likes the municipality, it favours the look of a herd (...) In a small commune like this we meet the mayor on the street every so often, in the post office, in the street, and we have that look of a feudal lord that many mayors have: 'Hey, man, and how is your family?' So that question gives the teachers a sense of security very much in accordance with the times: 'A union will not defend me, the union will come to fight with the mayor. On the other

hand I get on well with the mayor and I ask him for an interview and I talk to him and the mayor fixes my problem. (Hugo L.)

Private school teachers, on the other hand, faced many legal obstacles to organizing, so unions were rare. In Rancagua, in fact, in 2014 there was no private school with a union. Throughout the year in which I spent many hours accompanying Yorma and other leaders in the meetings of the teachers' college, there were very few occasions that teachers from private schools joined. I remember, in particular, the case of a teacher who came to ask for support for himself and his colleagues. They had tried to organize a union because the owner was very abusive, but on the day they were going to create it, she fired the two teachers who were leading the new organization. The teacher, who was about 35 years old, acknowledged to my surprise that he had never entered the teachers' house before and that he knew little or nothing about the advice that the organization could provide. When the teacher left, a leader explained to me that this distance from the teachers had to do with the fact that both private and municipal schools actively prevented the union from disseminating information and organizing, something that was unthinkable in the 1960s. She told me:

Today it is forbidden to carry out union activities in schools. Leaders are rarely allowed into schools and no one dares to break the norm or seek strategies to reverse things. (Mónica L.)

On the other hand, between teachers working for municipal and private schools, there seemed to be a consensus that the pressure for accountability and the organization of working time consumed life and work time, making it difficult to stop and do something other than what was requested, because they were always feeling in debt and behind. Thus, Ernesto, a professor whom I asked about the possibilities to revive political commitment, told me that "the intensification of teaching work is so brutal that there is little room for reflection"; "Teachers are generally worn out and for that reason too broken to resist."

Nitza saw something similar. For her, the constant evaluation of teachers directly undermined the possibility of organizing and feeling part of a larger group. She said that the divisive system, in addition to taking their time away, had changed the type

of relationship between them, forcing them to compare themselves and to demonstrate their own competencies all the time.

Assessments consume a lot of time detracting from both teaching work and personal life. Before, the mere fact of having a Teacher's Degree guaranteed excellence, and no one would refute its suitability. But now you have to give samples of excellence to people who have no idea of education. I miss the coexistence between colleagues, the solidarity. (Nitza C.)

Indeed, during all the months that I was in Rancagua, it was very difficult for me to meet practicing teachers who did not live their teaching profession with discomfort or feeling overwhelmed, like being in a hamster wheel, struggling to survive economically and overwhelmed by the difficulties of the current school. However, after asking questions and getting to know the city, I did meet politicized teachers. These were very few and were divided into two types of people who did not even know each other. On the one hand, teachers who had become educational entrepreneurs and who had joined an organization of priests and other school owners that defended the interests and subsistence of this type of school. I will talk about these teachers in the next chapter, showing that privatization generated conditions where new types of actors and subjectivities emerged.

On the other hand, during my fieldwork I also met a group of municipal school teachers who defined themselves as left wing and as defenders of public education. They were presented to me by Yorma, who had just won the elections as the communal president thanks to the support of this group, called 6th Teaching Movement [*Movimiento Pedagógico VI*]. They were the only political group of teachers in the city. Very shortly after meeting Yorma, she invited me to participate in her meetings, which took place once a week, between 7 and 10 at night, at the teacher's house. In this way, over ten months, I was able to accompany and support what this group was doing. There were seven teachers in all, although the meetings were normally attended by only four or five. Except for Yorma, who was already retired, all the others were between twenty-five and forty years old. The group's work capacity was high for so few. In the meetings, they discussed political and pedagogical issues, sharing their practices as teachers. They had a biannual bulletin, where everyone tried to contribute reviews, interviews, or essays. In October, they

organized the Luis Almonacid Political-Union School (see Picture 8), a seminar running four Saturdays in a row, open and free, for which they invited different presenters. The year I was there, the topics were interesting and current, revolving around analysis of neoliberal education, indebtedness, sexist practices in education, and alternative education. However, what I saw is that participation was minimal. In addition to the organisers, there were barely ten or fifteen other people attending. The group's reflection on this was that it was normal, that it had always been like this, a matter that generated regrets but in no case surrender. It was as if they had grown up used to being a minority and having no impact, but keeping an old (inherited) left identity intact, which symbolically, to them, felt in some sense sufficient.

Picture 8: Brochures' frontpage of the Luis Almonacid Political-Union School



Source: fieldwork2014

In contrast, most Rancaguean teachers had clearly left this political imagination behind. Memberships were scarce and union membership was getting lower and lower. Interest in social and political contingency existed among some, but without being associated with the possibility of doing something about reality. Thus, for nostalgic old teachers, the scenario was impossible – a frustrating dead end. On the one hand, the "mentality" of teachers had changed, and on the other, the old union was no longer able to attract and mobilize teachers.

What I have observed over time is that today's teachers complain in a hushed low voice, and in isolation, they are not capable of organizing themselves, they are not aware of the importance of the teaching profession. They are isolated and have an assistance-oriented and economic mentality about the teaching mission. And we also see that the Teachers Association has gradually shrunk, at the same time the leaders exercise a mainly administrative role, very different from the activist role of the former leaders. I must say though that I feel that here in the teacher's house there is much discussion, even other people come, sociologists, scholars, but only a paltry ten teachers appear at the meetings and no more. A communal assembly is also held, but there you see that those who participate are retired professors, who like they no longer work, they no longer have an influence within society to say let's change this, let's change that. (Nitza C.)

The depoliticization of teachers, which has been described by researchers in different contexts (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013; Robertson, 2000) is, as Nitza says, also a subjective change, since most teachers stopped thinking that by working with their union they could influence the political organization of society. In the case of Rancagua, teachers ceased to enjoy an authoritative respected voice in the public space to talk about educational policies and even pedagogy, ceasing to see the development of the city as a horizon in which they can influence. From what I was able to observe in 2014, even among the most committed, there would have been no possibility for teachers to worry about hunger and disease in their students and their families, or to organize among fifty teacher families to build a new neighbourhood, or create a school and then pass it on to a public body. For this there was no strength, but before that, there was not even the imagination. That the teacher's house was mainly occupied for yoga workshops reflected that something profound had changed, or, in less euphemistic terms, been lost, diluted or destroyed.

Conclusions

In this chapter I identified and described dimensions of urban life that have enabled me to address the complex process of transformation of teaching subjectivity throughout an intense period of privatization of education in Chile. The dimensions concern different ways of inhabiting the city, giving meaning to the role and work in the city and the capacity for political organization. They are all 'nostalgic', insofar as they refer to practices and discourses that are very rare or no longer present. As Ball and Olmedo (Ball, 2015b; Ball & Olmedo, 2013) argue, the establishment of neoliberal mechanisms in the field of school governance implies a reconfiguration of teaching subjectivity, that is, it transforms what it is to be a teacher and what it is to teach. This chapter contributes to understanding this transformation process by showing that the practices and discourses of subject teachers are contested and reproduced in the context of school work, and also, crucially in the broader context of urban life. In this sense, these dimensions are of interest as they provide a new angle of observation to the phenomenon of subjective effects produced by privatization policies.

My interest in these aspects of teachers' lives outside the classroom arose throughout the fieldwork, while exploring various ways in which the historical and spatial context were related to the local production of the educational order. When focusing on the teachers, it struck me that, while spatial, social and political-cultural aspects predominated in the stories of their past, they did not seem relevant to characterizing their present. It was not just that they were not mentioned, but their absence made them also difficult to observe. Over the decades, the teachers' way of inhabiting the city has been eroded; they have lost an image and social role complementary to educating future citizens in classrooms that had to do with their place and prestige as part of the social fabric of the city.

The first issue that I address is the way in which teachers inhabit the city and relate spatially to it. In this regard, the fact that the teachers ceased to involve themselves in trying to solve the issues of housing and other needs in a unionized way is very evident. With the destruction of trade unionism, the precariousness and liberalization of the wage scale, the teaching subject abandoned its class identity

embodied in the urban social space, a space that they shared with other unions who organized in a similar holistic, collective and communitarian way. This was also helped by the intensification of teaching work, which was translated in part into having to run from one school to another and of dreaming of having a car of their own. The teachers began to be diluted by the growth of the city and its social processes of flexibilization, indistinguishable from any other employee with an unstable salary and lifestyle. Now, on the street, no one could distinguish a teacher, just as a map did not register neighbourhoods which once grouped them together.

A second aspect explored was the disappearance of the old civilizing mission that prevailed until the 1970s. The territory became the field of intervention, the place to fulfil the task of raising the general cultural level and quality of life by all possible means in ways that transcended the confines of the formal classroom. In this way, without a doubt, the unity that existed between teachers was important, because it reinforced the group identity, the role and the possibilities of doing things together. Neoliberalism, however, has transformed the ethos of poor but educated officials, fragmenting their relationships and making them uninteresting and banal to the population. In addition, the teachers lost their connection with other residents of the city, to a point where families began to be seen as a factor (positive or negative) for the expected learning outcomes.

The third element addressed is the loss of the union strength of teachers in public policy, an issue that is related to the new teaching subjectivity that no longer operates with a broader eye on society. Before, almost all of them were members of the union, or at least participated in the union and there they were exposed to discussions and to generations of ideas for the country. This very formation pointed to the republican mission of literacy and modernization of the country through education. Many, moreover, took up the banner of social justice, adding to this civilizing mission a project of the democratization of knowledge. Today there is very little residue of that spirit left, just a few nostalgic teachers from the old days trying to continue or revive it.

The spatial, social and political dimensions are deeply intertwined with each other and therefore it is not possible to understand one without the other. The current disconnection with physical spaces and not sharing neighbourhoods or walks to school make it difficult to generate a common ethos and to feel part of the same social group and thus have a political project. Conversely, having no cultural or political affinities makes it unlikely that teachers can share more with each other and feel part of a group, however proud of themselves they may be. The same is true of cultural compatibility and politicization. The three dimensions are part of the same transformation process for teachers and their place in society as a whole.

It is no coincidence that educational policies began to bring policies ‘down to the classroom’, focusing on modifying teaching practices. Politics has the discursive effect of placing the classroom as *the* educational space. They reduce the field of resistance to the classroom. And politics, invading the classroom, is cunning. It wields such control that the teacher is forced to focus on such an attack. The omission of the life situated context and society is the art of this teaching policy. The teacher-citizen becomes impossible – a seemingly archaic concept.

Teachers are the main actors in the city's educational problem since they are working actively in the field. They constituted a key pre-dictatorship agent. This chapter shows how an actor once constructed and acted upon the problem of education, with a markedly social, public, cultural and political meaning has been disarticulated: their neighbourhood, their organizations, their main work space, and the ethos of the public school. All of the above have given way to the emergence of a more individualistic and aspirational actor: the entrepreneur teacher.

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Teachers that own schools: the emergence of a new subjectivity in the city

Introduction: The Queen of Rancagua

Finding the owner and headteacher of Rancagua College became a major goal and a persistent challenge during my field work. Early on I sensed I would need patience. While there was no physical evidence of the school itself, because it had disappeared and been replaced by a large building of tinted windows of a private vocational institute, since 2000 nobody even knew if this teacher was alive. Asking what had happened to said person, only triggered a cloak of silence, shrugged shoulders, and an abrupt and unsatisfactory end to the inquiry.

Beyond the mystery about the closing of the school, my curiosity to meet the headteacher, Sonya Graniffo was more down to my general interest in understanding the experience of a teacher directing her own school for more than four decades. On the other, it was down to the hagiographic way in which the Rancagüinos themselves described her in particular, always extolling her as an authority figure entitled to a statue. With or without affection, people said that she and the school were a fundamental part of the local history of education, that their school was considered one of the traditional Rancaguino establishments and that, being a primary teacher and woman, it was remarkable that she was regarded as a queen in a city marked by patriarchal and conservative norms.

I spent months asking about her, until one day a private school leader told me about her close friendship with her. It turned out that at the age of 82 Sonya G. lived in Viña del Mar, in a small apartment that her nephews rented to her. She had never returned to Rancagua, but she was willing to be interviewed. On the day of the appointment, I took a bus to Santiago and then another to the coast, making a trip of three hours one way and another three back to have a conversation that, at her express request, would last a maximum of an hour.

She greeted me dressed in grey trousers, a white blouse, and a slim black vest, as neat and austere as the minimalist decoration of her apartment. She offered me a cup of tea and then she sat bolt upright in her chair, conveying a dignity and pride that somehow inhibited me. She told me that she lived there alone and that she had no children. "I never married, I didn't have children either. I didn't need either one or the other, because instead of children I had my students", she explained satisfied. I told her then that I was interested in

learning about the history of the school she owned and so she began to talk. She managed the rhythm of the story as she pleased, leaving almost no room for interruptions or questions. As if she had narrated it a thousand times animating a gathering, she told me about her grandmother founding the school and then how she had inherited it. Over the years, the Rancagua school, “the school of Graniffo”, had become a mini fiefdom, with more than 1,200 students from kindergarten through to the final secondary level, with an enviable infrastructure, a consolidated prestige and a long history of multiple generations of Rancaguino students.

Something that she told me and that I did not know, on the other hand, was that part of the consolidation of that project and of Sonya's fame was related to her cultivating different spaces of political influence, as a leader. In fact, she counted among her achievements having been the first president of the women's section of the Rotary Club in Rancagua, the regional president of the Liberal Ladies and also a national leader of the Federation of private schools, FIDE. As she herself explained to me, while she was a director, she had had excellent relationships with both the local elites and the military government, with the mayors and, at least for a time, with the banks. Being the owner of a large school, I understood, had made it easier for her to have a voice in the political field and, vice versa, having power in the political field had facilitated her rapidly growing the school and quickly consolidating its institutional legitimacy.

Time flew by and I was increasingly astonished at her disappearance from Rancagua given everything she had told me. I was embarrassed to broach the subject, but I took a deep breath to gain confidence and tried to not get bogged down with words. I asked her directly: Can you tell me what happened? How did you lose everything? After a short pause, she answered without fussing. "By charging less, we managed to keep up with the two most important private schools in Rancagua, the O'Higgins Institute and the English Institute, and at the beginning of the 90s we came to be on par in performance and in terms of enrolment results" she started saying. "I was happy. Really happy. They knew me in the banks and then I got overexcited, that's what happened. I wanted to do my best. First I went into heavy debt with the construction of a new building, then the laboratory. I was buying all the land and all the houses on the block. Then I made another building and the covered court. And I did not do it as a trader, because traders go little by little, calculating the investment, most of them asking for subsidies from the State. I got excited and the banks then wanted their money back and took everything from me: school, houses, even the car. The school had to be closed and I preferred to leave Rancagua". Then she fell silent and settled herself as if to get up, gracefully ending the interview. Indeed, the arranged time was quickly over. Sensing that I had little further recourse, I looked at her with an uneasy expression. The mystery remained. How could it be that a woman with that background, contacts and strength had been carried away by such an untempered desire for growth? I wanted to

understand why. She got up from her seat and calmly told me: "I did everything for them, for my children."

*

Picture 9: Sonya Graniffo, Viña del Mar, 2014



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

During the most part of the 20th century, characters like Sonya G. (see Picture 9) were rare in the Chilean educational landscape. Teachers worked primarily for the state, and the few private schools that existed were typically owned by religious congregations or by foreign interest groups. However, at the onset of the 80s, the educational system began to shift rapidly, because all school provision was left in the hands of school holders ["sostenedores"], who would receive a voucher per student by the state (Aedo-Richmond, 2000; Bellei, 2015). Thus, while state schools began to be transferred to municipal providers [to sostenedores municipales], hundreds of individuals and societies around the country began to obtain the title of private holders [sostenedores privados], following the new constitutional amendment (Constitución Política de La República de Chile., 1980) facilitating the right "to open, organize and maintain educational establishments" (Article 19, subsection 11). In the first five years of the enactment of this reform, almost forty private schools were established in Rancagua. Of these, more than half were created by teachers, that is, by owners who had previously been public school teachers and who decided to become the owners of their own schools.

The fact that with the reforms it was teachers who were enthusiastic about opening schools was no significant shift from the expectations of the military government. In 1987, when Chile was already negotiating the terms under which the Pinochet dictatorship could be ended. Joaquín Lavín (1987), a Chilean economist trained by Friedman in Chicago, wrote a popular book about the achievements of the military government. In it, Lavín maintained and celebrated the notion that what had been happening in those years in Chile had been a "silent revolution" of the state apparatus and culture, which, supposedly, had finally brought the country out of the past and begun integrating it into a global society. One of the most illustrative areas of modernization described by the author was the school environment, upon which the formation of a "true educational industry" which moved billions of pesos could already be celebrated (Lavín, 1987, p. 133). Part of that transformation, Lavín continued, should be attributed to the teachers, since it was mainly them who had created more than 2,700 private subsidized schools nationwide in four years. These

teachers, whom he christened “teachers-entrepreneurs” (Lavín, 1987, p. 138), were presented as being one of the great successes of the silent revolution.

The proliferation of private school owners clearly aided the consolidation of the neoliberal model. For almost thirty years however, the question of who these people are has been practically absent in both the Chilean political and academic debate. It was only in 2006 that private providers became the focus of attention amid intense student mobilizations that pointed to the logic of the market and profit as the causes of a serious malaise within the education sector. The students railed against the socioeconomic inequalities of the school system swaying public opinion by showing the existence of profit-oriented school owners. This led to an intense questioning of the legitimacy and consequences of having privatised school provision by turning schools into a business, which was responded to by governments following the recommendations of the World Bank, with an agenda of greater demands and control towards all *sostenedores*, private and municipal ones (Bellei, 2015).

Here is important to mention that by the time I started my fieldwork, I shared part of the students’ distrust of the private holder. This perception was based on the generalizations of political discussion, and not in any concrete sense on direct personal experiences. In fact, until then I had never spoken with a school owner and was not directly aware of private subsidized schools, either as a student or as a professional. It was a first lesson, then, to arrive in Rancagua and come across these experiences. Although some people were critical of the general subsidy and competition model, the opinions that were expressed to me about the school owners varied. Moreover, people in Rancagua generally operated according to factors different from those highlighted in national debates and studies at the time. These debates are often reduced to dichotomised categories such as non-profit / for-profit; secular / religious; a single school / several schools (Almonacid, 2004; Bellei et al., 2008; Corvalán et al., 2009; Elacqua et al., 2011). In fact, in the conversations and urban tales of Rancagua in newspapers, the existence of private schools run by teachers were typically presented positively, with only a few exceptions considered as profit-oriented. As can be seen in the local newspapers of those years, having

schools was seen a legitimate enterprise. For the teachers-entrepreneurs, on the other hand, having their own schools was a dream come true; a project that absorbed their attention, creativity and resources; a form of personal fulfilment so powerful that it ordered and shaped their priorities values and daily lives.

Following the ethnographic task of “documenting the undocumented” (Rockwell, 2009, p. 21), the goal of this chapter is to analyze the proliferation and peculiarities of Rancaguean teachers who became school owners. How did classroom teachers decide to become *sostenedores*? What were the motivations and rationalities of these teacher-entrepreneurs? How do they contribute to building and re-shaping the educational panorama in the city and beyond from this position? In the following sections I seek to answer these questions drawing on formal and informal interviews with different actors, especially with teachers. In this way, the chapter has a double function. On the one hand, it furthers the previous one by investigating a lesser-known variant of the transformations of teaching subjectivity. On the other hand, following Foucault’s way of thinking about power (1995), it places the emphasis on the generative aspect of the new circumstances and discourses mobilised by the dictatorship and its neoliberal reforms. My main argument is that the proliferation of private school providers has contributed to redefining the educational problem in the urban space, with the individualistic aspirational “dream of having one’s own school” a central subjective element driving the privatization process in the Chilean case.

Educational privatisation and new actors

The identification and analysis of new non-state actors and their ways of operating has been an important research focus for those who analyze the expansion of the market model in different areas of society, including education (Ball, 2007, 2009; Burch, 2009; Lingard & Sellar, 2013; Parreira do Amaral et al., 2019; Robertson, 2016). One of the main contributions of this research is to help understand the new methods of governing society which imply a shift from centralised and bureaucratic state

governments to a polycentric and networked governance, where the roles and relationships of private and public actors are blurred (Ball, 2008).

In the educational policy arena, an important task has been to understand how a policy and advocacy community, that works for privatization in a transnational sense, has come to the fore and moreover to consider how it operates (Ball, 2009). This community grows as a complex network made up of diverse bodies such as the World Bank and the OECD, think tanks, policy entrepreneurs, private profit-oriented companies and philanthropic groups, whose functions range from directly offering educational services to advising, designing policies or creating exchange spaces. Here, national states operate as one more actor, but with the specific role of meta-governance (Jessop, 2002) and, as in Chile, as market-makers. Ball (2007) tracks the education service industry in the UK, identifying new practices, relationships and the ethical implications of its growth. Then, in later studies, he places more emphasis on the academies' program, the business of philanthropy and policy mobility, always showing detailed maps of the networks of financial and political influences. (Ball et al., 2017; Ball & Junemann, 2012; Ball & Youdell, 2007). Burch (2009), on the other hand, maps the financial and operational reach of some of the largest for-profit companies in the US education industry, showing how these activities are being covertly deployed and causing a growing transfer of roles from the public to the private sector. More recently, Verger, Lubienski y Steiner-Khamsi (2016), and Parreira do Amaral, Steiner-Khamsi and Thomson (2019) compiled a broad set of studies that broaden the evidence on the actors and factors that are shaping the Global Education Industry, demonstrating the rapid advances and impacts of the capitalization of the education sector at a global scale.

There is further literature on educational privatization that, although linked to mapping networks, has focused more on describing the new forms of subjectivation that change to roles and relationships within schools or policy making communities imply (e.g. Ball, 2003, 2007; Lingard et al., 2015; Reyes et al., 2010, 2014; Sisto, 2012). One of the central points of this literature has been to show that the emergence of new relationships and actors in the context of privatization lead to new ways of

thinking and acting in education. They are not just new practices and roles, but new epistemes, ethics, identities, and rationalities.

In this chapter I work with these two aspects of the same process. I seek to account for how the teacher-owner actor has become an important part of the machinery of reform that drives the privatization process at the urban level. I also seek to analyse the way in which these actors are capable of mobilizing an ethics, a discourse and educational practices in the context of the city, combining old elements (teaching professionalism) with new features of the neoliberal discourse (managerialism and competition).

Teachers-entrepreneurs in Rancagua

Emergence and consolidation of the schools owned by teachers

The emergence of private schools from the 80s, compared colloquially with mushrooms, was considered by the Rancagüinos as an important development of local history. Even as a phenomenon that had to be clarified when it came to accounting for current life in the city. The irruption of the new establishments modified the general structure of the school world that existed until then. This school world, in addition to being predominantly state-controlled, was ordered according to a few broad distinctions between schools. On the one hand, it was said, that there were long-standing public and private primary and secondary schools, considered "traditional" because they had been serving generations of Rancagua families ("traditional families") for several decades. On the other, there was a large group of schools built in new neighbourhoods, most of them public, the majority of primary education, which had been created to receive almost ten thousand families who, from 1965 onwards, had come down to the valley from the mining camps in the mountains.

The "current" school reality has its roots, then, in the 1980s. From then onwards, state schools had been municipalized and there had, once again, been an intense period of opening of new schools, but this time through private provision. The new schools were appearing in an unpredictable fashion, independent of the governing state,

religious or union rationale which hitherto had held sway. To get an idea of the magnitude of the irruption of this phenomenon in the city, it is enough to look at table 2 which summarises the period between 1980 and 1985. In those years, while 34 state schools were transferred to the municipal administration, 36 private schools were founded, each one by a different owner. Thus, in just five years, the number of private establishments exceeded that of public establishments, and with it, the historical distinctions within the local school world began to fade, with new socio-spatial references coming to the fore.

Table 2: Evolution of the schools' offer in Rancagua (1965–2010)

Year	State	Municipal (State Subsidized)	Private (State Subsidized)	Private (Not State Subsidized)	Delegated Management	Total
1965	8	0	3	3	0	14
1970	25	0	5	7	0	37
1975	39	0	5	8	0	52
1980	39	0	6	10	0	55
1985	5	34	36	16	0	91
1990	0	34	41	21	3	99
1995	0	34	35	26	3	98
2000	0	34	43	17	3	97
2005	0	34	48	8	3	93
2010	0	34	53	7	3	97

Source: Own reconstruction based on archives and interviews

The data kept by the Ministry of Education and the Municipality on schools created before 1990 do not enable me to identify who these new private providers were. The Head of Statistics for the regional secretary of the ministry, whom I went to for help, dusted off some photocopied tables from the 1980s, including enrolment data by school and the names of the headteachers, without specifying the owners. To find out who was behind each school, the only option was to ask around about each one individually and from this information, try and piece together the stories of each case in my notebook. It was thus - asking about the origins of a given school - that I learned that in Rancagua it was common knowledge that many of these emerging schools were the projects of teachers, who had previously worked in the state sector,

wanting to open and run their own schools. The comments were akin to the following:

When they started creating the subsidized schools, the idea was that the very same teachers could manage their own school - Nitza, a retired teacher, told me -. Hence, several schools were created by entrepreneurial teachers, such as the schools Villa Triana, Gabriela Mistral, Infantes de O'Higgins, to mention a couple.

As I was able to conclude with my notes and the incomplete documentation of the ministry, between 1980 and 1990, 44 schools were created, of which at least 25 were founded by these “entrepreneurial teachers,” as Nitza called them. The appearance of this concept (and subject position) was not trivial for my informants, because the category enabled them to distinguish these private schools from traditional private schools that belonged to religious congregations and from those that belonged to societies of another nature, such as parents' associations linked to mining or the Masonic lodge.

The changes in the school system of Rancagua resembles what Simkins et al. (2015) described for the school system in England. By analysing the effect that accountability policies and ‘academies’ have had on local authorities (LA), they argue that:

many of the administrative functions once exercised by LAs were delegated to school level, while LAs have seen their powers bypassed as schools have been increasingly subject to specification, monitoring and control of their outcomes by central government through regimes of testing, inspection and intervention in response to perceived school underperformance. (p. 2)

This idea is relevant because the evolution of formal schooling in Rancagua shows a similar pattern of increased fragmentation and multiplication of the social actors involved in the management of the school system of the city.

To understand why there is an important group of private schools in the hands of teachers-entrepreneurs in the Rancaguean school landscape, below I explain three aspects that in the opinion of the locals were fundamental: the triggering or generative conditions of the creation of private schools, the demand of families for

more schools and the conditions that consolidated this type of schools as a staple of the local school market.

Generative conditions

I went into the subsidized private sector in 1984, around that time, at the time when the dictatorship was still in charge and they kind of annoyed you a little [he was a leader from the Radical Party] and the calmest thing to do was that. I went to work in a school called Colegio Infantes de O'Higgins, which was one of the first subsidized schools to be installed in Rancagua. The owner was a lady who worked in the Ministry of Education and she came to understand that it was a business proposition to install schools. Since I was more or less acquainted with another lady who was her colleague at the Ministry, they then made contact and asked me to do classes there. (Luis R.)

Judging from the number of schools that have been created since 1980, it is evident that the rules decreed by the military government were effective in terms of decentralizing the school service with the participation of new local actors. Such effectiveness was largely due to the fact that, in practice, these actors recognised that there were real possibilities to become involved as owners in the new policy and political context – ‘actually existing neoliberalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). In the local memories of those years, it is a common idea that the government permitted (or encouraged) a kind of open season [*"chipe libre"*] incentivised by important conditions of viability and profitability. I heard this from both *sostenedores* and from government officials.

One of the people I met who was extremely clear about this process was Karina F., a teacher who since the 1970s had worked for the Ministry of Education at a provincial level. Although she worked with vocational guidance, in the early 1980s she was redeployed responding to requests to open new schools in the region, which enabled her to see the process from up close. For her, it was clear that the enthusiasm of people about becoming school owners was based on two central conditions: the threadbare requirements of the regulations and the amount of subsidy on offer.

In the 1980s, all the legislation was changed dramatically. Public schools were municipalized and given the legal opportunity for many people to form their schools in light of super elementary things. If you were interested, you [only] had to fill out a form. They could be old buildings, that is, the infrastructure was not considered much: if it was made of adobe, if it was made of wood, it did

not matter. [Thus] lots of schools emerged, because the subsidy was good and it was enough. I don't remember exactly how much it was, but we [the government officials] always multiplied. At least if the course had 30 students, it was enough to pay the *sostenedor* a lot of things. It was profitable. (Karina F.)

Roxana P., who was an English teacher and in 1980 was just 25 years old, remembered that in her case it was specifically the grant per student that allowed her to think that it was possible to specify what she felt as her vocation, which was to have and run an independent free school. Thanks to this new form of financing, she said, "other private companies" were integrated into the collaborating function of the State, like her.

It turns out that in 1980, I think I am not mistaken, or around then, the invitation came from the military government, allowing private to form requesting a significant State subsidy. These sort of schools existed before, but they were mainly Catholic schools that received state subsidies and were free schools. So what [the government] said was that there may be other private offerings that could make a request to the Ministry to collaborate with the State function and request a subsidy. And since what I wanted was to build a school in a vulnerable sector, my sister told me 'There it is, form a school, apply for a subsidy and create a school'. (Roxana P.)

Another issue here is the type of infrastructure with which the new private schools began. Until then, urban public schools were large buildings very similar to each other, all with robust architecture and with spacious interior spaces, most of them built by the Society for the Construction of Educational Establishments. This, in principle, could have been used as a model and set of norms for provision, however it was not. In fact, since 1980, any passer-by who walked through the centre of Rancagua could see how, suddenly, old adobe houses that did not even have a patio had been turned into schools (see Picture 6). The image is iconic and for many people I spoke with, it represented the best synthesis to explain how easy it had become to start a school in Rancagua. "I installed the Colegio San Ignacio right in the centre, on Avenida Cáceres," Roxana told me. "It was an *adobe* house that no one could believe, an *adobe* house that was rented." The school started with just 19 children divided between kindergarten and first grade, but the next year there were 50 and the next year 100, so a couple of years later she was able to get a loan and buy a new place to continue growing.

Figure 6: Colegio Javiera Carrera in the 1980s



Source: www.colegiojavieracarrera.cl

Karina told me something very similar about the humble beginnings of other school in the city. The modus operandi in all cases was to start with just a few grades and add grades year on year, while cultivating prestige and obtaining bank loans to build the infrastructure. "Mrs. Herna, for example, went to a little house that she rented in El Manzanal neighborhood and later bought one house higher up and she built there." She told me the same thing about the Villa María School, Don Bosco, Nazareth, Javiera Carrera, Saint John, to mention schools that I knew in 2014 as being great buildings. For the teachers, Karina inferred, this was the only real alternative, since they usually did not have enough loans or capital to start in anything other than these humble conditions.

Among the many teachers that I spoke to, especially those who had not yet become entrepreneurs, an obvious incentive to consider alongside the deregulation of the infrastructure was the deregulation of work. In effect, private schools, subsidized or not, were freed from the statutes that for decades regulated the work of public sector teaching staff. With the new regulations, teachers who were employees of private schools began to benefit from the same conditions as any other workers, which meant the *sostenedores* having the possibility of paying them the minimum salary, as well as having a great degree of flexibility to establish the contractual conditions and dismiss them without any legal requirements or potential consequences (Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991; Núñez, 1990). For teachers, this situation was neither normal nor desirable, but those seeking jobs had no choice but to accept it. The dictatorship had already shown that the Teaching State was a thing of the past and that they were now immersed in a divisive dog-eat-dog struggle for survival.

I remember that where the mall is now, I went to do classes once, and it was a house, and I had to do classes in the living room, there were the kids. And I said 'it can't be true...'. I worked a few hours there because I needed it, because I was alone with two very sick daughters. To the lady of this school, Mrs. Irmendia, you had to ask her nicely just to pay you. (Yorma A.)

In any case, there were a significant number of teachers I spoke to who, despite everything, felt grateful to certain teacher-entrepreneurs, who gave them the opportunity to work. Hugo L., for example, who was a communist during the dictatorship, told me:

What happened was a paradox, given that subsidized private schools became the main source of work for teachers who were marginalized from the public schools, something with which I, for example, benefitted from. And therefore there was a body of teachers that began to work there for sustenance. I worked in those schools between 1985 and 1991, a period in which I was left without a public school. In November of 1985 I was arrested for three months and then the military relegated⁶ me and I arrived in March without a school, without a job, without anything, and there these subsidized private schools, at least in Rancagua, were quite lenient to welcome you and place you in work. (Hugo L.)

⁶ As a form of punishment and disarticulation, hundreds of teachers were sent for months or even years to live in isolated towns or villages of the country, where they were strictly supervised by the *pólice* or soldiers. They were called “relegados” (Ljubetic, 2004).

Deregulation was now a fact, but still surprising to some extent. Karina vividly remembered in 2014 the discomfort that working for the ministry of education as an official caused her, knowing that the new subsidies meant the deregulation of the public education. It was strange for her, since it contradicted the work done so far with public schools. Her recall below shows the astonishment of learning how the Subsidies Law would be enacted:

One day a delegation came from Santiago, from the central level of the Ministry of Education, to present and explain to us the new Subsidies Law. I realized that there were very few..., they were guarantees that private providers practically had and there was very little inspection that you could do. And I told my colleague, 'but how... Look at so many things, how is the State going to give and give and give? I felt that it should be controlled more, there should be other clauses. Do you know what he answered me? 'Well', he told me, 'all these guys already own schools in Santiago' (Karina F.)

In addition to generating favourable conditions for privatization, the new regulations meant a paradigm shift in the rules of what was permissible and what was not. With this, a new educational ethics was deployed that allowed the configuration of a new type of subjectivity (Ball, 2015b). As can be seen from Karina's account, those who first understood the procedures to open schools in detail were the ministry officials. Learning that authorities and officials in Santiago were opening schools served as concrete evidence that it was feasible, and therefore worth it, to open schools. This also meant that the boundaries between public and private would begin to blur. Karina realised this when the regional chief suggested to her to open a school.

1988 was the last year that old constructions were recognized for schools. There was a regional chief who said to me 'Angelita, build a school with another person or find a fake partner [palo blanco]'. And I thought 'No, that's not me...' This chief from the regional ministry of education put it into our heads that we should own our own school, because it was very easy ["la papa"]: you had the possibility of renting a sizeable house and they gave you the quality of cooperation with a simple commitment that you were going to invest in the quality of teaching. (Karina F.)

During the last two years of the dictatorship (1988-1990), just before the post-dictatorship period started, rumours started to spread that that the end of the dictatorship would mean the end of the easiness to open new private schools. For

example, there were rumours that the infrastructure requirements would increase (e.g., a minimum of toilets per number of students, safety regulations, existence of a playground, amongst others); that there could be more demands on the *sostenedores*; and that there would be more the justifications for opening new schools, making it more difficult to obtain an official recognition decree. All of these expectations created a new environment. The Colegio San Ignacio is a good example of this since it was opened under those circumstances. Its owner (in a family partnership) had a cooperative decree for a kindergarten in the San Luis neighbourhood, but the garden had lost enrolment and its owner had thus lost interest in maintaining it. As a result, she thought of returning that decree to the Ministry, but an official and friend of hers recommended that she did not do so:

At that time [1990] a friend who was still working there told me “But Roxana, how are you going to return a cooperative decree? This document, in time, will be very difficult to achieve, do not return it.’ ‘But what do I do with it, if my family no longer wants to have a garden there?’, I asked. ‘Transfer it to another place, transfer it to another area. Ask for a change of address and settle with this cooperative decree in another sector that is in need of a private kindergarten’. (Roxana P.)

The rumours of changes in the demands had the effect of more people being enthusiastic about creating their own schools, reading it as a kind of “now or never” moment.

The ease with which schools could be opened, the threadbare and vague infrastructure requirements, the active encouragement from actors in positions of authority, were all conditions that encouraged teachers and others to become educational entrepreneurs and open their own schools.

The demand for private schools

The subsidy model consisted of a voucher per student – student needed to be attracted and recruited. The schools founded by teachers often began this competition for clients. In most cases, school began with 12, 15, 19 students spread over one or at the most two courses. However, very soon most began to increase their recruitment reaching 500 and then 1000 students after a few years. Where did so many students come from?

A very important contextual element to understanding the demand for schools in this new competitive environment was the substantial increase in the student population in Rancagua. The main factor here was the migration of families from the mine camps that had been established since the mid-1960s. Further, there were several waves of migration from the countryside to the city that intensified in the 1960s and 1970s due to the need for work and for a better quality of life.

Faced with such a high level of demand, the public schools could barely cope, which placed the new private schools in the position of responding to a specific community need. Even with the considerable efforts made during the decades prior to the coup, the country (particularly in the provinces) remained a long way from providing universal education coverage. This broader problem, which was not unique to Rancagua, was significantly exacerbated during the dictatorship as public schools were systematically put under pressure: the budget for maintenance was abruptly reduced, teachers were routinely expelled, and schools were subject to interventions from authorities in-hoc to the regime (Ljubetic, 2004; Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991). Of course, in this context, no new public schools were opened in Rancagua. In this way, at the beginning of the 1980s there was a significant percentage of the school-age population out of school, even at primary education level. Those able to find a school were being taught 60 students per room in increasingly run-down buildings with poor facilities. All of this increased the willingness of families to abandon public schools *en masse* for private schools which were free. The scene that Roxana talks about the day she opened her subsidized school in a working-class town in the city illustrates the burgeoning interest in private provision at the beginning of the 1980s in Rancagua.

And you know that opening the school was something like: I sat down, I remember, to enrol, and it was full, it was full of people. Because a private school, in a sector where there were only public schools (...) Well, this school rose like foam, and we soon started offering the secondary grades, we had about 1000 students. (...) Around there, the big [municipal] school we had is the one still exists, but it is no longer big (...) They really were our... not our competition, because we never need to compete with anyone because the school filled us up. (Roxana P.)

In the case of secondary education, the situation was even more opportune for private schools, since as Hugo L. told me, there was a 'captive enrolment' in the city, that was always easy to forecast and engage with.

I remember that in 1979, in Rancagua at least, the State helped the rise of subsidized individuals by pointing out early - in December - that it did not plan to create any new courses in state schools for the next academic year because the schools did not have the capacity. In Rancagua, therefore, the state delivered a 'captive enrolment', we could call it, of all that segment of the secondary schools that had finished primary education and were unable to find a place in public secondary education, but that were available and the parents wanted them to study. (...) I worked at the Juan 23 school, which was created by a colleague from the grammar boys' school Oscar Castro. He sought some financial support from a partner and he created that school with the permission of the system that allowed him to set up a school in a little house, and I mean, in a miserable little house... But I remember that even so he was capable of having four or five courses in the first level of secondary education, because of those excluded from Oscar Castro and other such schools. (Hugo L.)

Linked with the above, there is an element of another order that is worth touching upon to understand the growing willingness of Rancagua students to enrol in these schools without any history: the novelty factor. In the midst of the crisis of the municipalized public schools, the new schools sought to appear as the incarnation of the modernization of the system, pushing the idea that, because they were private, they could offer an innovative service to the population, different and more dynamic than what the seemingly stagnating (de-funded) public education could offer. The idea that people "are always responsive to the new", was a notion that teachers-entrepreneurs exploited very well. "There is a saying that the new starts well", Sonya G. explained to me, adding with some disdain that through the 1980s she saw the new school owners offering provision like any other street seller: 'Come here! This is going to be taught, classes of this, classes of this, classes of this other!'"

This strategy, indeed, seemed to have a certain correspondence with local characteristics, in particular with the consumer culture that different people with whom I spoke attributed to the inhabitants of Rancagua from long before the malls and credit cards exacerbated general consumerism. It had to do above all with the mining culture, who were used to much higher wages than those of any workers or employees in other industries. Even the merchants of the city waited for them with

special offers as they got off the mining train since the beginning of the century. The attitude, which ended up being assumed as *muy rancagüina*, was rooted in the patriarchal figure of the head of the household who, after weeks breaking his back in the heart of the mine, came down from his shift and both he and his family needed to feel, in a concrete way, that the sacrifice had been worth it. It was in this context that the drive for comparison had become a local hallmark, so widespread that during my stay in Rancagua I heard countless jokes about it, as if a family bought a television and this would trigger the one-upmanship of someone buying another, of course bigger or more modern. Rancaguan people were historically known to be vulnerable to these temptations of spending and consumption, and, consequently, highly sensitive to the status brought by access to expensive and novel consumer goods. (A classic anecdote about the urgency to keep up to date is that when the first shopping centre with an escalator in the city opened, there was a line for several days to try to get on it. The same was said of the first McDonalds). All this fit very well with the offer that the teachers-entrepreneurs began to outline. This, because unlike the private schools created by groups of parents or by congregations or by the Masons, who more or less had their clients insured, the teacher-entrepreneurs understood better than anyone that they had to capture the attention of families.

So there I started, I jumped at the chance. I set up the school in the centre of Rancagua and put up a simple poster: 'Personalized education'. And 'What is this thing?' And people came in to ask and I gave them my speech-spiel about what personalized education is for me. And there were families that felt appealed by this. (Roxana P.)

The description made by this school owner is illustrative of the outset of the privatization process in a city like Rancagua, when a way had to be devised to commodify education. The new schools presented themselves to the city like any store selling a product, offering something from their showcase that would appeal to the curiosity of passers-by, who "came in to ask."

Conditions of consolidation

While in the 1980s the favourable conditions and the strong demand already described allowed the creation of an educational market in the city, in the 1990s and

2000s there was a consolidation of the private sector. This was not the only expected path. In fact, the end of the dictatorship generated significant national uncertainty among the *sostenedores* of private schools, especially among the subsidized schools. The fear, in particular, was that the new government, which was opposed to the military regime, would seek to stop or reverse the privatization process by changing the financing scenario as it stood. It was speculated that the voucher per student could be abolished, or that it would be decided to privilege financing for municipal schools, or to force a significant increase in expenses, either by demanding better infrastructural conditions or formalised labour contracts. Soon after, however, the Aylwin government (1990-1994) gave clear signals that the neoliberal school model would not change and that there was no danger to the subsidized private sector. The official discourse, embodied in the final report of the *Brunner Commission* (Comisión Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación, 1994), was that the "modernization of education" had broadly been the right path. The initial phase of increasing coverage had already happened, and what had to be done from then on was to improve its quality. The main policies aimed at improving quality were, on the one hand, the deployment of more and more certification and accountability mechanisms for schools, teachers and students, and on the other, new financing mechanisms to invest in different areas of the schools, without distinguishing between whether this went to municipal and private ones.

For the teacher-entrepreneurs, the three forms of financing that allowed them to continue being part of the system were threefold: shared financing, new state funds and bank or investor loans.

I learned about this atmosphere of fear within the private sector in those first years of the return to democracy, thanks to Brother Aldo, a member of the Marist congregation who had been director of the O'Higgins Institute in Rancagua and president of the federation of private schools, FIDE. Brother Aldo had been a central actor in the educational discussion that took place at the national level at the end of the dictatorship and was very proud of what it meant to approve the system of co-payment in the plan to protect the private sector. The financing by co-payment, in

short, was a law passed in 1993 that allowed subsidized schools to begin collecting fees from families, in addition to the subsidy. For Brother Aldo, the greatest merit was that in negotiating with the new government he had managed to fulfil his mission, which consisted, in his own words, of “defending, defending, defending” what had been advanced in favour of the ‘freedom of education’. The end of the dictatorship posed greater dangers, he explained to me, because “there have always been people in Chile who long for the Teaching State, people who believe that the only one who can educate you is the State”.

With the extra financing provided by the co-payment, the subsidized private schools were able to compensate for the deficit that the military regime itself had been generating over its final years by, first, freezing the subsidy and then reducing it incrementally. This was a big problem for the FIDE schools, the priest explained to me, “because there was no longer enough money available to pay teachers like the municipal ones. There was the freedom to pay the minimum salary, but our idea was to have teachers who stay with you for 30 years and for that you have to pay them well”. The problem was, after all, that subsidized schools were at a disadvantage compared to municipal schools in attracting good teachers, a question that this alternative solved well. In Rancagua, eight schools that charged low fees decided to switch to this way of working.

Along with the need to retain the best teachers, the *sostenedores* observed that co-payment allowed them to attract and retain parents who were willing to pay for better quality provision, but found it very difficult to pay for an expensive private school. The co-payment, in that sense, operated as a discount donated by the State for those families that could pay a little and wished to remain in the private system. Roxana, describes the kind of families were benefitted.

They are families of young couples, professionals, but who in turn are starting [their social ascent], therefore when they start, they start buying a house, buying a car, more and more, then two cars are needed for the traffic jams, etc, etc. So [choosing a subsidized school with co-payment] is an opportunity for them to pay less for their children's education, but know they are receiving a good quality education, because what they want is for their children to reach the same level and become professionals. (Roxana P.)

The consolidation of private schools also benefitted from receiving fresh resources from the State. Along with starting to operate with the co-payment, many of Rancagua's private providers received significant amounts from the state through improvement programs for all the subsidized schools. To receive such benefits, private holders had to apply and then compete, so it was not uncommon that school web pages celebrated these benefits, noting in detail the contributions of the state. During the 1990s there were funds destined exclusively to enlarging the buildings (Full School Day Law), equipping them with laboratories and gymnasiums (MECE Media) and computer rooms (Enlaces Program). Then, as of the Preferential Educational Subsidy Act of 2008, the subsidized schools also began to receive more than double the subsidy per student when they were students from low-income families, an issue that more than a stimulus to consolidating existing schools, served as a consolidation of the private sector in general, because it promoted the opening of new schools in low-wage areas where traditionally interest and practicality were relatively low.

Along with being able to charge parents and receive significant funds from the State, most private schools have depended on banks or groups of investors to consolidate and grow them further, for which they must convince people that their project has a positive economic projection. Roxana explained to me to tell me that the *sostenedores* did not get rich, because they were all in debt. "The bank," she told me, "has put money into all of these schools, and that obviously has to be paid for from somewhere." In the case of attracting investors, on the other hand, the agreement is different, since it means giving external people power over the decisions of the school. Roxana told me that, in fact, she had received offers from investment companies, but that she has rejected them because she did not want to negotiate criteria. To explain this financial model to me, she told me about Colegio Coya. She told me that due to its level of indebtedness, half of the shares had to be sold to EducaUC – a commercial arm of the Catholic University, producing new problems and tensions with teachers and parents. The Mozart College, on the other hand, decided to sell part of its shares to a group of investors, who were able to put the

capital aside to make a significant investment in its infrastructure. Roxana found out about the following by chance, getting worried about the way in which investors operate and start making decisions about the schools.

The Mozart College was expanded to secondary school and they made a very nice building for these levels on the way to the cemetery. You go over there and see a tremendous building, and the sports field is outside. It is as if the court that children play here [at her school] were just a parking lot. And it made me curious! Generally you don't see that the first thing you see from the outside is the soccer field. So, I asked a teacher who works there "Hey, why did they make the pitch out?" And he told me "It's is because the investors demanded that, because that would sell more if it faced the street. (Roxana P.)

Another way to understand the consolidation conditions is to analyse those who failed in the attempt. These cases are the minority, but they do exist. They operate as a warning to be prudent with how to invest and, above all, for how much debt is incurred. The reasons for the closures were mostly due to financial problems, that is, when the school administration failed to balance its growth project with a workable plan to pay off its spiralling bank debts. That was the case of Sonya G. (see introduction to this chapter), who told me directly about the problems caused by her excess of optimism about her investment possibilities. This was also the view of people in general, even if they did not know the details of bankruptcies. "There were colleagues, Nitza clarified to me, who were simply not good administrators".

Figure 7: Javiera Carrera's School, 2014



Source: www.colegiojavieracarrera.cl

In 2014, I found that the existing schools linked to teachers-entrepreneurs were by then consolidated companies. Their names were considered part of the history of the city, as if they had become "old" institutions, known to all (e.g. compare Figure 6 and Figure 7). At that point they could already have several generations of graduates and it could even be that within the same family there could already be more than one generation linked to the same establishment. Thanks to state financing and the fees paid by the families, they had been replaced by solid buildings of two or three floors, which were leaving behind the old *adobe* houses without a trace that they ever existed.

The dream of owning your own school

Last week was a day of celebration and joy for the Don Bosco school, an educational establishment that celebrated 25 years since its founder Alicia Muñoz began this dream in 1989. (El Rancagüino, October 4, 2014)

El Rancagüino, the newspaper with the largest circulation in Rancagua, was at pains to lend visibility to school events in the city. Its director, Alejandro G., explained to me that they deliberately dedicated space to schools every week and tried to be fair so as not to create annoyance among readers. According to him, the Rancagüinos liked to find a reference to the school where they worked or where their children

studied in the newspaper. They felt that by doing this they were making a contribution to the local identity.

The celebratory piece of news cited above reflects aptly the type of events that the newspaper covered and, furthermore, the way in which the press built the image of the school owners. The news begins with that paragraph and later describes with large colour photos the various activities that were carried out at the Don Bosco School to celebrate its anniversary. With that entry, the article reminds readers that this school is not a product of the State (even if the State had partially financed it) or the municipality or any religious congregation with centuries of experience managing schools. It was the achievement of a woman, a teacher, who was able to make a "dream" come true, which is meant to inspire admiration in readers.

The normalization of the discourse on "the dream of one's own school" is a phenomenon that somehow synthesizes the cultural change that resulted from the privatization of education in Chile. It is not that before the schools were not dreamt of, but it was rare that the dreaming subject was an individual person of modest means. With the exception of foreign colonies (Germans, French, Italians, North Americans) and religious congregations, which considered the founding of schools for their communities as part of their cultural agenda, in Chile the dream of schools belonged mainly to the officials of the civilizational or industrializing state, or, collectively with residents and unions who demanded that the State build more schools.

The individual and legitimate dream of a teacher was to be a professional recognized by their peers and superiors, which was concretely reflected in their new responsibilities and appointments. Their ambitions were to develop professionally, for which he/she had an established teaching career, with a salary scale, hierarchies and merits that led to a higher level (Núñez, 2018). Yorma, for example, already retired in 2014, recalled that it was a milestone in her career when she was appointed the head of the pedagogical unit, a gesture that she understood as being a recognition for her work and capabilities and something which filled her with pride. Likewise, Nitza, who was also a retired teacher, told me about her mother, Julia, a primary

teacher who was a school headteacher for more than a decade at the Marcela Paz Public School, essentially "because she had more merit than anyone else." Along with this, as we saw in the previous chapter, the teachers vibrated with a general dream, which was, as I heard many times from retired teachers to "raise the level of culture of the population." And for this there were certainly in Rancagua those who fought to found schools for the workers (adults and their children), without their expectations including the desire of property.

Even if this is the case, it is important to recognize that the privatization policy did not create the idea out of thin air, but rather somehow insidiously changed the parameters of possibility for an already existing idea. In effect, despite the teaching culture being statist, before the coup there were experiences of teachers with their own schools. In this way it is conceivable that despite not being the hegemonic thought before 1980 some professors had already reflected on the matter, even if it was to reject it as unrealistic. Specifically, in Rancagua there were three teachers who owned schools and were also their directors. One of those schools was the one I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Rancagua College, founded by Sonya G.'s grandmother in 1942. The other two had been created taking advantage of the arrival of Teniente's families in 1967. The three owners were all women, all from well-off families who provided basic capital. The schools they owned were paid for, did not receive state subsidies, and were initially aimed at children from wealthy families that were not comfortable at or were rejected by traditional schools. They were few cases, but well-known, present even in the local press, either as propaganda or as part of press articles, as can be seen in the next Figures 8 and 9.

Figure 8: Advertisement of the school Villa Triana, 1970

COLEGIO "VILLA TRIANA" RANCAGUA
Cuevas 30 - Teléfono 23514
 ESTABLECIMIENTO EDUCACIONAL DE PRIMER ORDEN
 ENSEÑANZA PAGADA — KINDERGARTEN — EXAMENES VALIDOS

—EN VILLA TRIANA:
 Covarrubias 1021: Kinder, Primero, Segundo y Tercero básica.

—EN RANCAGUA:
 Calle Cuevas 30: Primero a Octavo años Básicos, 18 cursos permanentes. Personal docente idóneo, Normalistas Capacitados en cada Curso. Orientación Profesional Responsable.

—CURSOS ESPECIALES.
 RESPONSABILIDAD, SERIEDAD
 ETICA PROFESIONAL.

MATRICULA ACTUAL:
 523 ALUMNOS.
ASISTENCIA MEDIA:
 504 ALUMNOS



6 Años al Servicio de Rancagua

Source: El Rancagüino, 15th August 1970

It says: “Education establishment of first order- Paid teaching – Kindergarten – Validated Exams”. Next to it, was the following piece:

Figure 9: Sonya Graniffo Cerda, 1970



Source: El Rancagüino, 15th August 1970

Sonya Graniffo Cerda: the oldest granddaughter of the Rancagua College’s founder. She is the headteacher of the establishment since 1953 and leads the enthusiastic family team that works for the school. Both sections appeared in the local newspaper

El Rancagüino, on 15th August 1970. The first is a paid insert, the second a piece of the social pages

When in 1980 the dictatorship established the subsidiary logic for what had previously been state services, the dream of one's own school became very real, especially for teachers. In fact, over time the possibility also became attractive to anyone who wanted to invest in or found a new enterprise in order to obtain income. At least that was my impression when I was in Rancagua in 2014, when I realized that the idea did not even require the pretence of pedagogical vocation. I still remember with surprise one day that a friend from Rancagua invited me and one of his former school classmates to have lunch. His friend, who was between 30 and 40 years old, was a lawyer and had recently returned to the city to work in a low-profile position. When he learned that I was researching the Rancagua schools he became interested. He told me that a few months ago with his brother they were thinking about investing in a business. They thought a kindergarten was a good idea, because they had calculated that hiring a couple of educators could have good profitability. This was expressed in an open and direct way that betrayed the normalisation of market logic. He wanted to know my opinion, because he had heard with concern that changes in the regulations were being discussed and that it was said that the *sostenedores* would have to have at least one educator with a university degree. He was frustrated, angry. He told me, literally, "How is it possible that the State places restrictions on the freedom of business?" (Field Note, October 17th 2014). A few months later I learned that the uncertainty had discouraged the brothers from getting into a kindergarten 'business' and that they had instead started a distilled spirits distributor. This was a form of generalised everyday neoliberalism that equates schooling with any other kind of business.

The anecdote from the entrepreneur lawyer serves to keep in mind the differences that still exist between the dream of a teacher to have a school and those of any entrepreneur from outside the field. None of the teacher-entrepreneurs I spoke with ever had such a cold story about "the business." On the contrary, even talking about investments, profitability and competition, they always tried to convey a difference

between those "with an interest in education" and "those who have pound signs in their eyes," as Sonya G. also warned me. They themselves saw their activity as being something that is almost obvious and banal for people with the vocation, pedagogical abilities and leadership, something very similar to how the same civil-military government understood it to be, and the main reason why teachers in Chile were employed as key actors in the creation of a private school offer. Gerardo Jofré (1988), a vigorous promoter of school privatization, suggested this quite transparently in a text on the advantages of the private subsidy policy:

In this sense privatization is highly convenient to integrate teachers. For this, a popular capitalism can be carried out that gives them participation in property and allows them, for the first time in their professional lives, to autonomously and freely administer a school of their own. The teachers' identification with their establishment and the faith that they have in the management that is being carried out in it, are essential elements in obtaining the highest quality of education that the country can achieve given its means. (1988, p. 236).

This quote shows the level of clarity that the promoters of privatization had regarding the relevance of the subjective and cultural aspects of the success of the transformation they sought. By inviting teachers to this 'popular capitalism' of education, they not only found in flesh and bone those who would gradually fracture the hegemony of the State, but they also produced a group whose social legitimacy would help to consolidate the discourse of the right to have private educational dreams. The author's argument was based on a simple intuition: the mere fact that a teacher owned their workspace would generate a feeling of identity and faith in their own management, a fact that generated a very different story if the first wave of new schools would have been created by entrepreneurs from outside the educational world.

Identification with the project

Looking at the specific case of Rancagua, Jofré's (1988) comments about the subjectivity of the teacher-entrepreneurs seemed quite correct. In terms of identity, it was true that they felt a vital attachment to their establishments. Such an attachment was related to the existence of a very meaningful story, where they, as owners, felt they were fulfilling a vocation. It placed them as the head and the main

engine of their dreams. This vocation, according to the people I spoke to, was rooted in different discourses, which sometimes intersected: the teacher-mother, the teacher-saviour, and the experimental teacher, all these were discourses that sought to depart from the idea of simple merchants.

Sonya G. was the perfect example of a maternal teacher. "You get married to have children," she told me, "and I preferred having a school than getting married". The school was her family and her students, her children, so the dream of a school of her own was, in a sense, much like exercising a matriarchal position, just as her grandmother had done. Teaching was in her blood, so having a school felt like a kind of inherited, natural and inevitable destiny. From that place, she felt that she knew better than the State what was convenient for her students. In addition to that she considered that her own criteria had a more stable axis than what the governments of the day could provide. The Graniffo case, however, is quite exceptional. It was said, for example, that in the critical months before the coup, once the socialist youths had taken over the private school Instituto Inglés, she had stood at the door of Rancagua College with a stick, to defend her children. It was not by chance that the teacher was remembered as a kind of queen mother figure.

A different case is that of Roxana P., a teacher-entrepreneur whom I have already referred to throughout the chapter and whom I would now like to devote special attention to reflect on this new subjectivity. I met Roxana thanks to a contact from the Archdiocese, who recommended that I spoke with her because she was the director of a school and the regional president of FIDE, the main association of private schools in the country. Being a very busy woman, it took her more than a month to grant me an appointment for an interview, but when it was possible she was tremendously generous in spending two long afternoons expounding her vision of the city, the schools and her own experience as a school owner.

Roxana, who was later my bridge to Sonya G. and many other teachers, gave me to understand that, for her, the fulfilment of a teacher of having their own school was not just a psycho-family matter, although she understood the point. Her older sister, a primary teacher, had had a private school too, where she did not want to work.

Roxana was an English teacher, who had formed two schools, one private-subsidized one in 1981 and the second, a school that was first paid for and later became subsidized with co-payment, in 1990. Her first school meant fundamentally working with poor children, a desire that was rooted in a maternal and protective figure, but above all in her Catholic formation of social action. "My dream was to have a school in a very vulnerable sector," she repeatedly told me, and there was much in it being very young and differentiating herself from her older sister. To achieve this, her family, who had resources, created a school with her as the headteacher, because with the state grant, she could offer free education.

Roxana thus fulfilled her goal, as that school quickly flourished, reaching nearly a thousand school students. After ten years, however, all that energy faded before the emergence of a new dream. It was the end of the 1980s and she had done a Master's degree in Education, where she learned about the approach to personalized teaching elaborated and used by a Spanish researcher.

She transmitted personalized education with a different passion than others. And I fell in love with it. And since I was her assistant, I had all the facilities. When I was given this opportunity [to open another school] I said, Okay, I'll do this, but I don't do it out of work necessity, because I have thousands of offers, I do it to see if I can put into practice what I gleaned there and bring a new model to Rancagua, which is personalized education, which was unknown. (Roxana P.)

This led her to radically rethink her dream, as she realized that such an approach was not possible within the schools-for-the-poor paradigm. The subsidy amount forced her to have many children per room and the pedagogy she wanted to put into practice required other conditions. She needed a smaller school where parents would pay for the privilege.

The option of applying her knowledge as an employee of another private institution did not make sense to her either. She could have done it, because she worked part-time as an academic director at the private nuns' college, but that alternative did not appeal to her. Fulfilling her new dream, she thought, needed more freedom of action, and having her own school appeared to her the best alternative. For this reason, taking advantage of a collaborative decree from her previous school enterprise, she

opened a second establishment – the San Ignacio School. Her logic led her to do so convinced her to such an extent that she recommended doing the same to a colleague and friend of hers who worked with her at the Nuns. The context of her recommendation was that her friend's husband had been fired from El Teniente mine and received large severance pay for it. Concerned about the family's financial future, the friend had asked Roxana for business recommendations, with a shoe store or a boutique being the two alternatives she had been thinking about. Roxana then made her case.

And I said “You know Flor? I think that you have to do what you know best. So no, I don't think so, I don't see you in a shoe store”. “No, but I would have staff...” - answered her friend. “But no, you have to love what you do, that is, not form a business because you have money and because it generates money, but that you do not love what you do.” “Oh yeah...”. Look, I said, there is something else. You are super smart and hard-working, you are working like me for the Sacred Heart School. Here comes a new nun and she kicks us both out because she thinks we earn too much money and perhaps she doesn't consider it necessary to have this management team. We work, we give the nuns all the ideas, we give them all the advice. We are working for them. In this case I have a school for the reasons I told you [experimentation with personalized pedagogy], but I think it is a good idea for you too because you can do what you like and what you want, and you face less risk in that sense for the future. Then think about it. Here you generate ideas, generate projects, generate everything, and maybe one day they will throw you out!”. “Yes, you are right, you are right.” “So now, why don't you start a school, Flor?”, I said to her. “Really?”. (Roxana P.)

The anecdote serves both to get an idea of how reflection on the school problem became a private matter on a local and daily level. In order to understand the pedagogical passion with which Roxana started her second school this discursive context is crucial. Along with this, the arguments of the conversation expressed the unpleasant feeling of “generating ideas” for “them” (the nuns), that is, for someone else, who can also get rid of you at any time. The way out, then, the fantasy that is obvious for Roxana when the opportunity for an inheritance or compensation presents itself, is to “start a school”, because the important thing, as she told her friend, is to do “what she knows best”.

This discourse of fulfilling a dream was kept separate, as much as possible, from the idea of doing business. In this way the possibility appeared in the conversations in

different ways in order to differentiate itself. Roxana, in fact, repeatedly emphasized that her interest was education, showing herself to be interested only in having a salary and in "securing the future." It mattered to her that a distinction should be made clear between those *sostenedores* who invested their earnings in the growth of the school - which seemed fine to her - against those who "do not work for education, but work for the extension of external businesses" and which, for this reason, "I associate more with abuse". "You see that the results are terrible, that the question is of having 40 students per classroom, the teachers' salaries are low, etc.". In terms of identity, therefore, it was important for her to acknowledge for my benefit that there were business-oriented private providers and clarify to me that she did not belong to this group, because "the motivations are not the same."

Faith in one's own management

Roxana's case also helps us to understand how teaching subjectivities change when they become entrepreneurial, even if the original school project is not to generate money, but to make a pedagogical dream come true. Being the owner, her main responsibility had been to worry about managing the finances and the organization of the school, seeing herself continually faced with making difficult decisions to ensure the survival of the company. In our conversations, she explained quite honestly to me the adjustments that she had to make since the school started. Without trying to account for all the complexity of the management task, I am going to dwell on a couple of dilemmas that every school owner must face and that allow us to glimpse the type of practices and ethical aspects that are part of the subjectivity of teacher-entrepreneurs: the definition of the school goals and the definition of the students' composition of the school.

Regarding the objectives of the school, as I mentioned above, the San Ignacio project started with the urgency of its owner to organize an educational service based on "personalized teaching". "It is precious", she told me, a method that aims at "inclusion" and that "places trust in the malleability and flexibility of the human being". Initially, this model of "alternative education" attracted many parents of young children who were willing to pay for it, but as these children grew older, the

priorities of the parents themselves shifted towards achieving competitive results, that is, ensuring that they can get into university.

‘I want him/her to be happy’, parents tell you when their child is in kindergarten. Then that will change, because the parents are going to tell you ‘Well, this little child will be happy if he/she has money in the cash register to pay for the supermarket goods and the bills. Will my son be accepted at the university if studying here or not?’ (Roxana P.)

The pressure was not only in comments on the pedagogical orientation but was expressed specifically in terms of enrolment. When the first primary school grades approached the secondary school and the school inaugurated this level, parents began to take their children out, looking for other alternatives that promised good results in university entrance tests. "These parents said 'Hmm, Marists are doing spectacularly in Secondary Education and in the English Institute it is just the same.' Then they emigrated and our enrolment was reduced".

This generated the financial urgency to fill the quotas of these courses, which was achieved with children "thrown out of other places for performance or discipline." In this way, they reached their level of required paid tuition, but the pedagogical work inevitably became more problematic and difficult. "The work was hard for us, because for that you need time, time, time, you need to work with them from when they are small kids".

The balance was complex, however, because as the school system was increasingly armed with devices of control and competition, the pressure from parents to obtain results also increased, making it increasingly difficult to hold true to ideals of inclusive education.

What happens is that later the issue of external evaluations came up, which do not allow a child to go at their own pace. You have to give up. And what happened to us? We did not have those results, because we had a diversity of students! So there we unfortunately had already transitioned from a project that rescues the values and healthy coexistence, but that is very oriented to the search for results. (Roxana P.)

In this way, the school started to achieve good results by increasing demand and focusing on achievement, which began to generate new complaints from parents who felt that the school had become too demanding. Roxana, however, even if she

disagreed with the model, was already wholly committed to the decision. About the current situation of the school and the complaints, she told me:

I put myself on the parents' stage and yes, it's true, that's how school is. It presses and you have to study and study and then the test, the book and whatever. 'But', I tell them, 'when you came here, what did you say you wanted? Ok, apart from developing as a person and this, developing as a human being and everything, but you wanted him/her to develop. If he/she wants and can, be a professional, and for that we have to work. Yourself, which is the person who wants that, and not only you, but your child, because you passed it on to your child, your child also expects that, and we have the Ministry of Education now, which has 17 SIMCEs. So the truth is that we have no other choice, because the truth is that it is what society asks for, what parents ask for. Parents imagine that you can do that job without abandoning other things and without having to carry out so many tasks, but no, you can't. (Roxana P.)

A second dilemma was presented to Roxana regarding the decisions she made to generate a certain demographic in the students. From the outset, as I have already said, when she began to think about this new project in her life, she had concluded that to achieve an inclusive education it could not be free, because the subsidy was not enough for that to be done properly. This obviously implied a change in the social segment of Rancagua that it served, a turnaround whose contradictions did not emerge anywhere near as a topic of discussion with me. Something that she did tell me and that she experienced very clearly was the strong pressure exerted by competition for results among the city's schools, which generated significant flows of students into the market and threatened the stability of enrolment and the prestige of the schools. In this context, Roxana was forced to be continually concerned with maintaining a balance among her students, carefully analyzing variability according to performance, ability to pay and social class, management issues that were always interdependent with what the other schools were doing.

The issues became more and more complex, with a significant financial burden to respond to the banks and we have already begun to analyze the numbers. The children who came to ask, who were good, had no money. So we said 'Let's give them scholarships', because they are going to help us increase our prestige in that sense of results. But the budget did not allow for scholarships. So there we began to talk with the parents themselves about the possibility of transitioning to the co-payment system. The parents found it good to change because it lowered their burden, that is, from paying monthly 200 pounds [\$150.000 Chilean pesos app] to paying much less, and we saw it as an

opportunity to serve those families who were interested in school but who could not pay fully for it. But one of the things the parents asked for was to stay with the highest co-payment, because they came as a way for us to continue serving, more or less, the same segment of the population. (Roxana P.)

The situations described are small samples of the type of concerns that any school provider is obliged to face in a market model of education and are similar to those that the literature on managerialism in education has described for other actors. What they show is the relevance of the owner-of-school actor in the field of education. He/she is an actor who makes high-impact decisions in the life of families and schoolchildren in a city, generating spaces for inclusion and exclusion.

From the point of view of the school providers, it is very interesting how in these fragments of conversation, both in the decisions made regarding the educational project of the school and the project of the student composition of the school, the dream of the school itself (or the narrative/discourse) is disrupted somewhat, but crucially remains alive. Roxana sees herself in a difficult context, where the State, the Market and her clients constantly force her to adapt her school's organization and pedagogical practices in order to survive. Her objective, however, is ultimately that the school works, that it maintains a certain prestige along the way, and if, for this, she has to juggle and sacrifice certain ideas, she will have no compunction in doing so.

From the point of view of the city and the possibilities that decentralization opens up for new forms of participation, the case of Roxana shows that there is indeed a group of people who began to participate in the educational problem, when before they could only have had a limited role as classroom teachers. However, we also observe that the location of educational decisions in school owners does not necessarily generate greater democracy or participation in decision-making about education. The case described, for example, shows that there are different possibilities for violating the educational rights of the children themselves - such as discrimination which is based on salary, status and performance. Faced with ethical dilemmas, Roxana, who is a thoughtful and sophisticated pedagogue, ends up choosing the financial survival and academic performance of her establishment over other

possible pedagogical and educational criteria, thus configuring the sense of education in her establishment.

Roxana embodies, as Jofré (1988) puts it, the phenomenon of a faith in the management of her own establishment, giving her best efforts to the school to survive the brutal reality of the market together with the demands of educational policy. Paradoxically, concentrating on keeping the new school afloat pushed her to put aside her pedagogical dreams, making her display criteria and practices that were difficult to articulate. Survival management involves a set of dilemmas that transformed her, that forced her to think in practical and tactical terms in a scenario where even the parents-clients were sometimes a threat against the school she once dreamed of.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have sought to contribute to the understanding of the ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ (Brenner & Theodore, 2002) of Chilean education by focusing on the experiences of the teachers who founded and own schools in Rancagua since the 1980s. With this, I have sought to achieve a number of things: firstly, to explain how the school privatization process was nurtured and the creation of a local educational market with real and situated social actors; secondly, to analyse the emergency conditions of a new subjectivity that has been central to the local legitimation and consolidation of the privatization process; thirdly, to illustrate the complexity of motivations, rationalities and ethical dilemmas that revolve around the desires for the realization of personal dreams, and shaping this new subjectivity.

In the first part of the chapter, I described the historical conditions that allow us to understand why a group of teachers own and run private schools in Rancagua. These are related to three different aspects or moments. In the first place, the new legal provisions in 1980 found a positive reception from some Rancaguino teachers. The new form of financing by voucher, added to a general message of “open season” [*chipe libre*], created a ‘now or never’ environment that motivated them to take the chance to found schools, even if it they started with basic and precarious

infrastructures. In most cases the chances taken were ‘worthwhile’ in part because there was a high demand for enrolment and also because of a lack of places in public schools and partly because public schools had been severely deteriorated by a lack of resources and pressure from the authorities themselves. Finally, from the 1990s, there was enough political stability for the neoliberal model that a number of different capital investment models were deployed in subsidized private schools. Families, the state and banks each provided fresh funds that enabled the school providers to consolidate the infrastructure and maintain their role in the local educational market.

Following this, using mainly the specific experiences of one teacher-entrepreneur, I argue that the desire for a school of her own sums up to a large extent the subjective formation and the consequent cultural change that this new actor has enacted in the school field. As one of the ideologues of educational privatization in Chile says, a kind of identification with their own establishment is produced (Jofré 1988), which leads them to make calculations and efforts so that their private educational projects are able to survive. On the one hand, city dwellers - students, parents, teachers - accept that the struggle to open or organize schools should shift from the state to enterprising teachers. They are even happy because they empathize with the management skills and the courage to run a school. On the other, the teacher-entrepreneurs themselves feel that they are morally correct. They have dreams and inexhaustible energy with which to carry them forward.

This chapter provides insights into the unique Chilean path of privatization and the fragmentation of public education (Aedo-Richmond, 2000; Bellei, 2015; Verger, Zancajo, et al., 2016). First, it identifies an actor, the teacher-entrepreneur, who had been previously categorised only as ‘for profit provider’ (Almonacid, 2004; Corvalán et al., 2009). Secondly, it accounts for the experiences of a group of school owners in the context of a provincial city, a context that is under-studied in Chile and which is far from the large and anonymous dynamics of urban life in the capital. By doing this, the analysis contributes to the literature that argues that ‘intermediate’ spaces of government, such as local authorities (LA) (e.g. Simkins et al. (2015), have

experienced a process of ‘disintermediation’, have experienced a process of ‘disintermediation’ by which many of the administrative functions once exercised by previous ‘intermediate’ spaces are now delegated to the school level.

Furthermore, this chapter engages with the literature on the emergence of new actors, narratives and practices that are part of the generative process of neoliberalism, which has had as its central concern the new methods of governance that have emerged in favour of the expansion of educational privatization on a global scale (Ball, 2007; Burch, 2009; Lingard & Sellar, 2013; Parreira do Amaral et al., 2019; Saura, 2016). However, from viewpoint of daily school life in the city of Rancagua, what predominates is not the dynamic of a complex network of public / private actors, large philanthropic foundations, for-profit companies and large sums of investment that are mapped in these investigations. What the ethnographic work highlights instead is the existence of local actors with few or any connections or ambitions that went beyond the city limits. They were teacher-entrepreneurs from a single school, generally in debt, focused above all on ensuring that their personal pedagogical project survived. The specific contribution to this field of research, then, is to rescue the fact that the shift in the educational field from a polycentric governance that operates through the multiplication of non-state actors (Ball, 2008), can also occur in a version of independent projects. Moreover, it is notable that such governance is mainly based on a new teaching subjectivity which combines the old pedagogical and self-sacrificing vocation with an entrepreneurial, individualistic and dreamy logic.

In view of the above, the analysis of this new actor in a specific city serves to make relevant the cultural implications of a neoliberal form of governance of education in urban life. The main function of the emergence of the teacher-entrepreneur is to embody, and demonstrate to the local community, the discourse of education as no longer being a public or collective problem. This teacher-entrepreneur’s strength is to discourage Rancagüinos from getting involved in the destiny of a school, or feeling it as their own, their role is basically reduced to a choice between competing providers. On the contrary, what is normalized is that the teacher who owns a school

does everything possible for the survival of his/her project in the market. As Ball (2004), says, this is prioritised even over the needs of the students. In this context, it becomes nonsensical to think of the problem of the education polis as a public issue to be defined democratically. The competitive nature of this dream, owning one's own school, makes it difficult to think of the development of the city for everyone as something more than the sum of its inhabitants. It could be thus said that the effect of all this is a kind of cultural dispossession of practices and values which were common before, and that involves putting the question and difficult task of educating children and young people in the hands of a few. In the next chapter, this is explored by focussing on how citizens think about the problem of education, by analysing the case of an educational community threatened with the closure of its school.

The depolitisation and repolitisation of the urban school problem

Introduction: The Manuel Rojas School

On October 24, 2014, less than two months before I completed my fieldwork, Yorma A., the Teachers' Union president, called me on my cell phone. Although we had been cultivating an ever closer relationship since we met earlier in the year, until then, she had never called me. It was something urgent. The municipality, without prior notice, without consulting either the teachers or the parents, had decided to close the Manuel Rojas school, a small municipal comprehensive school located in a working-class neighbourhood of Rancagua. Her director had just called her to ask for help.

I decided to accompany Yorma and left for the school on my bicycle, because the school sector had no public transport available. Although leaving from the centre of Rancagua took me less than 20 minutes to arrive, the two locations were light years apart. The Santa Julia neighbourhood looked like a rural village, the roads were more like dirt tracks, there was an abiding aroma of the countryside and the modest houses were full of flowers. The Manuel Rojas school was on the Santa Julia's main road, just past a large mill. To enter the enclosure, you only had to push a gate, as there was no one watching. Unlike all the schools I had seen in Rancagua, this one had a huge outdoor space, some trees and swings. In the centre there were two very simple, one-story brick buildings. In one of them, there was both the principal's office and a classroom. In the other, two classrooms and a small dining room. In the courtyard there were children running around everywhere where I finally saw Yorma deep in conversation with a man in his 60s. It was the headteacher of the school, Gustavo V.

The headteacher, outwardly affected by the events, was trying to summarise the situation. He told us that the day before Leonardo Fuentes, director of the Municipal Corporation of Education (MUNCOR), Jaqueline Ramos (Education Chief) and Monica Toro (Community Development Chief) had come to the school to inform teachers and parents about its immediate closure. Two days earlier, however, he had been personally informed by Leonardo Fuentes about what was going on, being asked by the municipal director not to say anything to anybody until the meeting, which the headteacher accepted. During this two day wait, Gustavo realised that there were signs from part of the municipality of a general lack of concern for the school. For example, a year before, he

remembered, that due to the new state integration policy, school providers were obligated to have a room available specifically to work with children with special needs. MUNCOR decided then to free up a room by combining three educational levels per classroom, arguing that low student enrolment prevented them from making an investment to build new spaces. Further, the previous week the school had had a health inspection. The municipality was again categorical in saying that it was impossible to carry out the refurbishments required. Both reactions were incongruous, since not responding to ministerial demands is unconscionable. Gustavo was emotionally torn, experiencing a violent mix of feelings. Despite the fact that Leonardo Fuentes had assured him that both workers and children would be reallocated to other municipal schools, he felt responsible, impotent, and generally scared for the future of the whole school community, including himself.

According to the headteacher and the people I started knowing from this day forth, the first meeting between the MUNCOR officials and the parents had been a tough one. Around fifteen parents were able to join the assembly. The MUNCOR head conducted the meeting standing at the whiteboard with a felt-tip pen in his hand and a severe countenance. “The attendance is not even enough to cover the operative expenses”, he stated, and then, after broadly breaking down the quantities into individual items, he added: “The monthly deficit reaches \$4,596,000 (£4,840 app.). Nonetheless this is not even the major issue, the financial issue is not the point here. The point is that your children are learning very little”. And the reason that they were learning so poorly, according to Fuentes, was that the school was combining three levels in each classroom.

After delivering this ‘news’, Fuentes changed his tone and tried to calm down the parents explaining to them the details of the reallocation plan. As the Corporation, they guaranteed that each family would be able to choose the municipal school they wanted, and that the municipality would assure free shuttle busses and school uniforms to attend the chosen schools.

The announcement led in the first instance to differences within the present parents. For some of them, the idea of getting their children into the best reputed public schools honestly seemed appealing. However, as they commented then and during the following days, the uncertainty about its realisation hit home. This was particularly acute as many of their children had already been rejected by these same schools. Besides this, the supposedly best schools were too numerous and each had overcrowded classes, a fact that contrasted precisely with one of the features of the Manuel Rojas School that pleased children and families the most: the familiar homely atmosphere of the space and the relationships that were developed within it. Furthermore, the idea of a bus picking their kids up to get them to the central schools did not satisfy them, especially those who already had experience of that system.

Far removed from what was expected by the MUNCOR, parents' doubts did not leave them in a passive mood of acceptance, but rather the polar opposite: a position of increasing outrage for having felt overrun by such an important decision. "Why is the mayor not showing his face?" asked a mother to the MUNCOR director. He replied emphatically with a typical Chilean expression: "I am the one that cuts the cake here, I am the municipal schools' manager". The counter-answer was also emphatic. "But did you really think that you could simply stand there and that we would calmly thank you?"

Valeria, the mother of a girl in 4th year and a boy who wanted to join the school starting in 2015, managed to record a good part of the scene developing using her mobile phone. Some weeks later, while reviewing the video with me, she laughed surprised by the capacity they as parents had to constitute spontaneously a common front in that meeting. She told me that until this day "most of us do not even know each other's first names and we treated each other simply as 'the mother of...". Nonetheless, on this particular day, and as they were taking turns to make questions, they started supporting each other and naturally aligning themselves together to defend three key arguments: Firstly, that most families were very satisfied with the quality of the school. Secondly, that it was an idea from MUNCOR and not theirs to combine three levels per classroom. Thirdly, that if the number of students was not high enough it was because of the lack of classrooms and teachers, not because of the lack of demand, which actually could be forecast as growing, given the recent construction of several housing projects in the school vicinity.

However, in spite of the strong arguments which were laid out this evening, Leonardo Fuentes and the other women abandoned the meeting making their tone more severe; reiterating once and again that they only went there to maintain them informed, and that now they – the parents – just had "to reflect" and "to analyse which school they wanted to go to".

"This school isn't bad", shouted the last voice in the video. "It is only bad for your wallets, but not for us".

*

Picture 10: The Manuel Rojas's headteacher, 2014



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

The relationship between the inhabitants and the schools was deeply coloured by the ongoing privatisation of education in the city. Decentralisation by means of municipalising state schools and promoting the creation of schools in private hands had generated a situation in which multiple types of schools co-exist, meaning a gamut of very divergent experiences for users. Among the private schools, as we have seen in the previous chapters, each school owner and their vision generated a distinct

space that attracted certain types of parents, with differences according to their social class, their economic resources, their expectations, the formal learning facilities. The municipalised schools, on the other hand, were also marked by their internal differences. While the municipal administration turned their focus towards obtaining competitive results with the traditional public schools placed in the centre, they apparently left the “neighbourhood” schools, on the periphery, become residual spaces of ever decreasing prestige and thus decreasing enrolment (see chapter 4).

In this context characterised by the fragmentation of school experiences, the threat of the closure of the Manuel Rojas school is an event, to some extent, normalised for the inhabitants of the city. The power to close or open a school and to distribute the children into one or another school was not really a power that was in the hands of the State or organised settlers, but was one that, to all intents and purposes, had been passed into the hands of the municipal or private *sostenedores*. In turn, these decisions were guided by criteria that had little or nothing to do with conceptions of justice, or with the history of the place, the well-being of children or parents, but rather with the economic survival of the business and management needs of the providers.

Along with being symptomatic of the relocation of power away from the public domain (Ball, 2015a; Carrasco & Gunter, 2019), the case of Colegio Manuel Rojas illuminates perfectly how the school provider - even being municipal- embodies the neoliberal logic and constructs an ideal model of parents from that discourse. Here, while the Municipality authorities made “technical” decisions, parents “simply had to reflect and to analyse which school they wanted to go to”. Put simply, the position of parents is reduced to looking individually for the best option for their children and choosing between the offers available for them in the educational marketplace.

In this chapter I analyse the closure of the Manuel Rojas school from the viewpoint of the group of parents that self-organised to prevent it. The objective is to illustrate the contradictions and changes that occur between families and schools, understanding that it is an outlier within an established neoliberal normality. It is an analysis from the exception, because not even what this group of parents began to

feel, think and do in the context of confrontation with the municipality, was normal. The chapter contributes to understanding the subjective and political effects of privatisation on the experience of citizens. I hold that, in the case I am analysing, it was the overwhelming closure of a school what generated an unexpected re-politicisation of the citizenry, which exceptionally transformed an educational problem into a common problem to be solved from below.

Educational privatisation as a process of depoliticisation

Studies that address the privatisation of education in Chile considering the perspectives of families have focused almost exclusively on how parents choose a school, giving little attention to the practices or scenarios where the school problem may appear as either a public or community issue. Often labelled as the “demand side” (Gallego & Hernando, 2009), or as “consumers” (Elacqua & Fábrega, 2006), families have been studied regarding the evaluations they make of the different schools and the reasons that motivate their choices (Canales et al., 2016; Elacqua et al., 2006), the access and type of information they have to decide from (Elacqua & Fábrega, 2006), the barriers posed on the popular classes for a free choice (Córdoba, 2014) and the concerns related to maintaining or seeking social advancement (Carrasco et al., 2015). The main interest of these investigations is to provide evidence to the discussion on the coherence and effects of the voucher policy and the free choice of school, which operate under the assumption that the rational choice of parents according to quality criteria generates an improvement of the entire system. These studies generally explore the individual (or family) experience of people who are or have been subjected to the question of how to solve their children's insertion into a school and who have no connection between them. Despite the fact that a good part of these studies offer critical arguments to privatisation policies, pointing out that the choice involves criteria of different orders and has a segregating effect, the analysis leaves aside alternative practices and subjectivities to those promoted by neoliberal logic, since from the same strand of research they restrict the gaze on parents to their role as consumers. Following Popkewitz (2013), it could be said that research on school choice, both Chilean and international, contributes to

“manufacturing” a part of the population - parents - and their problem - school choice -, thus delimiting “the possibilities of what is done, thought and hoped for” (p. 440).

A different angle to look at the relationship between school privatisation and families is offered by the literature that analyses privatization policies as part of a more general strategy of governance via individual freedom (Ball, 2007; Carrasco & Gunter, 2019; Rose & Miller, 2010). One contribution of this perspective is that it seeks to explain the way in which privatisation and commercialisation policies are promoting the emergence of new social spaces, subjectivities and ethics that in turn embody and disseminate the privatisation logic.

Davies and Bansel (2007) point out that neoliberal policies imply devices through which ‘people are reconfigured as productive economic entrepreneurs of their own lives’ (p. 248). For the authors, neoliberal subjects are highly individualised and empowered through the new governance mechanisms. In the same line, Rose and Miller (2010) see that the conception of ‘social citizen with powers and obligations deriving from memberships to collective bodies’ disappears, giving place to an ‘individual whose citizenship is manifested in the active pursuit of personal fulfilment’ (p. 298). It is by means of choices that individuals can make in order to secure funding that they become responsible and thus tightly governed; so, they are defined as free, but at the same time transformed in ‘docile bodies’ (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The way in which neoliberal governance works, therefore, has less to do with regulating or repressing certain conducts and more with changing culture, that is, values, ethics, practices, and power relations. As Rose and Miller (2008) put it,

Power is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as of ‘making up’ citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom. Personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise, the more so because most individuals are not merely the subjects of power but play a part in its operations. (p.54).

Carrasco and Gunter (2019) point out that privatisation conceives of individuals as the focus, place and outcome of decision-making. Parents are part of this movement, since they make decisions autonomously and in private. For the authors, a

‘depoliticised privatism’ is generated, in other words, a shift in the identification and addressing of educational matters from the politicised public to the depoliticised private domain. It is for this reason that they see the "privatisation of public services such as education as a visible reform within a wider governing by depoliticisation strategy whereby debates and decision-making about education are being relocated away from the public arena and political representatives in public institutions" (Carrasco & Gunter, 2019, p. 70).

When analysing privatisation as a depoliticisation mechanism, the contextual conditions that hinder the possibility of looking *from the polis* regarding education are made visible. In the case of Rancagua, at first glance, fragmentation and individualism prevail, but there are situations – like the case of the Manuel Rojas school closure – in which a truth repressed by the imperative of competition seems to wake up, and so, the inhabitants of a social-space – not only the parents – are able to see themselves as active agents of the common school reality.

Drawing on my experience with the people who began to organise to defend the Manuel Rojas school, I would like to contribute with a broader view of what the advance of privatisation has meant for families and communities with respect to their relationship with the school world. The process of reflection, grouping and alliances at the local level that emerged as a result of the closure of the school illustrates how profound the effects of privatisation have been in a couple of decades. On the other hand, the power that for subjectivity and meanings and practices has to think in common a problem such as education. The ethnographic engagement with the articulation of various actors to defend the school shows how the city can turn quickly from an individualised, controlling and disaffected version of its individuals to a city where the problem is collective, the subjects are active problematisers and seekers of solutions, and where there is an affective link both with spaces and schools, and with history and the future. These are aspects that allow us to understand that depoliticisation triumphs and that, if reversed, they produce repoliticisation. The sections below approach these processes analysing briefly the

history of the school, then the movement against its closure, and finally three aspects of privatisation that the case challenged.

From settlers to docile bodies to politicised bodies: what a school can remove

A brief history of the schools' present

Since its creation, in the 1960, the school was small in terms of enrolment. In 2014, it had about fifty students and seven staff between teachers, an assistant and a cook. It offered from the 1^o grade to the 6^o grade, and because of the lack of rooms, it mixed the 1^o, 2^o and 3^o grade in one.

Unlike students in the 1970s and 1980s, the current students were not just children who lived in the same area or on the neighbouring farms (which did not exist anymore). This time, along with children living in the neighbourhood, there were others who lived in the *población*⁷ Santa Julia, on the other side of the rail track, and students who came from new *villas* to the west, like Los Bosques de San Francisco, Villa Jardín de los Prados and Villa San Nicolás. And there were also students who crossed the entire city to get there. Their parents had come to the Manuel Rojas school after being rejected by other schools or made feel uncomfortable because of their so-called 'special learning needs'. Such experiences were multiple and outrageous, which was the main reason why, despite the poor infrastructure, families greatly valued both the supplementary or even surrogate pedagogical work offered by Gustavo, auntie Amelia, auntie Ani, auntie Nubia, auntie Marisol, and the support of Xavier, the assistant, and Adriana, the cook.

Among the parents there was a personal narrative of suffering, a feeling that their children were made into objects of calculation, written off and pushed to one side.

⁷ The concept *población* or "*la pobla*" is used to refer a popular settlement or neighbourhood, either illegally born and then regularised, or a social-housing project. In the 1980s, new housing projects aimed to be sold to a wealthier segment of the working class started to be called *villas*, in an attempt to make clear the class difference.

“Schools select and reject children, depending on whether they work for the numbers they need or not, and many of our kids have been rejected”, a mother told me. Further, parents there shared a quite recent memory of frustrating experiences regarding the threadbare education which the city of Rancagua was offering; an education which they saw compelling all families to be constantly trying to work out what was best for them personally and what they can aspire to given their own possibilities; an education which does not look to have been created for them, who were honestly indifferent to the SIMCE rankings, the opportunity to be selected or the prestige of the schools in the centre of town. The parents were in no doubt about what they like about the school: “Here I have never felt rejected”, “The kids aren’t seen as numbers”, “Here you find quality, respect, and fondness”, “The teachers care about their work”, “The School doesn’t look like an overcrowded prison like the schools in the centre, here the kids can play in a field!”, “There is no private owner here trying to steal our money”.

The Manuel Rojas School was at the heart of the *población* Santa Julia, which exists since the middle of the past century. The *población* is placed in an area where until a couple of decades ago, farms predominated in its landscape, and the lack of urbanisation, as well as the indifference of property developers was evident. It is located just on the west side of the railroad which ploughs through the country towards the south and connects Santiago to Rancagua. Its territorial division is still a legacy of the traces left by the *tomas* and *loteos*⁸ which, as in so many other sites of Rancagua and Chile, begun to multiply in those years as part of the general migration process towards the cities.

However, since the 1990s it officially lost its label of being a rural zone, although the *población* maintained its countryside colours. Willows, thorn trees and oaks gave shade to the irrigation channels which cross their roads, of which many still

⁸ ‘Toma’, from ‘tomar’ (to take), is a concept used to refer to any illegal occupation, either of a territory or of a building. The concept of ‘loteo’, refers to the division of prior latifundia or large estates’ parts, aimed to formal process of sale.

remained unpaved. The San Miguel Mill was the only building in the view towards the mountains and there was only one grocery store where you could find fresh bread (see Picture 11). There were no squares, shops, banks or medical practices, and public transport was almost absent. A football pitch, a small chapel and the school were the only semi-public spaces where the community could spend time together.

The parents were not aware of the older memories of the place, because they barely knew each other and the people of the area before them. This, until the threaten of closing down the school removed voices that appeared to share a long history of local and collective struggle for an education that once a group of local people wanted for their children and grandchildren. In this sense, most of the following information was as new for me as it was for them. I was able to learn about it with a group of current mothers that decided to go from door to door presenting themselves to the neighbours and listening to their experiences and opinions.

Picture 11: View of the mill at the población Santa Julia



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

One of the main discoveries for the young parents was learning from the oral histories that having a school inside the *población* was not the product of some governmental or church program, but rather the product of the neighbours' self-determination, as in the early 1960s they had struggled to bring education closer to their homes. Until then, owing to infrastructure and transport issues, the majority of the primary and secondary schools in Rancagua were concentrated in the central radius of the city, a long way away for those who would go on foot each day.

The children and grandchildren of the first settlers experienced the effects of this conquest on their schooling. By 1960, when Santa Julia was not part of the city yet, within the O'Higgins Region 33.7% of the rural population over 15 years old had never been to school, and around 58.6% had only attended some initial level at primary school. In this sense, illiteracy was still a relevant problem, both within the urban areas - 16.4% - and outside them - 22% -, with this being notably higher for women. Forty years later, the picture had changed beyond recognition. According to the 2002 Census, the levels of education achieved specifically by the inhabitants of Santa Julia reached an average of 10.3 years, and the percentage of illiteracy had also dropped to a minimum. The statistical breakdowns, however, do not tell much about the individual and collective histories which imbue some sense into the processes of change.

It is true that before the Manuel Rojas school existed, other primary schools in Rancagua were willing to admit those kids who lived beyond the rail track. Owing to their geographical proximity, the main alternative for them was the school which had been founded and constructed during the 1950s by the neighbours of the *población* Esperanza, in the south of the city. Nonetheless, this school was still located too far away to arrive on foot using the shortcuts and paths that would quickly become bogs when it rained.

Between 1960 and 1963, on a date which nobody knows with precision, the then Ministry of Public Education finally decided to create a school, which would depend from the historical Escuela Superior de Hombres N^o1. Since then, the "Attached School N^o 1 Santa Julia" would offer from the 1^o to 4^o grade of "preparatory

education” in a combined and gender-mixed class. The deal only considered teachers, and not the necessary infrastructure. Thus, the *población* opened its neighbourhood’s union headquarter for it. It was in a shack of adobe and wood on the west side of the main road that boys and girls of these families started to learn to read and write with more stability for the first time.

Rancagua quickly expanded. The football World Cup of 1962 meant investments in road and pedestrian infrastructure and water piping towards the east, where the Pan-American Highway connected with the city, thus opening a new space for the construction of neighbourhoods (*“villas”*) for employees and families of professionals. Further, mainly towards the north, several projects of urbanisation started to be constructed, receiving more than ten thousand mine workers from the El Teniente mine. They gradually came down with their families from Sewell and Caletones, when the Braden Copper Company was nationalised. The Agrarian Reform and the proliferation of *tomas*, the politics of housing and health, also had an important impact. Hence, only two decades later, the population of Rancagua tripled, passing from 53,218 in 1960 to 86,470 in 1970 and finally to 148,753 in 1983 (INE, 2014).

In the meantime, the *población* Santa Julia and in general all the west sector stood practically indifferent to the urban hypertrophy which was being experienced on the east side of the council district. But there were progresses. On the west side of the rail track the hovels were slowly improved and extended, the trees grew and new generations were born. The people were not capable, as trade unions, of opening state-built schools or literally bringing them down from the mining camps, but instead, they took as an example the *población* Esperanza and decided to stop waiting. They started collecting the financial and resources necessary to buy the land just in front of the neighbourhood’s union headquarter and to build the state school, which was possible in 1978.

The then mothers, today’s grand or great-grandmothers, remembered with nostalgia these times of neighbourhood organisation, which were significant in scale and scope. When they told the young mothers about it, it became evident that this

passage of their lives had meant their more tangible achievement, leaving a legacy of pride and collective memories of solidarity and resistance. The same year, all the schools in the country were renamed according to their administrative nomenclature and thus the “Attached” passed to be named “G-476” (see Picture 12).

Picture 12: 1980s school badge from the Manuel Rojas School



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

Elsa O., who was an active participant in these battles, summarised succinctly: “We were the ones who raised this school”. She immediately added that the teachers were fundamental representatives and advocates of this movement. “Miss Sonia, the head teacher back then, didn’t rest until making it real”. “We organised with her all the raffles, bingos and parties, whatever was necessary in order to fundraise”. In this

sense, it is telling that neither the effervescence of the Popular Union nor the obscure beginnings of the military dictatorship emerged as explanations or context among these memories.

In the newly created space, the schools of language and mathematics⁹ thrived inside the community. In this sense, Matilde P. and Juana V., a couple of old friends and neighbours from those days, suggested that the school became a place for the wider and more personal interests of the *población*. “An adult school was created, along with other types of activities”. “On Thursdays, for example, the old granddaddies use to meet, like a social club, and the mothers’ centre also worked there, there were workshops”. “Furthermore, it was a time when the youngest were very participative. We used to choose our Ugly King¹⁰ of the Santa Julia and we organised dances”.

The affection for the space lead to a care for its maintenance, and the voices who now are encouraged to remember, use the issue to illustrate the place and power women had during this time, while also recognising the gendered identity constraints which were produced by being housekeepers and child carers. “The mums used to meet regularly, and analysed, for example, that it was required to clean the channels or to lop the trees. Hence, there was always some of us who offered their husband [they laugh], and that is why the school field was always beautiful”.

Thousands of anecdotes, memorable characters and also strong feelings emerged through the exercise of remembering the past. That is why the neighbours neither forgot talking about the teacher César Castillo, who worked for several years educating their children. Being a Communist militant, he was also a well-known folklorist in Rancagua. The people in *población* Santa Julia remembered him with a special fondness for boosting ceremonies and parties with his guitar, but, above all, for conducting a farming project which had all the kids ploughing and harvesting

⁹ Even nowadays Schools “of letter and number” refer pejoratively to public schools with the coded connotation being non-prestigious and probably poor schools.

¹⁰ ‘Rey Feo’ or Ugly King alludes to the man who accompanies a woman participating in a beauty contest.

lettuces. The parents, mostly coming from peasant families, were so excited with the vegetable garden that they proudly dubbed the school the “Agriculture School”.

In the 1980s, while in the city centre the number of private primary and secondary schools in the city exploded from 16 to more than 40, no new school was created in the south-west sector. The G-476 school, like all public schools in the country, changed its name for a second time in 1985. Within the same discourse of competing to attract students, the military government considered it legitimate that both private and new municipal suppliers had the option to choose proper names instead of letters and numbers. This was accepted even when the names were those of revolutionary intellectual anarchists with intellectual credentials, as in the case of Manuel Rojas, who won the National Prize for Literature in 1957. How such a name evaded censorship by the dictatorship is a moot point, neither does anyone remember who chose it. But the fact is that Manuel Rojas survived as the school’s name. The only recent change regarding this is that now the municipal establishments can be called “colegio” and not “escuela” if the municipalities want, which reflects the same wish of marketing freedom as the latter shift¹¹.

Since the late 1990s, the sector became suddenly attractive for investments, and housing developments started to proliferate. The housing projects were not the product of negotiations conducted by trade unions or local organisations, as happened in the 1960s and 1970s, like in the case of the *poblaciones* February 25th, Esperanza [Hope], las Viudas [the Widows], Teniente (named after the mine), to mention but a few old developments from the east side. Instead, these new projects were promoted by private developers that took advantage of the changes in land-use planning to gain high profits, both by selling houses via bank credits or via state subsidies. In respect of education the general story for the first decades of the century

¹¹ Before the neoliberal reforms, labels were thought to distinguish the “escuelas” (primary schools) from “liceos” (secondary schools). Since the 1980s private schools started renaming their schools as “colegios” instead of “escuelas”. It was a way of differentiating themselves from the public sector, but it also reflected a new way of schooling, since the private “colegios” placed primary and secondary students together in the same institutions.

had been quite similar. In the South-West sector several years went by before any entrepreneur became interested. In 2004 the Monte Castello School was created, and subsequently, in 2008, the Leonardo Da Vinci School was created too. Both of them were subsidised private schools who charged a fee to parents as part of the school scheme of co-payment. The Manuel Rojas School, meanwhile, despite having more than enough space, had not received any significant investment from either the Ministry of Education nor the municipality and so had maintained a minimal infrastructure. Further, whilst the public sector stopped creating schools, the private sector did not stop growing. MUNCOR, the local body which could have developed a more holistic view of the geography of education provision, with a managerialist logic focussed solely on the schools it was in charge of and only in a certain way. The main focus of their efforts, as was seen in their periodic public reports, was achieving the committed indicators like the enrolment rates, the SIMCE and PSU scores, and tournaments, which were obtained by the few prestigious and selective public schools, but not by the ones like Manuel Rojas.

Despite the generally weak social organisation in Rancagua and the *población* Santa Julia, which was very different to what it was before the shift in terms of the country's model of social and institutional development, the small Manuel Rojas School was able to maintain some spirit as a social space, retaining to some degree its local identity and public-communitarian character. The low enrolment rates somehow released the school from external pressures exerted by the SIMCE rankings and its consequences and, in general, neither the municipality nor the ministry authorities were a heavy presence. The school, for sure with less frequency than before, was still occupied as a neighbourhood headquarters for any festivity, *beneficio*¹² or meeting. The parents, in spite of not being formally organised and not knowing each other's first names, would collaborate spontaneously if necessary. The same was said to be

¹² A *beneficio* is an informal name used in the poblaciones to refer to a fundraising event to support someone who suffers a tragedy.

felt by the teachers and assistants, who especially valued the strong working relationships and communication that they found when they first came to the school.

A school on the battle

It was three weeks in total. Twenty one days had passed since Leonardo Fuentes, the general secretary of the CORMUN abruptly announced, with an air of nonchalance, that the school was about to be closed, and the mayor Eduardo Soto had shown up with a horde of journalists in tow, to put out the fire his own administration had begun. In this section, I will describe what happened from what I was able to grasp by being in frequent contact with the mobilised parents, taking part of the meetings and demonstrations. Although the story can be fascinating to analyse in its strategy as political action, my interest in the events has more to do with an attempt to convey the convergence of allowing conditions and the process by which the participants experienced a subjective change regarding their relation to schools and their role as parents.

Transformed into voice

After the unexpected meeting held on Thursday 23rd October, the parents stayed in the room to process what they had just been informed, and to think about what they could do. They had an open conversation about what the school meant to each of them, and showed their special concern about the boys and girls with special educational needs. They became conscious of how vulnerable certain kids such as Katy – a blind girl in 1st year of primary school – or Bryan, a boy who has suffered several operations due to facial cancer. They also highlighted how many children had not been welcomed in other schools, due to their lack of concentration or specific learning disabilities.

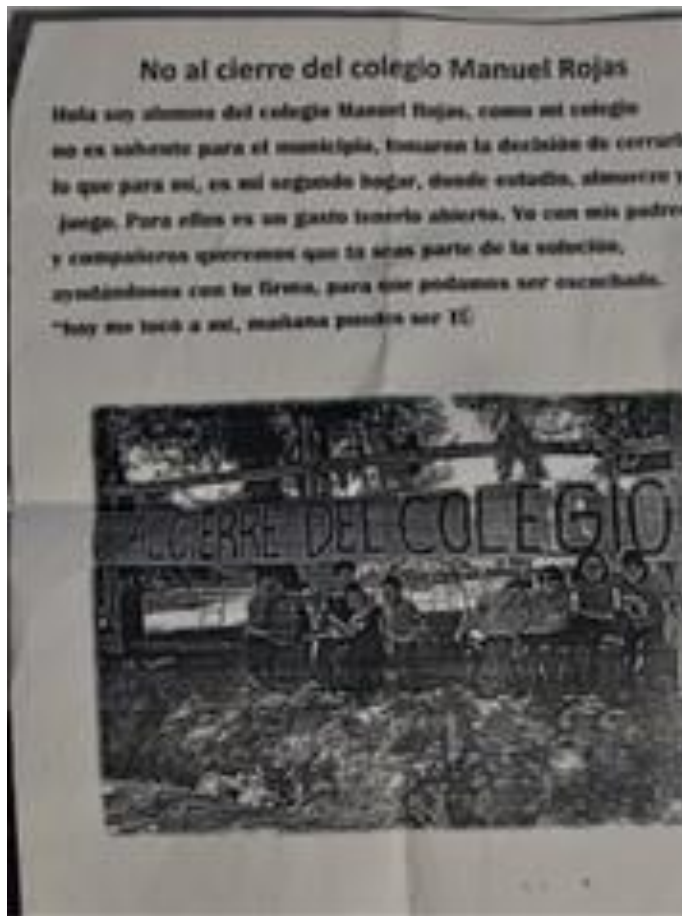
“It was firstly helpful to get to know each other as parents, and then to become aware of aspects of the school we did not know about”, suggested one of the mothers who was in the meeting. “I could then look at other children’s problems, see that there are kids who need these type of schools, and understand that there are many kids beyond this particular school who might have the same special needs”. It was the

beginning of a new interactive space between them and of a realisation of the broader issues at play.

The group's conclusion was that they should join forces and make public their opposition to the closing of the school. The next day, parents and children started painting signs to hang on the school façade, typed on a school computer a flyer, and made as many copies of it as they could. The flyer was titled "No to the closing of the Manuel Rojas School" (see Picture 13), it had a photo of the demonstration, it described what was happening to the school, and called upon whoever sympathised to sign in support of the kids.

Another task that was carried out from the beginning was to look for the support of specific organisations, for the purposes of spreading the word and looking for further orientation. While the mayor refused to meet with the aggrieved parents, the Governor did, but only to manifest that the school closing was a decision of the school owner – the City Council – and that there was nothing she could do about it. The only achievement of this meeting was the emergence of an improvised parents' union, and the presence of two parents at the meeting naturally made them become spokespeople for it.

Picture 13: 1st flyer made by the school parents of the Manuel Rojas School



Hello, I am a student at the Manuel Rojas School. As the school is not profitable by the municipality, they took the decision of closure. It is my second home, where I study, have lunch and play. For them, it is a cost to maintain in open. With my parents and school mates what you to be part of the solution helping us with your signature, so we can be heard. Today is our school, tomorrow it could be yours.

Source: Fieldwork 2014

At the same time, teacher Gustavo V. had contacted Yorma A., president of the City's Teacher Union, whom he had known for a long time. She quickly reached out to a number of stakeholders or organisations that were sensitive to what was happening. One of the parents who worked in the mine El Teniente and belonged to a major union of subcontracting mining companies (SITECO), activated the miners' unionist networks and also the regional workers union. In the search for further allies, more city councillors, parliamentarians, and chiefs of the church were contacted.

Taking the street

An assembly between parents and neighbours was arranged for Monday 27th October. More signatures were collected at the gathering, at which point they realised that the community was eager and willing to join in the battle. Some of the

participants were older neighbours who told the younger ones the school's history. This helped to illustrate, in no uncertain terms, how the City Council's decision to close the school was informed by a logic which neither supported nor acknowledged their interests as a community.

The voices who had recently joined in, had empowered the movement even more, which made them decide to block the neighborhood's main road the following day. They created a huge sign that read "Where is the mayor? No to the closing of the school" [*Dónde está el alcalde? No al cierre del colegio*] and another one that claimed "I love my school" [*Amo mi colegio*]. They stood together in the middle of the road, playing drums. The local TV channel came to interview the parents, and they took some photos themselves to share on a Facebook page created for the purpose of organising and sharing news.

It became clear that stopping the traffic only with people and signs was neither easy nor safe. Under those circumstances, a mother who had not become very involved until then, blocked the road with her own car. Without being asked to, she assumed the risks involved, not least driving without a license.

"When it became public that the school was about to be closed, my husband told me he didn't want me to get involved, but I replied that there could be a chance of changing the school's fate. For him, the fact that Leonardo Fuentes had come in person himself, meant that it was a definitive fact. But seeing the girls [the other mothers] looking for solutions and contacting others, made me think that I could do something about it, I could help fight this injustice too".

Taking to the street felt like a first significant step and a big lesson, although the protest was dissolved as soon as the police arrived. That was the moment when Gabriela, a neighbour who lived at Santa Julia and was the grandmother of two students, convinced herself that the next demonstration should be to block the road where buses to El Teniente copper mine depart from. "Then the press would really take an interest in our protest", she said with conviction. Ideas like this one started circulating with growing confidence.

The Support Committee is created

Around that time, leader of teacher unions in Santiago were locked in a dispute with the government about their salaries, ever-increasing classroom hours, and types of (flexibilised) contracts they were often expected to plan lives around. On Thursday 29th October they called for a national strike and a protest. The group of parents who were most active in defending the school decided to accept an invitation from the local Teacher Union to join the protest, and to take the opportunity to publicise their own cause (see Picture 14). For some of them this was the first chance to join in a protest of this kind. Brave and shy at the same time, they walked the whole distance at the end of the procession.

Picture 14: Manuel Rojas School's parents joining a march organised by the National Teachers' Union



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

Members of the *Movimiento Pedagógico Sexta* and people working for the communitarian Radio Manque interviewed them and recorded some podcasts which were repeatedly transmitted on the radio the following days. They also met with a teacher who was a member of the *Conciencia Crítica* collective and agreed to attend the collective's radio program on Radio Rancagua the following Monday. When the march ended, one of the spokespeople for the Parents' Union read a call for support in the city's main square. The declaration pointed out the contradictions in the Government's approach to closing public schools whilst at the same time carrying out a program to strengthen public education. The teachers cheered loudly in favour of the school.

The same afternoon of the march, in the same room where Leonardo Fuentes had announced the closing of the school a week earlier, a Support Committee for the Manuel Rojas School was officially created. It was agreed that this committee was to be led by parents of children who attended the school, and that this would initially include members representing the regional Teacher Union, the council's Teacher Union, the socialist parliamentarian José Luis Castro, the *Movimiento Pedagógico Sexta*, one representative from the regional Unitarian Workers Union, and one leader from SITECO, the mining union.

The parents expressed their satisfaction about the creation of this committee, but also concerns about what would follow. Evelyn explained to all participants that there was much to be done and that it had not been straightforward to define a coherent and representative agenda. Yorma A. proposed to make a daily schedule and to divide the different tasks: there were communication matters, which involved taking care of spreading the word, also legal matters, as well as contacting the authorities. Some more concrete tasks were then defined: the entire committee would hold a press conference the following day. One of the topics to be covered was to clarify the falsehoods published in the newspaper *El Tipógrafo*, regarding the reasons for the closing of the school and the supposed dissatisfaction of the parents with the school. The main purpose of the press conference would be to show unity.

Also other schools have been threatened

The week of November 3rd started with the visit of René Varas and Patricio Véjar to the school. Both were executive board members of the Forum for the Right to Education, an initiative which works for Chile from the capital, and is part of the Latin-American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), and the Education World Campaign (CME). I knew them because of my prior jobs at the University of Chile and remembered she had worked with specific school communities before. I put them in contact with Yorma, who arranged the visit.

The meeting with people from Santiago was useful for the parents in different aspects. On one hand, the fact that there was a concern about the school's situation coming from outside Rancagua reinforced the perception of injustice and the importance of forming coherent and effective resistance. On the other hand, the people of the Forum shared valuable information that the parents did not have. For instance, that during the last two years other municipalities had also been trying to close down the schools, and that some school communities had been organising and finding different ways to resist, with varied results. This information opened up a new world of possibilities, and made them aware of the broader context of the struggle for public education nationally in which their own particular fight was situated. Finally, the Forum offered them practical guidance and a legal support they previously did not have access to. Concretely, what they suggested was to submit a writ of protection on the basis of the right to education, which if possible, should be presented before the council formally. The Forum committed to writing this legal document, while the parents would need to provide as much information about the case as they could.

As a result of the meeting, a group of parents and members of the Support Committee started to collect and organise data. I joined this group, which was almost natural to do given that I was already focused on taking notes, taking pictures and recording interviews. Valeria, one of the most committed mothers, had been keeping a log of all the minutes of activities and meetings which had taken place up till then. She and other two mothers, the headteacher, members of the collective Movimiento

Pedagógico, and Elena, a student at the prestigious public secondary school Liceo Óscar Castro and a member of the New Education collective, and I, spent the whole week working on data about the school's students, the labour contracts of teachers and assistants, and the history of the school. Among many effects of this search, the data we got and discussed in group enabled us to raise new truths about the school that bridge past and present, which helped to confirm the right of the Santa Julia's inhabitants and the parents to defend what they had built.

During the same week, the spokespeople continued attempting to meet with political authorities, but none of the meetings seemed to open effective ways of making the mayor change his decision. Meanwhile, the claim was becoming more polished and backed up by factual evidence, and the conviction of the need to keep the struggle growing. In this sense, the news the Forum had given them about the *República Dominicana* School in south Santiago, really encouraged and informed their collective thinking. "We were decided", Evelyn told me later. "If this [avoiding the closure] didn't end well, we wanted to occupy the school, take the kitchen in our hands, and find the teachers. We thought of it seriously after hearing what had been happening in other councils". And Gabriela complemented her by giving an account of the talks they were starting to have: "We didn't want to close the school year like that, but to have a summer school. We decided that the school had to be open all year round, without stopping, as a way of avoiding them making us give up in our purpose".

Another bucket of cold water

Protesting during the public accountability sessions that the mayor and city council held at the time was a plan, which, together with other actions, seemed to promise some results. It was possible that the idea of interrupting this process could be heard about in advance or simply anticipated by the authorities. Whatever the reason, just before a group of the school's supporters did it, the mayor finally offered a meeting to talk about closing the school, thus pacifying, to some extent, the fury driving protests until that point.

The meeting with the mayor, in which Leonardo Fuentes and Jaqueline Ramos also participated, happened on Monday 10th November. Different people attended the meeting namely, the parents' spokespeople, the headteacher, Yorma A. from the Teachers Union, Viviana Abud from SITECO –representing the Support Committee, and the priest Eduardo Morin from the Workers' ecclesiastical department of the diocese of Rancagua.

At this stage, despite the various positive developments, the majority of the community actors who were involved were rather emotionally affected. For the school teachers the situation was stressful. They had been prohibited by the council from getting involved in the struggle, and they suspected that their effective reallocation would depend largely on their obedience. They kept teaching as though nothing was happening, in spite of being concerned about the uncertainty regarding the future of their students. Many parents also reported that their children were having nightmares, and that they suddenly started crying with great anguish, asking what was going to happen to their school and themselves. The more active parents were spending an important amount of time on the whole process, time that demanded the use of other resources, such as money for petrol, mobile phone top-ups, photocopies, food, etc. In addition, the organisation of community activities for involving more people and raising funds wore them out and stressed them, even if these were efforts for the community.

The meeting with the authorities, against expectation, proved to be a second bucket of cold water for the community and its leaders. The mayor, who spent more time fidgeting and fretting with digital gadgets than listening to the arguments that were presented, just aligned himself uncritically with the speech previously given by Fuentes. The situation was hostile. The council's position was the same as the one they had repeated without change for the press and television: the decision had been taken. The closing down of the school for the year 2015 was a fact.

The mayor gives up

Two days after, however, on Thursday November 13, Mayor Soto called Evelyn with good news. Nobody from the Committee knew exactly what had happened to trigger

a change, nor to whom else he had talked. If it was because of the coming elections or because he actually understood the nature of the protests and feelings generated by the episode. What he told the parent's spokesperson was that they had finally decided that the school was not going to be closed down and that he was going to the Población Santa Julia to give the announcement formally himself.

The mayor's call caused an outpouring of emotion. Evelyn, who was at the school at the time, hugged the headteacher, deeply moved. Then she found Darren, the other spokesperson, who in turn crossed the school field to go to the classroom where his son was working, and excitedly shouted out the news. The children started jumping for joy in their seats. The teachers burst into tears in public for the first time. For some seconds Evelyn feared having heard wrongly and she even thought that maybe it was not the Mayor who had called her, but in the end the cheerfulness made her give up to enjoy the celebration, however she retained one anxious assailing doubt. The mobile phones of all the parents started ringing in different places, and after a while the same happened with the members of the Support Committee, neighbours, and friends.

When a couple of hours later the Mayor and the city council journalists arrived, the smiling teachers were chatting in the school field, not so close to the centre, somehow giving prominence to all those mothers, grandmothers and neighbours who started coming in. Assistant Xavier installed the audio devices, anticipating speeches. Gustavo, the headteacher was not able to hide his happiness and excitement, and aimlessly went from one place to another in the school. Boys and girls ran wildly across the pitch, as if they had never heard the news that once threatened to change the course of the school and community's history.

The mayor, with a photographer never less than a metre away, went first to a group of children, and asked them some questions about the school whilst squatting at their level to show his engagement. Then, Gabriela and Paz approached him to introduce themselves as two of the school founders, and, without waiting for any question, explained to him directly and briefly how they had struggled in order to raise the school up more since more than forty years ago.

The headteacher greeted everyone with the microphone and gave the mayor the floor.

I want to start highlighting our concern, or the concern of the MUNCOR, because a purely technical analysis was carried out here regarding the difficulties for the group of students who are of three different age groups but are habitually gathered in the same classroom. That is not a desirable situation for any person who has an interest in good quality education and also for those of us who have the responsibility for managing something as delicate as public education in this city. But we have studied how this school was founded in the community, which still has several features of rural areas of this city. That is why we started to analyse what a group of people were asking for (...) and I have told the Municipal Corporation board that it was my wish to come and talk to the students first. I believe that it is important being able to talk to them, to feel concerned about the implications of a decision which is not made by the students (...). Therefore the instruction given to the general secretary and to the head teacher a moment ago, before coming here, is that the school will not be closed! [cheering]. ;But! we will carry out a series of actions here, we are going to talk to the Education Regional Ministry. We will ask them for permission to install a 2oft container as a temporary classroom. (...) I believe it is not the moment to give any further signs of weakening of public education. (...) We, the political authorities, must weigh up not only the technical arguments but also the reactions of people. And this is not about numbers, as someone said, we have here students with names, with identities, who have told me so much in just a few minutes, I have a clear picture now. (...) So I would like to thank everyone involved. We have been with the neighbours, with important actors within this community, and it is our wish that those who have shown an interest could also help us, because the responsibility lies not only with the head teacher and the teachers and the parents, it lies with everyone, and if everyone can make a small contribution to achieve transformations and use this crisis an opportunity to begin again with renewed strengths, then all of the prior effort would have been of use. But for your peace of mind: the school will not be closing. It is not closing and we will continue to work together. [cheering].

It was 3 pm. The sun was burning.

Picture 15: Parents and neighbours celebrate the mayor's decision to keep the municipal school alive. Población Santa Julia, November 13th 2014.



Source: Francisca Corbalán, 2014

Pride and a possible future

The battle of the community of Manuel Rojas School was not only emotive for the people who fought for the school, but it was also an opportunity to develop ways of being and feeling that they did not expect to experience. In many cases they were transformed.

On Friday November 28th, in the backyard where fundraising parties were held and where the mayor gave his speech two weeks earlier, the entire community including the Support Committee celebrated the school's anniversary with *cumbias* as the background music. There was lunch for everybody. They had inflatable children's games and a photo exhibition of trees, with old photos of the school and the neighbourhood. All they could talk about was what had just happened to them and the new dreams that were quickly becoming possible.

“I’m happy about the mayor’s decision; we didn’t know what to expect from him... we were almost about to start packing our bags to leave”, said Xavier, the school janitor, cheerfully.

Yorma A., the council’s Teachers Union president, highlighted the fact that they had been able to find allies in other organisations, because the battle for public education and other civil rights should be fought by everyone through a united front. She then added that “this is an opportunity that should be used, an opportunity to rebuild the neighbours’ union, to get to know and work with each other, to discover history, the sense of community and the ability to organise ourselves that had, until now, been lost”.

Between anecdotes and toasts, they went through the story once more. “I am so proud we have fought for a just cause” said Gabriela, grandmother and one of the school founders, as she struck the table with conviction to emphasise what she was saying. Clara, a younger mother, said from a different perspective: “I never thought something like this could happen to me, I never pictured myself in a situation like this one, fighting for a cause. It is something that I will cherish forever, something that I will never forget”. And Valeria, who was always carrying little Diego around while participating and contributing with her endless creativity and energy, added: “The organisation was something special, because it came from everybody’s hearts”.

One of the mothers who participated as a speaker went deeper into her thinking when I later interviewed her, while she was about to burst into tears:

The hardest part was the daily battle, the stress, seeing doors being closed in front of us, not knowing where to start, what doors to knock on first. I am happy because I feel I have grown as a person. I used to be an ordinary house wife. My life was based on my children, in my house and I lived an ordinary life. But when we heard about the closing of the school my life suddenly changed, in just seconds. I started having lots to do, many places to go, and I realised there is so much that happens around us that we don’t even notice. This felt like the wakening of so many things. Now I see things from a different angle. I’m concerned about education issues much more than before. Before I worried about what my children would learn, would know, but I didn’t go beyond that, I didn’t see what was happening beyond that. But then I began to engage. I participated, I saw the politics, the obscure faceless power that drive things, how teachers struggle, how this dark system works, so crude, nauseating even.

I realised how fundamental all of this is, the support and the alliances that can be formed, they are essential... I feel happy. I feel older. (Evelyn N.)

Three aspects of dispute

When Carrasco and Gunter (2019) speak of ‘depoliticised privatism’, they are seeking to draw attention to what ‘private’ means in a polity dominated by privatisation. They point out that the school choice mechanism, added to the powers that school owners have, take the educational problem out of the public sphere and place it firmly within the sphere of individualism. Ball (2014), analysing the case of England, notes a similarly rudderless drift towards depoliticization, noting that there has been a relocation of educational authority, from being focused on teachers and local services to depending upon the ‘benevolence’ of a diffuse network of philanthropists and businessmen. From the perspective of families, the case of Manuel Rojas helps to make visible three ways in which privatisation has led to increased and more profound depoliticisation and that, if subverted, they imply politicisation.

Individualisation of the education problem

The Manuel Rojas school is an exemplary case to observe the many elements present in the fragmentation and individualisation promoted by privatisation. By individualisation here I refer to the role given to parents as the only ones responsible for the education of their children, as defined in the Chilean Constitution of 1980. Such a definition was experienced first-hand by the parents of the Manuel Rojas school, who had to knock on the doors of different schools in the city to find someone willing to take them on. Whilst this was a subject remembered with much discomfort and lament, it became normalised to some extent nonetheless.

Evelyn, reflecting on how her life was before getting involved in defending the school, remembered it like this:

I used to be an ordinary house wife. My life was my children, my house. I lived an ordinary life (...) Before I worried about what my children would learn, would know, but I didn't go beyond that, I didn't see what was happening beyond that. (Evelyn N.)

The way Evelyn reflects is what I have repeatedly heard from other women in Rancagua, both as housewives and as working or professional parents. The

education of the children was part of the tasks of a good father or mother, it was not something that was talked about in the meetings of the neighbourhood councils or in the assemblies of the municipality. The experience was intimate, familiar, a wholly “private” matter, in the sense that it was not only the responsibility of the family members and their resources to decide the best way and get a place.

The pragmatic and economic logic from the municipal authority was transparent for the parents of the announcement meeting, which removed the punch of the arguments. However, it is important to recognise that they bothered them first, because they also had elements of truth. Indeed, each of the parents had previously wanted what was being offered to them. Individual parents were attracted by the offer of – now for real – having their children in the municipal school of their choice.

De-politicisation, from my perspective, occurs because of the desire for survival and pragmatism that Rose and Miller (2008) have described. It places subjects in circumstances where they are burdened saving their own skin or finding the best personal benefits. These are the general accepted and unacknowledged rules of the game. Likewise, the option of thinking that the people of a locality or a group of parents will reflect together on what they want for school, is entirely unconscionable.

However, there are scenarios that can strain the normality of the individual gaze. The meeting where the CORMUN director informed parents about the school closure and explained the technical reasons reconfigured the normalised situation opening it up for debate. For this reason, the mayor in his final speech included a pointed self-criticism: ‘We, the political authorities, must weigh not only the technical arguments but also the reactions’, he observed with faux humility. Parents began to individually express their annoyance about the decision, but in that exercise they met for the first time in a *we*.

The experience of the parents meant deprivatising the educational problem by broadening their point of view of the problem. Various shifts were part of this. First, when they met, they listened to their personal situations and identified the aspects that made them feel good at that school. Later, they understood that the strategy of the municipality was to divide them whereas it was demonstrated that their strength

as parents resided in them coming together. Thirdly, they soon discovered that school was not a matter that only concerned the children and their parents, but rather the Santa Julia population, who used the space and felt it part of its history. Fourthly, for different actors in Rancagua the closure of a public school also became an acute problem. Finally, the actors involved, in particular the parents, released their imagination to think about what they would like as a school, generating ideas and solutions.

The citizens as a management resource

Closely related to individualisation, there is a way of operating on the part of the authorities that insidiously seeks to depoliticise by restricting the role and scope of action. It is said that parents are the consumers of a service, however, those who appear to be consumed are themselves. It is the school providers [*los sostenedores*] who stand more clearly in the position of rational choosers, analysing their resources and needs in certain territory in order to keep playing. It is they who have the city in mind, since the city is the main source of the type of students and families they need.

In the case of the Manuel Rojas school, the parents went from feeling like survivors in the face of the difficulties of finding a school to suddenly feeling rejected from their little oasis. “Treated as numbers”, as they repeatedly said, parents then felt that they were either of utility for the municipality or easily disposable. It is a form of clientelisation, they feel, but the worst, the most miserable, because here the clients - their children – could become not good enough for those who are supposed to offer them good service.

The school provider here is an extreme example of endogenous privatisation (Ball & Youdell, 2007). It is a municipality, a public body, but its practical reasoning starts from excluding the perspective of the inhabitants. This position, there is no doubt, is expressed by the crisis situation that causes a school closure, it would not be something so easy to observe. However, if we compare the municipality with the private providers, we see that it is actually the usual (see chapter 6). The only instance in which the position of the parents matters to the school providers is when there is a danger that their children will be taken out of school or, as in the case of the mayor,

that they will take away their vote. Beyond that, the students and their families had little to say in terms of architecture, students, hiring teachers, and much less about the territorial community.

The exclusion of parents and the community from the decision-making space was an obvious and harsh mode of depoliticisation. The parents first realised this because they were not consulted about the closure, but then, they experienced it when the municipal authorities refused to enter into any form of dialogue. The municipal holder did not notice the need that parents perceived to think in a collective way. Instead, the officials acted as people just pursuit their ‘personal fulfilment’, as Davies and Bansel (2007) put it.

The organisation that emerged to defend the school implied a re-politicisation not only in light of the de-individualisation of the perspective on the educational problem, but also because it implied an appropriation on the part of parents and other local actors regarding the closure decision. The change, in that sense, implied a re-subjectivation, this time as active agents.

The ability of different actors - not only parents - to create a space for reflection on education was something that seemed lost in the urban context. During the battle to keep the school open, it emerged that in the past there used to be an alliance between teachers, residents and mothers in Santa Julia that managed to raise official recognition, hire teachers, donate land, and build a school. The threat of closure once again opened the possibility for various actors to think together. The teachers' college, political groups, community radio, high school students and the union relocated, by way of forming a committee, and by taking to the streets, the space of power.

Identity Disaffection

A final aspect that seems relevant to me to re-construct the history of the school is that it illuminates governance by the disaffection and ensuing apathy of individuals. What I observed during my field work is that in general, the parents of the popular classes of Rancagua did not have a loyal relationship with the schools. Turnover is

high, both due to the pressure of each school for scores and discipline and due to the volatility of jobs, which make the material conditions of each family unstable. The Manuel Rojas school, in this context, was an exception, because the children and their parents felt especially happy with the school and at all costs did not want to have to change again. Therefore, the interesting thing about the case is that, even in light of this, the parents did not know the history of the school or the history of the *población*, as there was never really an organised community of parents. They were the parents of the children who attended, but they did not work together for the school. Moreover, many of them did not live in the Santa Julia, so they had no ties with the place and had no common daily life experiences beyond the moments of entering and leaving school.

CORMUN's position somehow confirmed these observations with the coldness of its position. For them, closing should not cause a problem for the group of parents. The uprooting and the custom of changes, they think from the comfortable position of their offices, will make their proposals for election, uniform and bus seem tenable and even appealing.

When parents begin to retrieve the history of the school, so do the other actors involved. This makes it difficult to feel that the school problem is a private matter. First, because the recovered history turns the school into a heritage that transcends people and certain times. Second, because for those organised parents, knowing about the place they are standing in makes them value it in a different way, feeling part of their history.

The mobilisation also generates a shift in the socio-spatial experience of the school. The neighbours who had once built it, came closer to explain the origins and, in doing so, they reinvented themselves in space. The school gave strength and identity to the neighbourhood, while the neighbourhood gave strength to the school. At the same time, the support provided by external leaders, such as the teachers' college and the mining union, made them feel that they belonged to a greater concern, where they could be an example of struggle.

The sense of belonging and identity with the institution and the place is a condition for the burgeoning politicisation of education among citizens. The repoliticisation of citizenship regarding the educational problem allows us to dream in a more concrete way, because we dream not only about our own children but about the future of something in a collective or committed way.

Conclusions

In this chapter I moved my attention to the local experience of school privatisation from the perspective of the parents, using as a point of departure the threat of closing a municipal school. For this I describe the history of how the school became a candidate to be closed by its own administrator and the resistance that an alliance of local actors gave in order to defend it. The analysis of the events and the voices that intertwine in them allow me to show three aspects of how privatisation acts upon the school-citizens' relationship: whose problem is the school, what is the place of citizens in regard to education, and what is the relationship between parents and their children's school. It is the inflection of normalised answers to these questions what helps me to reflect about how depoliticisation and repoliticisation of education has taken place among citizens in the context of Rancagua.

The emphasis I place on the citizens' depoliticisation and sudden repoliticisation of the education problem responds to the focus of the thesis on school privatisation and its role on reconfiguring the social order at an urban level. I thus describe the history of the school, since it shows the scope of neoliberal impacts. In the case of the *población* Santa Julia, it is seen how privatising policies depoliticised a strong community that had dreamt of and built its own school during the 1960s and 1970s. The school belonged first to the state and then was transferred to the municipality, but for a long time it was felt as belonging to the locals, since its daily use and also its bricks and trees were a communitarian matter. More than thirty years of privatisation discourses and policies separated the daily life of the school from its neighbourhood and normalised the possibility of closure, as the reallocation of children was simply a management matter.

On a more theoretical level, the event of the closure of Manuel Rojas's school shed light on the implication of what Simkins et al. (2015), following the work of Lubienski (2014), call a process of 'desintermediation'. In the previous chapter, I argued that the possibility to open private schools by teachers entrepreneurs activated a process of fragmentation and multiplication of the social actors involved in the management of the school system of the city. A displacement of the locus of management of the (school) system took place from the central or intermediate level to the school level. The process of municipalisation was based on the idea of displacing decision-making power from the central-state level to local communities to increase the possibilities of such communities to participate in school affairs (Bellei, 2015). However, as Simkins et al. (2015) argue, the process of fragmentation and situating the management at the level of each individual school, worked against the possibility of sustaining a democratic system for the benefit of the community. The case of the closure of the Manuel Rojas school is an example of the consequences of this fragmentation. The municipality is one of several actors, and by taking this decision it is not necessarily concerned with the public good (of the '*polis*'), but with efficiently managing its assets. It is assumed that the process of municipalisation would prompt intermediate actors to get closer to and understood the needs of the people, but in practice it prevents the coordination of people in thinking about what they want from education in their communities. In this way, on the one hand, control over important management decisions remains at the central level with the Ministry of Education via, for example, accountability and standardised testing policies. On the other hand, the school level is confronted with making sense and taking care, by its own means, of the socio-cultural complexities of the educational life under this discursive order. In the end, one of the most important effects of privatisation in Rancagua is that it has made irrelevant the intermediate level.

Nonetheless, the threat of closing of the school moved old meanings and practices – in addition to fear, anger and the will to fight back. The affected parents talked to each other and found themselves speaking another language and other truths, reflected in their sharing of feelings and ideas about the ways in which the

authorities and the educational system wants them to behave. The school problem became the shared problem, driving the individual solutions away. Neighbours and other city's actors got involved, thus enacting the truth that it was a problem of the polis, not only a matter of family choices.

Therefore, a process of depoliticisation and repoliticisation of the urban milieu is enacted by the relations of force put in motion by school privatisation. In this chapter, I have analysed how deep is the process of depoliticisation and, at the same time, how emergent and incipient is the process of repoliticisation.

7

Conclusions

This thesis has explored the daily production of education in the context of urban life and, more specifically, how school privatisation in the Chilean city of Rancagua has gradually generated new practices, subjectivities and discourses operating locally. As described in chapter 2, my research questions and focus importantly narrowed during the research process. The fieldwork started with the idea of studying the educational realm in a situated but wide sense, opening eyes and ears to anything that seemed related to education in the urban experience. However, the preliminary analyses of my data showed the relevance of narrowing the research goal, both for making it viable, and for framing it within a clearer field of study. Therefore, my research focused on understanding how school privatisation has affected the way in which the inhabitants of Rancagua relate to and take part of the educational problem. I selected four observed phenomena to exemplify in depth the complex and multifaceted process of urban change that school privatisation entails. These phenomena, which became the four empirical chapters of the thesis, were i) the commercialisation of education in the urban school milieu (chapter 3); ii) the disappearance of the traditional teacher subjectivity (chapter 4); iii) the emergence of entrepreneurial teachers (chapter 5), and; iv) the depoliticisation of local inhabitants regarding the school problem (chapter 6).

In this final chapter I offer some concluding remarks about the major themes which I discussed in this research, and point out some contributions, challenges, and open research questions emerging from this work. I will start by examining the three main ideas about school privatisation which I see as contributions to the analysis and understanding of neoliberal education, namely, i) how school privatisation depoliticises the educational problem; ii) how school privatisation entails a form of urban *governmentality* that reinforces the processes of privatisation more generally; and iii) at the same time, how the city is a site of resistance against the de-

politicisation that school privatisation entails. I then draw attention to the contributions and challenges I see in the use of an ethnographic/genealogical approach to study school privatisation, as well as to new questions that have risen from this thesis.

The de-politicisation of the educational problem

The thesis has offered a perspective in which privatisation affects the daily and situated production of education, not only through policies transforming educational meanings and practices within the school contexts, but also by changing the how the realm of education is problematised and approached by the inhabitants of a city. In particular, by changing the extent to which inhabitants of Rancagua perceive education as an issue to address and discuss politically and publicly. According to Ball (2015a), market driven reforms in England have disconnected education from democracy by effacing the political contestation over what it means to be educated. Education, he states, is *depoliticised* by being positioned ‘as the product of technocratic solutions, “effective” interventions and the sum of “what works”’ (Ball, 2015a, p. 8). Analysing Australian educational neoliberal reforms, Clarke (2012) also identifies a problem for democracy, observing that neoliberal policies affect education by disavowing its political nature, mainly by construing it in economic terms ‘through processes of commodification and by assuming and promoting a broad consensus in relation to the economising agenda analyses’ (p. 298). In the light of Ball’s and Clarke’s observations, my thesis deepens our understanding of how this depoliticisation has operated at the level of urban social interactions.

The ethnographic and genealogical work done in the city of Rancagua demonstrates the profound effects of the processes of school privatisation initiated in the 1980s in bringing about the disappearance of discourses, subjectivities and practices that were conditions of possibility for experiencing public education. In other words, by placing the locus of observation in the urban context and its recent history of

changes, the absence of spaces, institutions, relationships and ways of thinking that may render possible to experience education as a shared problem becomes apparent.

Each chapter of the analysis provides support to this argument. In chapter 3, through the description of everyday urban scenes, I described how the idea that education is an individual matter has become embedded both in subtle and evident elements and dynamics in the city, constituting an 'immanent force' whispering that the problem itself is something private. Throughout the next three chapters, I pursue the same argument from different angles, showing that, before school privatisation, other subjectivities and practices did enable a basic sense of common good, in spite of the disputes about its forms and purposes.

In chapter 4, I argue that three historical roles or ways of being a teacher have been lost during the process of privatisation: teachers as neighbours, teachers as cultural missionaries and teachers as militants. These three roles or aspects of their identity underpinned the capacity that teachers had to mobilise and enact a political/public discourse on education among the local population. Their replacement by teachers without a strong role within the city-space has been therefore a relevant factor in the general process of depolitisation. Most of the teachers I worked with spoke about their current job conditions as inhibiting the possibility of thinking about educational problems beyond matters affecting their own specific school. In particular, they faced not only an overwhelming intensification of school work, but also the radical atomization of their spaces of relationship and discussion, which was concomitant with the *destatisation* of schools. Teachers ceased to enjoy an authoritative respected voice in the public space, they were unable to talk about educational policies and even pedagogy, and had ceased to see the development of the city as a horizon in which they had influence. Whilst the current concerns of teachers varied, they were mostly reduced to the sphere of the school classroom and what they were able to do (or not) in this specific context of practice. This subjective transformation of teachers under the attrition of neoliberal has been described in different contexts (Ball, 2015b; Cornejo & Insunza, 2013; Robertson, 2000). My

contribution here is to illustrate how a new subjectivity is promoted through the transformation of teachers' lives in a broader sense.

Chapter 5 furthers our understanding of the depoliticisation of the educational problem by analysing a new actor whose subjectivity now plays a specific and highly relevant role in the school system of the city – the school owner. My main argument here is that the proliferation of private school providers has contributed to redefining the educational problem in the urban space, with the individualistic aspirational “dream of having one's own school”, a central subjective element driving the privatization process in the Chilean case. The main function of the emergence of the teacher-entrepreneur is to embody, and demonstrate to the local community, the discourse of education as no longer being a public or collective problem. The impact of the teacher-entrepreneur as a new kind of subject is to discourage Rancagüinos from getting involved in the destiny of a school, or feeling it as their own. Their role is reduced to choosing between competing providers. What is normalized, however, is that the teacher who owns a school has to do everything possible for the survival of his/her project in the market. In this context, it is no longer sensible to think of the problem of education as a public matter to be defined collectively. The question and difficult task of educating children and young people is left to the decision-making of the owners of schools (within the frameworks set out and assessed by the state).

In Chapter 6 I provide further bases to the main argument by showing how parents are part of this movement of fragmentation and depoliticisation of the educational problem as they make decisions autonomously and privately. I argue, following Carrasco & Gunter (2019), that a shift in the identification and addressing of educational matters from the politicised public to the depoliticised private domain has taken place, that is, a ‘depoliticised privatism’ is generated (p. 70). The fact that a force of resistance is awakened during the process of closure of the Manuel Rojas's school provides evidence of the weakness of community bonds around educational matters.

Privatisation is a strategy of urban governance

This thesis also suggests that the city is a social space worthy of attention, as a space that offers a particular perspective on the micropolitical practices and discourses on school privatisation. The ethnographic approach makes it possible to understand that different subjectivities with different levels of involvement in educational affairs contribute to the shaping of the urban scenario on a daily basis by giving meaning and materiality to what counts as education and how it is practiced.

The analysis of the city landscape, of teachers, and specific events, contributes to an understanding that school policies not only operate in the context of practice thus constituting the mundane realities of educational institutions and their actors, but also, intentionally operating in the urban social order, indicating the city as a locus of control. This argument supports the work of scholars such as Lipman (2011, 2014) and Gulson (Gulson & Fataar, 2011; Gulson & Symes, 2007). Lipman has carried out ethnographic studies in Chicago exploring local policies of school choice and vouchers as drivers of social and racial segregation, and as linked to real estate business within the city. She shows that the city has become a space of desire for neoliberal capitalism and that it is therefore a key space of social and political dispute. The description in Rancagua extends this line of work by means of describing how the social fabric of the city has changed through a creeping transformation of the subjectivity of teachers, the reordering of urban social relations and of the spatial dynamics related to schooling. The new configuration has meant new forms of social segregation, atomisation of the schooling world as lived by the citizens, and a growing private sector competing at offering services to the locals. It has also meant the absence of a political treatment to a matter that is essentially political. The city became a social space in which school privatisation is the truth of how things work, which in turn legitimises and reinforces the process of privatisation.

What interests me is to highlight that this relationship between the city-space and schooling has acquired especial relevance in the frame of neoliberal governmentality. On the one hand, without a 'neoliberal city' (Osborne & Rose,

1999), featured by individual responsabilisation and commodification of the public goods, it would be difficult to develop the conditions of possibility for an educational industry. On the other hand, it is a privatised (and depoliticised) education which strongly contributes to produce and reproduce urban relationships driven by market logics.

In chapter 3, which seeks to convey a sense of the schooling landscape, I analyse the 'immanent force' of the privatisation discourse in/from the city. I argue that the neoliberal model of education is embedded in all sorts of elements which are experienced daily by the city dwellers. I describe what could be read in the newspapers, the place and architectures of the school and city annual routines, such as the beginning of the academic year and a parade. What I show with these examples is that urban governance through education is not a matter of coercive power over the city dynamics, but of a silent *politia* which operates through the self-regulation of people.

Chapter 4 contributes to this idea from another angle, that of the subjectivity of teachers. Teachers are recognised as fundamental agents of discourse within the city, which is possible thanks to the genealogical analysis of their urban practices and use of the space. Whilst current teachers enact neoliberal policies by constraining their socio-spatial imaginary to the schools, and particularly to their work inside the classrooms, before privatisation, teachers co-constructed an idea of education as common good through their urban roles. The disappearance of the Teacher's neighbourhood and the union that represented them in the past is the disappearance of a strategy of urban governance where a professional role shaped the materiality of the city.

Likewise Chapter 5 provides examples of how education entails a form of controlling urban population and the discourse that the city provides to operate. Through a specific teacher-entrepreneur's story, I have argued that, for this person, the desire for a school of her own illustrates to a large extent the subjective formation and the consequent cultural change that this new actor has enacted in the school field. Her case works as example of the extent to which school owners atomise the education

dream in each concrete school project. Privatisation, then, operates by replacing the prior schooling projects driven by unions or neighbourhoods with individual business dreams. On the one hand, city dwellers - students, parents, teachers - accept that the struggle to open or organize schools has shifted from the state to enterprising teachers. This even makes them happy because they empathize with the management skills and the courage to run a school. At the same time, the teacher-entrepreneurs themselves feel that they are morally correct. They have dreams and inexhaustible energy with which to make them come true. Therefore, privatisation is a strategy of governing the schooling landscape by atomising local projects, inhibiting the political imaginary of a local collective project.

Additionally, Chapter 6 provides an example of how privatisation, as a strategy of urban governance is 'naturalised' to such extent that the threat of the closure of the Manuel Rojas school is an event deemed as inevitable and even appropriate by the inhabitants of the city. The power to close or open a school and to distribute the children into other schools was no longer in the hands of the State or the local community, but in the hands of the municipal or private *sostenedores*. In turn, these decisions were guided by criteria that had little or nothing to do with conceptions of justice, or with the history of the place, the well-being of children or parents, but rather reflected an economic strategy of survival of the business and management needs of the providers. While the Municipal authorities made "technical" decisions, parents "simply had to reflect and to analyse which school they wanted to go to". Put simply, the position of parents was reduced to individually looking for the best option for their children and choosing between the offers available for them in the educational marketplace.

The city as an important site of resistance against privatisation

Throughout my thesis I have drawn attention to what school privatisation has meant in terms of the urban social relations in Rancagua, emphasising local memories and experiences of the whole process in opposition to telling the story of changes from the perspective of the implemented reforms.

The final contribution of this thesis relates to the possibilities opened by the analysis of the processes and effects of school privatisation as not “from above” but “from bellow”, meaning “from a situated space”. I have worked in this thesis with a poststructuralist view that understands education as both an assemblage of policies and discourses that shape the contingent truth about what education is from the power “from above”, and a set of practices fabricating ethical situated subjectivities “from bellow”. The point, therefore, is that there are different entry points to understanding what education is and the possibilities open to construe the relations of forces, the discourses of truth and the subjectivities at play in a given order of things. Not just “from above” and not just “from within”. That is the reason I adopt a position that highlights the “situated space” of the city.

This approach to the problem of school privatisation enables us to understand how neoliberalism transformed education not only by describing the legal, institutional, and political changes implemented since 1973 (from above) or by describing the different effects that these changes have produced in the everyday life of students, teachers, parents inside the school walls (from within), but also by situating it within the concrete sociocultural transformations that this rational of order has enacted. The importance of a contextualised and territorialised understanding of neoliberalism has been emphasised by poststructural thinkers (Ong, 2007; Peck & Theodore, 2015) in order to grasp the ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). I have focused on exploring and understanding what has been changed from the perspective of the context of practice (Ball et al., 2012) of a concrete situated space: Rancagua. Decentring attention from what happens inside schools and framing the locus of observation and analysis at the city level is a key and original element of my approach.

The relevance of the above is that the same argument is valid not only to understand the effects of school privatisation within the urban scenarios but also to question how it is possible to transform or ameliorate these effects. The problem is how to struggle against and resist neoliberalism. I argue, as Ball (2015b) does for a form of struggle that centres on subjectivity, that the urban space is a necessary but not

sufficient site of struggle. That is precisely the main idea of poststructural approaches: there is no single site that condensates the social problems and enables social solutions. Having said this, I consider that it is also important to analyse and describe the concrete sites from where struggle and resistance is possible and urban governance is one of such sites of struggle.

Following the previous arguments of the de-politicisation of the educational problem and the key role that urban governance plays in this effect, I argue that any attempt to democratise and re-politicise the discussion of education needs to consider not only the site of subjectivity (Ball, 2015b) or a specific subject such as teachers as community actors (Smith, 2019), but also the urban plane as a space of relations of force for the construction of truth and possibilities to enact processes of subjectivation. This is very clear in the last chapter of analysis, where the defence and resistance of the Manuel Rojas's school, in different points of the city, is discussed. In this chapter, the dramatic news of the closure of the school generated an unexpected re-politicisation of the citizenry, which transformed an educational problem into a collective one, a problem to be solved from below. When analysing privatisation as a mechanism of depoliticisation, the contextual conditions that hinder the possibility of looking at social issues like education *from the polis* are made visible. In the case of Rancagua, at first glance, fragmentation and individualism prevail, but there are situations – such as the case of the Manuel Rojas school closure – in which a truth repressed by the imperative of competition seems to wake up, and so, the inhabitants of a social-space – parents and others – are able to see themselves as active agents within the collective school reality. The ethnographic engagement with the articulation of various actors to defend the school shows how the city can turn quickly from an individualised, controlling and disaffected version of its inhabitants to a city where a social problem is conceived as a concern in common, the subjects here are active problematisers and seekers of solutions, and there is an affective link both with spaces and schools, and with history and the future. Despite the routine prevalence of depoliticised engagement within education, there are moments when repoliticisation becomes possible and real.

Likewise in Chapters 4 and 5 the discussion of the relationship of teachers and their corresponding processes of de-subjectivation and re-subjectivation shows that, if there are no links to a mode of educational thinking that goes beyond what happens in the classroom or the school and there are no spaces available within which to imagine things happening in different ways, it is difficult to resist neoliberalism. For example, in Chapter 5 I argue that the teacher-entrepreneurs in Rancagua managed to become important agents of urban life. They are recognized by their names and the names of their schools for several generations, and are valued as part of the material and social development of the city. Generally speaking, locals (former workers, former students, neighbours) tend to feel sympathy for these actors and for their projects. Today the subjectivity of the teachers-entrepreneurs and the existence of their schools— is crucial to shaping and thinking about education; in other words, they have reconfigured the socio-spatial relations of the city and modified the discourses and power relations in the educational field. It is not enough to produce an abstract critique of these subjectivities. Such an endeavour misses the point that these characters have a direct presence in a situated political context; they produce the direct experience of immediate educational practice. Therefore, they cannot be criticised simply as providers who profit from education. This does not take into account their relevance to local experience and within local history. The attempt to regulate the role of profit and philanthropy in the Chilean education system, which has been the response of recent governments to protest, downplays or misses the relevance of where the problem of education is actually being thought and shaped at the local level.

A broader political strategy aimed at scaling back or removing school privatisation needs to take into consideration, as Ball (2015b) argues, that the self is the main focus of control of neoliberalism; the self must also be understood as one site where resistance may take place. Therefore, the theoretical, political and practical problem is where and how the self is fabricated. I argue that urban milieus, as Brenner and Theodore (2002) assert, are 'strategically crucial geographical arenas in which a variety of neoliberal initiatives - along with closely intertwined strategies of crisis

displacement and crisis management - have been articulated' (p. 349). This sort of experience of the urban articulation of neoliberalism is present in my analysis of the workshop I did with the students, described in Chapter 3. By opening a space situated beyond the school walls and within the city space, it was possible to think about the effect "from above" and "from below" that school privatisation has produced in the urban milieu and on the life of the students. Students in general have shown clearly since the 2006 demonstrations that democratization at the local level is possible. Of course, to reiterate, the urban plane is just one more plane of resistance, and perhaps not the only and not the main one, but it is crucial. For me, this is to be able to demonstrate this using my empirical-theoretical data is one of the most important contributions of the thesis.

Contribution and limitations

The three points just described are the main contributions of my work regarding the effects of school privatisation in urban space. Here I would like to mention an additional epistemological contribution. I believe that my thesis develops a novel way of approaching and investigating the problem of education. This consists of articulating the genealogical with the ethnographic. Although authors such as Tamboukou and Ball (2003) have reflected on this, my work illustrates this approach through an investigation located in the urban plane. The type of knowledge that this thesis presents benefits, on the one hand, from ethnography, as it reveals daily practices and local histories. On the other hand, from genealogy, it reveals the emergence of and historical changes of these practices on an epistemic level. Therefore, the thesis as a whole is an example of producing knowledge about the problem of education.

Having said this, the main challenges that I faced during the process of writing this thesis are concomitant with this way of conducting research. Thus, to further clarify the contribution I am referring to, I can recognise three major challenges that I faced in my work. As challenges, they delineate the limits and scope of the knowledge produced and analysed in my work.

First, the dangerous encounters between genealogy and ethnography described by Tamboukou and Ball (2003) is undoubtedly the main challenge when producing knowledge from this type of approach. More concretely, the challenge is to describe densely certain areas of practice while attending to their genesis and historical development. The difficulty I faced was constantly having to decide which was more important: the density of the present or the tracing back of the genealogies of each practice. Being constantly confronted with questions about how and where to 'look', both in the fieldwork and in the analysis created problems both in terms of the scope of focus (how to set the limits of my field of study) and the volume of information produced (how to set limits to the depth of and amount of material collected).

As a result, the second challenge I had to face was that studying the educational reality of the city of Rancagua was always too broad a research focus. Although the very principle of the research approach I worked with was an invitation to keep the focus broad and open, with limited time and resources I was always ignoring something, looking away. It is possible to argue that everything that happens in the daily life of a city it is in one way or another linked to a broad and poststructural notion of education. It was not until I narrowed my focus to school privatization that I could begin to see a framework for analysis.

A third challenge, as I mentioned in the methodological chapter, despite systematically ignoring things and setting limits to the span of my attention, I still had too much data. In relation to this I faced difficulties in the organisation and synthesis of very different data sources. It was difficult for me to select and decide what material was more relevant than others. I could have written several different theses based on different decisions about inclusion and exclusion. However, all of the different topics with which I engaged have informed my analysis at a general level. Nonetheless, had I chosen privatisation from the beginning, I would have interviewed different actors producing a more focused analysis. The amplitude of the research approach here works both as a potential and a limitation.

Regarding this idea of amplitude in the production of empirical data, one of the additional challenges of my analytical work was that I concentrated the analysis on

more traditional empirical sources such as field notes and interviews to the detriment of pictures, statistics, maps, newspapers, official documents and the different products of the collaborative workshop I conducted. One of the reasons underpinning this was my struggle to articulate such amount of different sources in a coherent way. Whenever I added some new source, the analysis generated a diversion that I needed to attend. The main effect of this was not only losing important data that could have provided different insights into the broad topic but also that my analytical work was based more on oral accounts than these other sources.

A piece of advice that I would have loved to have received when starting this research and that could benefit someone following this type of approach is: beware of the focus and teamwork relation. If you are researching alone, the focus needs to be as narrow as possible. In my case, rather than a whole city, the teachers' neighbourhood would have sufficed. Alternatively, I could have started with a more specific focus of inquiry. But, of course, this is the wisdom of hindsight. Therefore, the more practical advice is that a process of delimitation and narrowing of the research focus after a preliminary period of fieldwork is crucial. Working with a research team, the possibilities are different.

Positionality and ethics: lessons from my research experience

In this section I reflect on two significant lessons that I learned from my research experience. The first is an epistemological issue. I was able to experience that there was a direct relation between who I am and the openness/closure of the rapport, that is, the relationship of trust I established with my research participants. I noticed that some of my characteristics such as being a woman from Santiago, doing a PhD in London about neoliberal education, were features that both opened and closed my possibilities in the field, depending on my interlocutors. On the one hand, those who were somehow similar to me, in terms of gender, social class or interest, were quickly willing to contribute to the research. On the other, those who were different to me did not easily engage or understand what the type of relationship I was offering. It

was the case of local professionals, for instance, who engaged immediately with critically historicising the educational present from the city. The attitude adopted by male professionals was to explain to me what I should write about and focus on, while women tended to use the interviews to analyse deeply their life histories.

There was a margin to play with my own identity in the field in the sense of hiding some aspects of my own biography and purposes. I never tried to show a different gender, and frequently rushed to introduce myself as a researcher learning about Rancagua. This said, it was always an option to emphasise more or less some aspects of my identity, such as being a PhD student in London, how long I was going to stay in the city, my level of engagement with the social movements against private education, my atheism, my experience going to a private school, etc. Over the months in Rancagua, I learned that the way in which I introduced myself or was introduced by someone else had relevant effects on the time that was offered, the contents that were approached, and the relationship that I could establish with the people, and consequently, on the production of knowledge.

The second lesson is an ethical one and is directly associated with the first one. The possibility to show or hide aspects of who I am for the sake of my research triggered ethical dilemmas for me. I would like to illustrate the range of my ethical positionality with two examples in order to make a final reflection on this regard. The first one is having hidden who I was. It was my first month of fieldwork and I was trying to understand the social segregation of the city. A social leader offered to take me to an emblematic shantytown, since he knew the heads of the place and supposed it was interesting for my research to visit it. We went there and, without asking me before, he introduced me to a group of women as an English journalist interested in denouncing to the world the living conditions of Chilean shantytowns. I did not find a way to contradict my gatekeeper and clarify who I was and which were my real interests. I felt very uncomfortable with the whole situation and particularly with not being able to speak for myself. However, I also understood that the social leader found it too complicated to explain these women what I was really doing, which I suddenly felt as a type of frivolous slam tourism. So, the man lied in

order to make my presence (and his role as gatekeeper) acceptable. ‘Thus you could take some pictures and go’, he said later. As a result, I did not come back to this place. The second experience is an opposite situation, and is the one that I have narrated in this thesis in the form of my relationship with Yorma and Roxana. With them, as I argued in chapter 3, I established a deep personal friendship based on an open and transparent relationship. In particular, Roxana showed me that it was fruitful to apply a radical honesty regarding my political position and prejudices about school owners, since this enabled to create something very similar to a horizontal dialogue where both of us were thinking and understanding the phenomenon of school privatisation.

My positionality in terms of what I was doing in Rancagua could shift within a range of honesty or fiction as these two cases illustrate. The epistemological lesson is that both ways do produce data, albeit differently. However, this entails an ethical lesson: I have to choose how honest I want to be in the construction of knowledge. I decided to be myself, that is, someone that it is at peace with herself and who can speak her own truth about her work to the people I met. My ethical lesson involved clarifying who I wanted to be when doing research. The relationship of friendship I constructed, one of the highlights of my research experience, were possible because I chose to be myself in the production of knowledge.

Further research

Finally, some open research questions that have emerged from my study. The first has to do with the other educational governance rationalities that I was able to perceive. One of the concerns that I observed is all work and effects of these other rationalities of government, for example, the colonial power relations, the nineteenth-century republican rationality, or the strength of the developmental state of the mid-twentieth century. From a genealogical perspective, the socio-educational reality has traces that go deep into the historical roots of a community. In this thesis, I have managed to describe and trace with enough precision the most important rationale to understand the educational present of the city of Rancagua: school

privatization. However, there is a set of other historical traces, whose presence and "real" importance still seem mysterious, that need to be understood better. Perhaps the neoliberal rationale is more fragile than we think and those older rationales are only 'sleeping', just waiting to wake up to reconfigure themselves in the present.

A second open research question has to do with the diversity that can exist in what Brenner and Theodore (2002) call the 'actually existing neoliberalism'. This was a guiding force throughout my work and I consider that the thesis evoked and delineated the actually existing forces of school privatisation in the city of Rancagua. Now, how many other types of 'actually existing neoliberalism' might exist? What are their communalities and their main differences? In order to address this problem, it seems to me that a possible research path is to compare the analysis of the city of Rancagua with studies of other types of cities. The aim here is to better understand the effects of neoliberalism and the contextual possibilities that have developed in each place around the depoliticisation of the educational problem and therefore the potential forms of resistance or re-politicization. It is possible to think, for example, that the larger the city, the more depoliticised the educational problem will be, while in smaller cities, where community ties may be stronger, it is possible that there are urban spaces where collective considerations of educational problems continue.

One last open research question is what has happened in Rancagua after 10 years. My doctoral research began at the beginning of 2013, and today I ask myself: How will the problem of education be in the years 2023-2024? Perhaps, thinking about where my thesis has got me, the key question now is not the specific problem of neoliberalism and school privatization, but the general problem of the (de) politicization of education. Including a longitudinal dimension in this type of study, and, for example, being able to ethnographically/genealogically trace back and articulate the educational practices of a city for some 30 or 40 years looks like a research exercise that with the potential to deepen my contribution of investigating and understanding the phenomenon of education in an urban space.

Lastly, I want to mention that as I am writing these conclusions, a process of political and sociocultural change is taking place in Chile, whose scope is still unclear and uncertain. I am referring to a series of massive demonstrations and serious riots that occurred on October 18, 2019 in Santiago and spread to all the national territory, with the great impact in the main cities of the country. This process, known as *estallido social* or social outburst, was institutionally responded to and dealt with through a political agreement to change the 1980 constitution, drawn up during the Pinochet dictatorship and which has been fundamental to the preservation of the neoliberal model in Chile. In October 2020, a referendum was held where 78.28% of the population voted in favour of calling a Constituent Convention to write a new constitution. In May 2021, the 155 constituents in charge of drafting the new constitution were elected, work was begun on July 4, 2021 and should be completed in one year. In this light, there are two reflections that allow me to conclude this thesis: first, when I began I had little faith in legal changes, “from above”, however, this constituting process is producing a political-social discussion that is opening a set of questions and problems of great relevance to re-think and re-imagine the country. Questions about the role of the state and about the protection and expansion of civil rights were blocked before the *estallido social*. Now the discussions that are taking place are addressing basic structural and subjective dimensions of the everyday life of Chilean people, on both macro and micro level. Although these discussions exceed what will finally be written in the new legal framework, what is important, for me, is precisely everything that goes beyond the legal as it is reconfiguring our ways of thinking about what is important and true for ourselves as citizens of our country. The second point is that, at the onset of this thesis, it was very difficult for me to visualize a non-neoliberal or post-neoliberal educational system, where education was not being governed through market principles and where the logics of competition and privatization did not prevail. Understanding education as a common good, with challenges and problems as the responsibility of the *polis*, seemed impossible. In a way my thesis describes a given reality that today, eight years later, may be changing. Today, it seems that the possibility of recovering education as a collective and political problem, that is

openly discussed among ‘ourselves’ does seem possible and real. Perhaps, this thesis can contribute a small step in this direction.

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Appendixes

Appendix I: List of research's participants

Participants: Name or pseudonym (*)		Gender	Age	Occupation	Data		
					Method	Registry	Date
1	Alejandro G.	Male	60	Owner and director of the newspaper "El Rancaguino" Studied at a private school in Rancagua	Interview	Audio recorded	22-08-13
2	Alonso R.*	Male	70	Retired, worked as minor in CODELCO. Still is a trade unionist. Was the Socialist Party chief during the Coup de Etat - prison, exiled in Sweden	Interview	Audio recorded	12-09-13
3	Amelia T.*	Female	50	Primary teacher at the public-semi rural school Colegio Manuel Rojas, threatened to be closed	Interview	Audio recorded	26-11-14
4	Ana G.*	Female	65	Administrative staff - Education Department at the bishopric or vicarage	Interview	Notes	05-05-14
5	Antonio B.*	Male	31	Engineer working at Ministry of Public Works	Interview	Notes	09-09-13
6	Bruno B.*	Male	60	Retired teacher; Worked at the Regional Ministry of Education (SEREMI)	Interview	Audio recorded	25-09-13
7	Lorena C.*	Female	17	Secondary student at a municipal school	Interview	Notes	30-04-14
8	Camila F.*	Female	16	Secondary student at a Vocational Private-Subsidised School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
9	Carlos N.*	Male	16	Secondary student at a Private-Subsidised School	Interview	Notes	02-10-14
10	Cecilia G.*	Female	55	Leader of a parents' association to protect children with special needs	Interview	Audio recorded	24-10-14

11	Clara M.*	Female	32	House wife, mother of a student attending the Manuel Rojas School	Interview Group interview	Audio recorded	28-11-14
12	Darío Q.*	Male	22	University student	Interview	Notes	25-05-14
13	Elena B.*	Female	62	Sculptor, member of the directory of the Regional Theatre Worked at the Municipality at the cultural council	Interview	Notes	26-08-13
14	Elena M.*	Female	18	Secondary student at a Municipal School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
15	Elsa O.	Female	82	Old neighbourhood of the población Santa Julia	Interview	Video recorded	15-11-14
16	Ernesto C.*	Male	60	Teacher at a vocational School (in Rengo)	Interview	Audio recorded	13-11-14
17	Evelyn N.*	Female	35	House wife, mother of two children attending the Manuel Rojas School	Interview Group interview	Audio recorded	28-11-14
18	Federico L.*	Male	65	Retired teacher; Former Headteacher at a private school for 18 years	Interview	Audio recorded	06-11-14
16	Felipe R.*	Male	35	Copper artisan	Interview	Notes	04-05-14
17	Francisca V.*	Female	65	Hairdresser	Interview	Notes	25-08-13
18	Gabriela F.*	Female	30	House wife, mother of two children attending the Manuel Rojas School	Interview Group interview	Audio recorded	28-11-14
19	Guillermo D.	Male	65	Historian, owns the restaurant "The Old Rancagua"	Interview	Notes	04-09-13
20	Guillermo F.	Male	58	Statistician - Regional Ministry's Secretary of education's staff	Interview	Audio recorded	30-09-13
21	Gustavo V.	Male	60	"Teacher in Charge" at the public-semi rural primary school Colegio Manuel Rojas, threatened to be closed	2 interview's sessions	Audio recorded	29-10-14 26-11-14
22	Hernán C.	Male	57	Industrial Engineer, Former Regional Chief in Education	Interview	Audio recorded	01-10-13

				(SEREMI); Current Communal Chief in Machali			
23	Hernán V.	Male	70	Little businessman (marketer) President of the Neighbourhood's Communal Associations Union	2 interview's sessions	Audio recorded	11-09-2013 01-10-2013
24	Hugo L.	Male	80	Retired teacher; President of the Regional Teachers' Union (2011-2013); Worked at public and private schools	2 Interview's sessions	Audio recorded	27-08-2013 04-09-2013
25	Isabel G.	Female	18	Secondary student at a Vocational Private-Subsidised School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
26	Jacinto B.*	Male	92	Retired teacher; Ex Headteacher at Public Vocational Schools	Interview	Audio recorded	09-09-13
27	Javiera C.*	Female	40	Early Childhood teacher at a highly prestigious Private School	Interview	Audio recorded	26-09-13
28	José J.*	Male	18	Secondary student at a Municipal School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
29	Juan R.*	Male	18	Secondary student at a Private School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
30	Juana V.	Female	84	Old neighbourhood of the población Santa Julia	Interview	Video recorded	13-11-14
31	Karina F.*	Female	70	Retired teacher, current writer; Worked at the Regional Ministry's Secretary of education	Interview	Audio recorded	19-11-14
32	Laura L.*	Female	65	Program Coordinator at the Municipal Department of Education	Interview	Notes	23-09-13
33	Leandro P.*	Male	55	President of the Parents Association at his grandson school (a vocational Secondary Public School) President of the Neighbourhood Association from Población Los Artesanos Ex Secretary of the Neighbourhood's Communal Associations Union	2 interview's sessions	Audio recorded	01-10-2013 02-10-2013

				Pensioned by labour illness Worked as welder for CODELCO (the national company of copper)			
34	Leo P.*	Male	18	Secondary student at a Private-Subsidised School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
35	Leonora C.*	Female	45	Works at a Municipal primary school as Philosophy teacher Member of the Caucus MP6 and feminist groups	Group interview as member of the caucus MP6	Audio recorded	28-07-14
36	Luis Fernando G.	Male	35	Chief Journalist for the newspaper "El Rancaguino", which his family owns Studied at a private school where he still takes part of the pastoral	Interview	Audio recorded	22-08-13
37	Luis G.	Male	48	Assistant at a Vocational School; President of the Regional association of school assistants	Interview	Audio recorded	22-10-14
38	Luis R.	Male	88	Retired teacher; Ex-President of the Municipal Teachers' Union; Worked at the most prestigious Public Secondary School	Interview	Audio recorded	04-09-13
39	Lusiana N.*	Female	55	Owner and headteacher of a private relatively new school; Member of FIDE Studied and worked at a prestigious private school from Rancagua	Interview	Audio recorded	18-05-14
40	Mabel J.*	Female	85	Head of "the Anich", a Syrian family well known by its commercial expansion in Rancagua (pharmacies, clothes shops, housing brokers, etc.)	Interview	Audio recorded	07-05-14
41	Manuel N.*	Male	17	Secondary student at a Municipal School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
42	Marcos S.*	Male	50	President of the Parents ' Association from a municipal school	Interview	Audio recorded	06-05-14

43	Marisol I.*	Female	18	Secondary student at a Private School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
44	Matilde P.	Female	85	Old neighbourhood of the población Santa Julia	Interview	Video recorded	13-11-14
45	Mercedes R.*	Female	17	Secondary student at a municipal school	Interview	Notes	30-04-14
46	Mónica L.*	Female	55	Teacher at a Municipal School	Interview	Audio recorded	10-08-14
47	Natalia R.*	Female	16	Secondary student at a Vocational Private-Subsidised School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
48	Nitza C.	Female	62	Retired, but still works doing private lessons; Former Teachers' leader; Human Rights advocator	2 interview's sessions Emails	Audio recorded	10-08-14 17-08-14 During year 2014
49	Pablo F.*	Male	50	Works at a Municipal primary school as Math teacher Member of the Caucus MP6 and feminist groups	Group interview as member of the caucus MP6	Audio recorded	28-07-14
50	Pascal T.*	Male	17	Secondary student at a Vocational Private-Subsidised School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
51	Patricio M.*	Male	30	Founded with others one of the first teachers' unions at private schools.	Interview	Audio recorded	14-11-14
52	Priscila F.*	Female	28	Teacher at a Private Subsidised School	Interview	Audio recorded	10-08-14
53	Ramiro V.*	Male	40	Works at a Municipal primary school as History teacher + currently studying to be lawyer Member of the Caucus MP6	Interview Group interview as member of the caucus MP6	Audio recorded Audio recorded	22-10-14 28-07-14
54	Ricardo B.*	Male	60	Forest engineer	Interview	Notes	26-08-13

55	Roberto G.*	Male	28	Counter; Formed at a vocational public school; Works some hours a week in a public vocational school in Graneros	Interview	Audio recorded	22-10-14
56	Rodrigo K.	Male	28	Works at a Municipal primary school as History teacher Member of the Caucus MP6 and feminist groups	Group interview as member of the caucus MP6	Audio recorded	28-07-14
57	Roxana P.	Female	58	Owner and headteacher of a private-subsidized school; President of FIDE (Private Catholic Schools Association)	2 interview's sessions	Audio recorded	20-05-14 11-11-14
58	Rubén V.*	Male	18	President of the SU at a municipal school	Interview	Audio recorded	30-04-14
59	Ruperto G.*	Male	60	Teacher formed at a "Normal School"; Headteacher at a Private Subsidised School	Interview	Audio recorded	02-09-13
60	Sandro F.*	Male	55	Vice-president of the Neighbourhood's Communal Associations Union Member of APAR (Parents' Association in Rancagua) Current painter Pensioned by labour illness Worked as mechanic for CODELCO (the national company of copper)	Interview	Audio recorded	24-10-14
61	Sebastián Y.*	Male	65	Lawyer, councillor for the Peace and Justice Commission at the Bishopric from Rancagua; Studied at the local public school, his children went to private schools	Interview	Notes	28-04-14
62	Sonya G.	Female	82	Retired teacher; Owner of a disappeared private school	Interview	Audio recorded	06-11-14
63	Valentín Z.	Male	45	Religion teacher, Priest; Studied at the prestigious catholic-private school; Vicar of Education from the Dioceses.	2 Interview's sessions	Audio recorded	28-04-14 05-05-14
64	Valeria F.	Female	28	House wife, mother of two children attending the Manuel Rojas School	Interview	Audio recorded	28-11-14

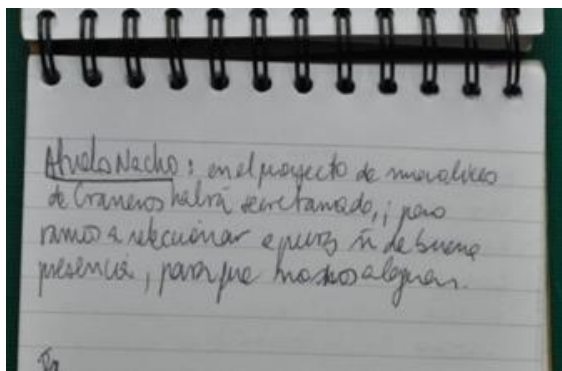
					Group interview		
65	Vicente P.*	Male	31	Lawyer, works at the Ministry of Environment	Interview	Notes	22-05-14
66	Vicente R.*	Male	18	Secondary student at a Vocational Private-Subsidised School	Interview Workshop	Notes	22/07-14 21/28-07-14
67	Víctor A.*	Male	68	Hatter; went to the public school.	Interview	Audio recorded	04-05-14
68	Yorma A.	Female	64	Retired teacher; formed at a "Normal School"; President of the Regional Teachers' Union (2014-2016); worked mainly at public schools	6 Interview's sessions Group interview as member of the caucus MP6 Workshops Walking along	Audio recorded Audio recorded Notes	Between April and June 2014 28-07-14 Between June and December 2014
69	Xavier F.	Male	57	School janitor at the public-semi rural primary school Colegio Manuel Rojas, threatened to be closed	Interview	Notes	25-11-14

Appendix 2: Examples of sources

a) Field notes

- Rough notes

Example: picture of one of my many field diaries



“My project for a new [vocational] secondary school in Graneros is to include secretarial courses, but selecting only good looking girls, so we avoid complaints [from the employers]”.
(Retired teacher, male, 92 years).

- Expanded field notes: When I came home, I described some experiences with more detail, using my notes and other elements such as pictures of news to remember the most as possible.

Example:

October 10th 2013

Today I met the president of a neighbourhood association, M. I had been invited to take part of a monthly meeting in the headquarters of the Association of associations. When the meeting finished, our ways to get home coincided, so I found a space to introduce myself calmer and to explain her my interests in knowing Rancagua and its education. M. is a working class woman in her 70s and has been a grassroots member of the Socialist Party for more than 50 years. She lives in one of the oldest *tomas* in the city, the one which became *Población Esperanza* in the 60s, and which has pretty and very uneven houses nowadays, mostly still occupied by the families of the ones who once rebelled against the law for getting a decent place to live. As also other working class people often interpreted my enquiries, M. tackled with her comments the idea of social inequalities related to schooling, but her account exceeded the usual accent on labour opportunities and cultural capital.

‘The other day I was walking home along the Cachapoal Avenue with a friend. It was around 4 pm and the sidewalk was taken by the secondary students of the [private school] ‘Instituto

Inglés', which had finished the school day already. When we were approaching the lot, my friend step down to the street to avoid them. I took her arm firmly to bring her back and told her that 'sidewalks are public and are done to walk along them, we have no reason to leave it'. But then one of these blonde girls shouted at loud 'No miss, the sidewalk belongs to us' [Maria imitates her as a recognisable caricature of a posh girl, somehow stressing nastiness and childishness at the same time]. It was impressive, she was so bad-mannered, but we kept walking. Then I got happy, though, because a young boy jumped to make us space and said loud that of course we were allowed to pass. He said sorry for her stupid classmate, making her look bad, and the rest of the group started telling her of. At least the story ended well and one can see that they are not all the same'.

M., in this story, is raising the struggle over space that is lived in the city, a dimension that crosses the spatial production of education, so as the social construction of space through education. The old woman and the schoolgirl embody two opposite projects. Whereas M. has done flesh a history of collectively challenging private property under the convincement of a right to housing, the girl expresses the discourse of her school, which in the very act of being founded expressed the convincement of the right of exclusion, and by the pass of time, has been buying all the houses of the area to expand, among others, to build a huge fenced carpark in the front.

b) Interviews (transcription)

Example: first page of transcription of interview to Hugo L. (in Spanish)

Interviewee: retired teacher Hugo L. Retired teacher; President of the Regional Teachers' Union (2011-2013); Worked at public and private schools

Date: 27-08-2013

25 pages (here an extract, in Spanish)

FC: Bueno entonces primero que nada tengo que ubicarme en el mapa y saber un poco de usted, yo sé que usted es presidente del colegio hace tiempo y dirigente desde hace mucho tiempo entonces me interesa mucho eso, su vida, su historia.

HL: La generación mía y todos los que estamos viviendo estamos muy determinados por la etapa de la dictadura a pesar de que yo soy un hombre muy anterior a la dictadura también por mi edad y por lo tanto yo estoy vinculado a la educación, conozco el sistema antiguo, pre

anterior a la dictadura y a la instalación pos dictadura y las continuidades democráticas que ha habido también, estoy exactamente en la mitad, yo a la altura, yo me inicié en la educación, participe desde la década del 60, me titulé de profesor yo el año 1960.

FC: ¿Y dónde se tituló?

HL: Yo soy profesor de inglés, profesor de Estado es el título mío, era el Estado el que patrocinaba los títulos en esa época fíjese por lo tanto es una rareza, porque después los títulos han sido profesores de básica, mi título es profesor de Estado en inglés, que eran títulos destinados a la educación media, digamos hoy día educación media y en ese tiempo educación secundaria, el sistema educativo chileno en ese tiempo tenía seis años de básica y seis años de educación secundaria, que no era básica era primaria, primaria – secundaria, y por tanto yo egresé del Instituto Nacional donde hice todos mis estudios en Santiago y el año 1958, 1959 una vez titulado ingresé al servicio público educativo que se hacía mediante concursos públicos nacionales.

FC: ¿Disculpe y usted era oriundo de Santiago?

HL: Santiaguino sí, y por lo tanto... yo concluí mi carrera más o menos a los 22 años y empecé a concursar inmediatamente digamos con, con ese afán que todos los nuevos titulados tienen de conquistar el mundo, de conquistar espacios, de salir a mostrar, etc... y bueno hice, gané un concurso aquí en Rancagua, lo cual era una suerte enorme puesto que estaba muy cercano, se percibía en ese tiempo cercano a Rancagua ya y el tiempo lo ha hecho cada vez más cercano en realidad.

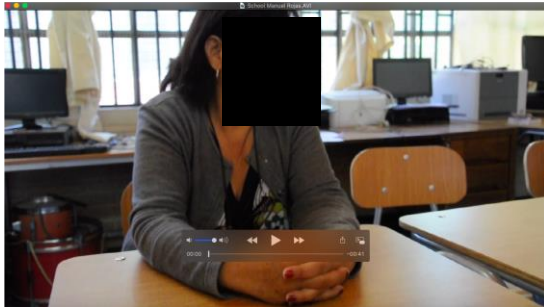
c) Pictures

Example: the teachers' house (taken during 2014)



d) Videos

Example: interviews to the parents at the Manuel Rojas School (2014)



e) Memos: analyses during fieldwork

Rancagua, 15th October 2013

Rancagua: expression of neoliberalism?

The literature I have read until now is mainly Anglo-Saxon... What are the problems/limits of using it to interpret history and social change in Latin-America?

Cities: the understanding of cities in relation to capitalism is related to the emergency of a bourgeoisie, the market and getting rid of the Kingdom. Whereas, in LA the cities were erected as a means of a Kingdom first, to conduct easily the conquest, to install the government apparatus, distribute territory to the conquerors and install churches.

Rancagua developed as a place of conquest, to domain indigenous which were already dominated by the Incas. It is said that it was quite easy in this part of the country. The city was then the scenario of the first serious attempt of independence, not conducted by the indigenous but by the new generations of the elite, who were not proper Spanish anymore. The city was for a century an administrative node of the country side, in times when the 90% lived from farming, the aristocracy was very conservative and the catholic church was the third power. And then came the mine and a new colonisation now by north American engineers and industrials. The mining brought with it industrialisation and qualified workers, and so organization, unions and pressure to get better conditions. The city I know is mainly a vestige of this struggles. There is the classic church in the classical Spanish middle square, but the city is composed by neighbourhoods with names like "the rail employees", "Braden and Co", "The teachers", "The widows", etc. There is also "the market", and "the market of flowers", pretty deteriorated, but completely energetic and in use. A last layer is

that of the poverty financed by the state with private concessions: multiple new social housing with people coming from poor sites of the country, little and bad constructed, two shopping centres constructed right in the middle of the historical centre, so as dozens of education institutions, mostly private. Has Rancagua ever been the city of the freemen?

f) Newspapers



(Newspaper El Rancagüino, 3rd October 2013, pictures of the yearly parade “the Battle of Rancagua”).

Appendix 3: Example of analysis - Teachers as neighbours

In this appendix, I show the process I followed to construct the analysis chapters by presenting one example of what I did in each specific section – the one called ‘teachers as neighbours’, in chapter 4.

In chapter 4, I describe the transformation of teacher subjectivity along the process of neoliberalisation, in particular the way by which a traditional form of being a teacher in the city disappeared under the consolidation of the neoliberal regime. The chapter is a manner of answering one of my research goals – to identify and understand processes of de-subjectification and subjectification in the urban school milieu in Rancagua. Teacher subjectivity was a topic strongly present both in the voices of the research participants and in my own observations and reflections expressed in my fieldnotes and memos. For this reason and also for the fact that teacher subjectivity is an important line of inquiry within the studies about neoliberal education, I decided to focus on it.

The literature about the effects of neoliberal education on teacher subjectivity gave me clues to make sense of my empirical data and name the phenomena I observed. Indeed, my data show there are important coincidences in what has been happening in Chile and other contexts regarding, for instance, technification and standardisation of teachers’ work. However, thanks to the attention put at the level of urban dynamics, my data also shows the changes that teachers have experienced in regard to their socio-spatial relations beyond the school walls, and which I interpret as relevant conditions of their subjective transformation. In particular, the analyses of my data point at three dimensions of change in this sense: i) the way in which teachers inhabit the city, ii) the commitment of teachers with the cultural development of local communities, and iii) their political engagement.

The three dimensions mentioned above were codes that had emerged during the preliminary analysis, where I labelled quotes of the transcribed interviews and my fieldnotes (my rough notes and the expanded fieldnotes). Hence, in order to analyse

each dimension to describe them in the chapter, I started by reading separately all the information I had coded in relation to them.

Regarding the dimension ‘the way in which teachers inhabit the city’, the references were abundant, especially in relation to the past, since teachers used to live together, in the same neighbourhood. This fact evidently contrasted the present of the teachers in Rancagua and was frequently raised to contextualise any other issue from the past. Besides, there were other aspects of inhabiting the city that had notably changed in relation to the privatisation of the educational system, for instance, the relation that in times of unionism teachers had with the union headquarters. Hence, the analysis of this section consisted of simply describing and contrasting these aspects of teachers’ urban life.

In order to construct my description in this section, I combined sources and voices, but interviews were the main source of information, even when I had not asked directly about the issue in the most of the cases. For instance, when analysing an interview with Nitza, a retired teacher, I found the following interaction where this issue emerged unexpectedly. She was presented to me as teacher before the interview, but then, when the interview started, she told me at some point that for the coup the etat, in 1973, she had just got the title as engineer.

Francisca: When did you start teaching in Rancagua, then? In 1973? Did you present your title as engineer or... ?

Nitza C.: I hadn’t a title as teacher, I had only studied at the Chilean-North American Institute, thus I spoke English very well. And there weren’t English teacher at the time, so I started doing English classes. I was barefaced, so, if someone asked me to do Chinese classes, I would have done them. [This happened because] Look, when I arrived in Rancagua in 1960, the thing is that I always lived in teacher housing centres, because I lived in Sewell in a building with only married teachers and all the children were friends and we played in that building together. It was a wonderful thing because, for example, in one house we painted, in another house we played the piano, in another house we listened to music and the parents were great and they played with all of us, including my father, everyone. So it was like a super beautiful community and then we came from Sewell, I came here to the neighbourhood of teachers, so we were also detached to some extent from what was happening to the rest.

(Extract from the first interview with Nitza C. – my translation)

In the section about the way in which teachers inhabit the city (which I called ‘teachers as neighbours’), I used the underlined extract from Nitza’s interview to depict with local memories the mode in which teachers used to live before the process of privatisation destroyed teachers’ unions and the collective manner to solve social problems.

The topic also emerged in other interviews, where similar remembrances were repeated. Further, in my own experience in the city, I had heard/observed that the younger teachers lived dispersed in it. In effect, I had explicitly asked about it, searching for the way in which current teachers solved the problem of housing, and there was nothing even close to a collective option.

Not only did I have evidence of the current dispersion of teachers across the city in my fieldnotes (i.e., teachers inviting me to their homes, teachers talking about where they lived), but also comments about the ‘teachers’ neighbourhood’, an area which is still named like that. Since the goal was to describe and give the readers the opportunity to have a sense of the place under study in the text (the chapters’ section about this topic), I used the following personal anecdote to illustrate the point:

When I arrived in Rancagua and began to ask about the local history of education, many people recommended that I speak with Luchito R., a senior teacher who was still seen participating in local activities and who fulfilled the typical trilogy of being "radical, a Mason and a Firefighter". Ricardo, the father of a friend, told me that the teacher must be over 90 years old and that no one could know more about what has happened to the Rancagua schools than him. Having heard the same recommendation by several others, I decided to look for him. I asked for his contact number, but no-one knew. I was told that it was common to come across him in the centre of Rancagua, after lunch, walking or having coffee in the plaza with other retired teachers. If I didn't see him, it would be possible that he was sick, they also warned me with a hint of concern. As I did not know him and had no way of recognizing him on the street, I asked if it was possible to go and see him at his house. The answer — as was habitual in Rancagua when anyone wondered about the location of a place — a gesture of an outstretched arm, pointing towards the address: "He lives there, in the teachers' neighbourhood." "Street, number?" "Nah, it will be 10 minutes from Plaza Los Héroes, everyone knows which is the neighbourhood of the teachers, surely by asking when you're close you will find it". (...) (Field Note, March 20th 2014).

The anecdote was part of my field notes describing the day I went to interview the retired teacher Luis R. I used it to introduce the section, making explicit that the

existence of a neighbourhood of teachers was a surprise for me as researcher. In addition, its function is to show a situation that only makes sense in the context of an ethnographic study, where having been there is a basic condition. Likewise, it helps to develop a genealogical study, because, from this perspective, the main task is to show the processes of emergence or descent of those practices that are part of certain regimes of truth. Different from other situations that could have been evocative enough, this one enabled me to illustrate in a simple way a practice – teachers' unions organising to live together – that is about to disappear completely.