'The Untouchables': Elite Schools, Privileges, and New Scenarios

"Los intocables": la educación escolar de las élites, sus privilegios y nuevos escenarios

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Abstract

Although there has been considerable interest in the Chilean education context in recent years, limited attention has been given to the specific educational experiences of social elites. As a starting point, this paper provides a systematic literature review of international and local research centered on the elites' school education. This review was based on relevant research published in the Web of Science, Scopus and Scielo databases between 2008 and 2018, as well as other documents and books identified as relevant to the subject. Overall, 104 texts were included in this review. The primary results suggest that there are critical mechanisms of (re)production of privilege and of social exclusion in the education of elites. Despite this closure, research demonstrates that small, yet significant, fissures have emerged. These have been triggered by globalization, the intensification of competition in educational markets, the reconfiguration of discourses about merit and privilege, and the demand for greater inclusion and equality. The analysis concludes that there is a pressing need to strengthen a research agenda in this domain regarding the Chilean experience to better inform educational policy-making.

Key words: education of elites, elite schools, elites, social closure, educational inequity, literature review, Chile.

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Resumen

La educación de las élites en el contexto chileno constituye un terreno escasamente estudiado, aunque ha emergido de forma incipiente en los últimos años. El principal objetivo de este artículo es ofrecer una revisión bibliográfica sistemática de los principales hallazgos de investigaciones internacionales y nacionales que abordan la educación escolar de las élites. Para esta revisión, se realizó una búsqueda en las bases de datos de Web of Science, Scopus y Scielo, entre los años 2008 a 2018, sumado a otros documentos y libros relevantes. En total, se examinaron 104 textos. Los principales resultados muestran los mecanismos de (re) producción de privilegios y de cierre social en la educación de las élites. No obstante, en el hermetismo de este segmento educativo, han emergido pequeñas aperturas en sus modelos de socialización, gatilladas por la globalización, la intensificación de la competencia de los mercados educativos, la reconfiguración de los discursos sobre el mérito y privilegio, y la demanda por una mayor inclusión e igualdad. El artículo concluye respecto de la necesidad de fortalecer una agenda de investigación en el área en Chile, así como abrir el debate sobre políticas educativas en este sector.

Palabras clave: educación de élite, colegios de élite, élites, inequidad escolar, revisión bibliográfica sistemática, Chile.

Introduction

The schools of the elites play a strategic role in the preservation and social closure of this segment. Investigating the education of these minority groups gives us an insight into the mechanisms and principles of their social and cultural formation and, in turn, contributes to the understanding of processes of segregation and inequality in a society.

In the case of Chile, the school system is considered to have one of the highest rates of segregation in the world (OECD, 2016a; Chmielewski & Savage, 2015; Valenzuela, Bellei, & De los Ríos, 2014). The evidence shows that students from the highest quintile of the population tend to be grouped mostly in private paid schools, representing some 8% of enrollment in the educational system (MINEDUC, 2018), with its financing depending exclusively on families and private contributions. Elite schools account for only a small number of these paid establishments.

In a context of competitive regulation of the school market, such as that in Chile, segregation and school hierarchies are intensified and, therefore, *local elite schools* emerge, even in small cities. However, this paper refers to the establishments that serve the children of a national elite, which concentrates the majority of the economic, political and intellectual power in the country.

According to a UNDP study (2017), the children of this Chilean elite are educated in just 14 educational establishments, all of which are located in the Metropolitan Region, representing 0.1% of the total number of schools. The evidence indicates that, between 1990 and 2016, some 75% of the country's ministers of state, 60% of senators, and 40% of representatives studied at one of these 14 schools (UNDP, 2017). Meanwhile, Zimmerman (2019) shows that 50% of the highest positions in Chilean companies are held by alumni from a sub-segment that studied at only nine elite schools (all of which are included in the 14 schools identified in the UNDP study). This is explained by the endogamous nature and cultural dynamics that Chilean elites have historically possessed, which have shaped social circuits to which access is restricted by themselves (Correa, 2004; Fischer, 2017). In the words of Rothkopf: "Chile is not a country but a country club" (2008, p. 57), access to which is largely made possible by passing through one of these so-called elite schools.

Despite the high concentration of power and influence of these small groups in Chilean society, there has been little study of the elites, although in recent years there has been a renewed interest in studying who comprises them and their reproduction mechanisms (Joignant & Güell, 2011; González-Bustamante, 2016). The lack of literature is even more pronounced when we consider educational institutions (Moya & Hernández, 2014; Madrid, 2016a). This reflects that discussing the elites and their privileges has been taboo in the country, but has been brought up in recent times, albeit only intermittently. In fact, this type of school has even managed to remain outside the reach of state regulations, as in the case of the School Inclusion Law № 20,845, which prohibits selection of students, charges made to families, and profit-making in school education (Ilabaca & Corvalán, 2020). Hence why this segment has been called *the untouchables*.

This aim of this paper is to present a systematic review of the international and Chilean literature on the school education of the elites. A total of 104 documents were reviewed. The paper concludes that, although these are institutions that seek to participate in the social closure of the elites, in recent years there have been small signs of changes and opening, triggered by globalization, the reconfiguration of discourses on merit and privilege, and the demand for greater inclusion and equality. This enables us to examine the Chilean case and propose new research questions on the topic.

Conceptual references: the education of the elites

Despite the polysemic nature of the concept, elites can be identified as minority groups that occupy privileged positions in the social structure and concentrate the greatest economic benefits, along with the highest proportions of power and social status (Hartmann, 2007; Khan, 2012). The status of the elite, therefore, is not exclusively due to the economic criterion, although it is relevant; it also responds to their capacity to influence and exercise power (Scott, 2008). This is observed in the ability they possess to propose, define, and guide models of society (Lipset & Solari, 1967; UNDP, 2004), that is to say, the way in which the economic, political, and cultural projects that shape the structures and institutions of a country will depend on the dominant ideas of this social segment to a large extent (Gárate, 2013; Undurraga, 2012).

At the same time, it is necessary to speak of elites in the plural, due to the differentiation of social systems in modern societies, which distinguish between political, economic, social, intellectual, and religious elites, for example (Hartmann, 2007; González-Bustamante, 2016). Finally, it is also necessary to consider their contextual nature, that is, they are constituted and understood differently depending on the sociohistorical context in which they are situated.

Through a complex network of relationships and mechanisms, these groups tend to seek to maintain social closure and intergenerational reproduction. In the words of Parkin (1979), this means:

> The process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a restricted number of eligibles. This entails the singling out of certain social or physical attributes as the justificatory basis such exclusion (p. 69).

Social closure basically involves the establishment of barriers and forms of exclusion of various natures—social, economic, cultural, moral—that separate the elite from the rest of society (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Closure, therefore, plays an important role in the reproduction of the elites, since it allows them not only to distinguish themselves on the basis of economic capital, but also through cultural, moral, and historical-symbolic mechanisms—hence the importance, for example, of the surname (Thumala, 2007; Bowen, 2015).

One of the main contributions of sociology of education since the second half of the 20th century has been to demonstrate the role of the school as a reproducer of inequalities, questioning the collective imaginary about the school as the institution called upon to reduce the influence of one's social origin (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Derouet, 1992; Draelants, 2018). The role played by elite educational institutions in reproducing inequalities is considerable. Despite the multiple policies for democratization and inclusion implemented in various educational systems around the world, inequality has now acquired new dynamics, tending not to reproduce itself vertically, that is, by the educational level attained, but especially horizontally, according to the type of institution attended (Euriat & Thélot, 1995; Merle, 2009). This is why these schools play a strategic role for the elites.

The conceptual definition of this type of establishments is not without difficulties. Among the pioneering works in this field, some have used a definition based on the cost of the establishments or ranking of schools based on results (Kamens, 1974; Cookson & Persell, 2008). In more recent works, other researchers have attempted to provide a better account of the specific characteristics that distinguish them: Van Zanten (2010), reviewing the models of elite schools in the United Kingdom, the United States, and France, argues that that they have socialization practices oriented towards distinction and management of power, high internal cohesion, reduced size, and strong selectivity barriers (preferably academic or economic). Based on the model of elite boarding schools in the United States, Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) also describes the main constitutive characteristics of these institutions, which are: their independent status (self-governance, self-sufficiency, self-definition of the curriculum and educational project, etc.); a scholastic-type curriculum, that is, broad and sophisticated; they receive historical elites, which translates into the existence of social networks (social capital); their physical nature and location; and the characteristics of the population, which translates into the children of the elites attending these schools.

At the same time, there are approaches of a relational nature. Khan (2015) contends that elite schools are the institutions in the educational system of each country that have access to the largest amounts of resources (material, symbolic, social) and are able to use them. Following the relational approach, but from a reproductionist perspective, Moya and Hernández (2014) state that the elite status of a school is a product of the composition of its student body and community. In this respect, "what truly distinguishes a school as elite is that the elite chooses it to educate their children" (p. 67). Finally, Kenway and Koh (2015) contend that what distinguishes an elite school is its high degrees of selectivity and exclusivity.

Going beyond a precise definition, these institutions are spaces of exclusivity that allow their members—students and their families—to access and participate in an accumulation of symbolic, social, and cultural capital, which contribute to maintaining their position of advantage and the social closure of this segment. However, all of this is not sufficient if the circumstantial and historical elites do not consider these establishments as being worthy of receiving their children.

Methodology: Systematic Bibliographic Review

A systematic literature review leads to the construction of new knowledge. It does not simply attempt to summarize or restate everything that has been said in the scientific literature, but rather to understand and map out the field. It is the construction of a literature review matrix on a given topic, in which one reads, listens, organizes, contrasts, and learns from what has already been researched through critical examination (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Rodseth & Marais, 2015; Petticrew, 2015).

A systematic review can have different objectives and approaches. In this paper, from a comprehensive point of view, we do not seek to answer *what works* or test a particular hypothesis, but rather—more openly—to understand *what happens*, as Petticrew (2015) suggests. The crucial thing, in this respect, is to examine the main findings on a topic of study, their differences, and the gaps in the literature reviewed.

The aim of this review is to analyze the literature on elite education in school systems. We defined a series of search terms: elite, elite education, elite schools, selective schools, and upper class. The period investigated covered 10 years, from 2008 to 2018, in order to examine up-to-date literature in English, French, and Spanish. We conducted the search in the Web of Science, Scopus, and Scielo databases, which ensure quality procedures to safeguard the scientific standards of their publications. After the first search, we created a filter by reading the abstracts of each paper and excluding those in which the education of elites was not part of the central purpose of the research, or those which referred to higher education. To this corpus we manually added theses, books, and papers prior to the period studied that we considered to be particularly relevant to the area of study. In total, 104 documents were reviewed, divided into 89 papers, 14 books and one thesis.

We processed the data in three phases. First, each document was registered; then the literature was classified by geography, methodological and theoretical approach, and the topics addressed; and finally the results were systematized transversally in three emerging categories: i) access to privilege: selection, and exclusion; ii) community formation, membership, and ethos; and iii) educational project and curriculum.

Results: Review of the Literature on the School Education of the Elites

The pioneering studies on elite education were mainly carried out in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States and Europe (particularly in France), such as those by Kamens (1974), Levine (1980), Cookson and Persell (1991), Vicinus (1988), Bourdieu (1989), Delamont (1989), de Saint Martin (1990). Most of these were focused on the mechanisms of selection and exclusivity of these educational establishments, along with the description of socialization oriented towards the management of power, social distinction, and moral superiority, both at the school and in higher education.

A second wave of studies emerged in the 2000s, based on protests by social movements in various countries against social inequality, abuses, and privileges; the implementation of policies that promote greater social/ethnic/racial inclusion; and cultural changes in the elites themselves (adoption of discourses on meritocracy and inclusion, global elites, etc.). In addition to studies that appeared in the United States and France, this phase included research in the United Kingdom, as well as in other former British colonies, such as Australia, Singapore, India, etc.

In the words of Kenway and Koh (2015), these studies led to a *new agenda* of research and debate regarding elite schools, focusing on how these institutions seek to legitimize themselves or adapt to these new contexts. The research questions inquire into how these schools have adapted in contexts of increased competition, as a result of national educational markets (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995; Rizvi, 2014; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016), the adjustment of these colleges considering global competition (Tholen, Brown, Power, & Allouch, 2013; Brooks & Waters, 2015; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016), and the tensions and changes in light of demands for more democratic, inclusive, and fair education systems (Khan, 2011, 2015; Howard, 2010; van Zanten, Ball, & Darchy-Koechlin, 2015). The questions and approaches that come with this *new agenda* also entail a change in how the role of elite schools is understood, not only as reproductive entities, but also with the capacity for agency in school market systems: the quest for self-presentation, differentiation, and positioning.

Although this literature review focused on the school level, it is interesting to note that the literature shows differences between countries depending on the educational systems. In the United States and England, the studies tend to focus on both the school and university systems, while in France they center mainly on the Grandes Écoles in the higher education system, where the elites are educated. In Latin America, on the other hand, there is a strong tendency to study the elite schools, since they tend to have greater relevance in their formation.

Although there is a study on private education in Chile by Brahm, Cariola, and Silva, published in 1971, as well as some research that indirectly addresses this educational subsystem (Thumala, 2007), the few studies focused on school education appeared at the end of the 2000s and in the early 2010s, as we will show below.

Table 1 shows a descriptive summary of the results of the literature review, displaying the origin of the main studies that have addressed the education of elites, the methodologies used, and the principal topics covered by these studies.

Table 1
Summary of the bibliographic review

Dimensions	Sub-dimension	Nº of publications (total 104)
Location of studies	North America (English-speaking)	20
	Latin America	24 (Chile 7)
	Europe	46
	Oceania	14
Methodology used	Experimental study/meta-analysis	6
	Qualitative methodology	67
	Quantitative methodology	2
	Mixed methodology	29
Topics researched	Access to privilege: selection and exclusion	32
	Formation of community, membership, and ethos	39
	Educational project and curriculum	33

Source: Prepared by the authors.

A general approach to the results of this study first shows the existence of a research agenda concentrated among a relatively small number of researchers in Europe and the United States, such as Kenway, Maxwell, or van Zanten. In Latin America, Argentina leads the production of texts addressing this topic, showing an increasing interest in the subject, followed by Brazil and Chile to a lesser degree.

Most of the studies analyzed have been carried out in the field of the sociology of education and have mainly used qualitative or mixed methodologies. The main themes addressed by these studies are mechanisms of access and exclusion, community formation and membership, and the educational project and curriculum.

The literature review also shows that this is a research field that displays somewhat convergent results (unlike other fields of study). This is probably due to the fact that this area of research comes from the sociology of education, having common theoretical and methodological frameworks. This is also because the elites have used structurally similar mechanisms and practices, which makes it possible to find analogous dynamics and logics in schools in different countries and contexts.

The results of the literature review are shown below; first, we present the results of the international review and then those of the national review.

International literature: exclusivity, socialization, and new scenarios

The main findings of the international literature review show that education is a crucial factor in the (re) production of the elites, since educational institutions seek to guarantee spaces of internal homogeneity by means of various mechanisms. On the other hand, the social closure, which seems persistent and hermetic, is combined with new social and political pressures that have permeated and changed these educational institutions, although they still have limited degrees of openness and inclusion. The results of the literature review are shown below, in accordance with the four dimensions specified in the methodological section.

Access to privilege: selection and exclusion

One of the main mechanisms of social closure that we can draw from the literature reviewed is seen in the link between the barriers to entry established by elite schools and the preferences of elite families in terms of where to educate their children. Charging high fees to families is one of the primary mechanisms of selection and social closure (Stevens, 2009). In addition, studies on these institutions in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom show that another distinguishing feature of these schools is their physical closure, as they are usually located in remote areas with little access to public transportation. These characteristics also include the size of the schools and the small number of places they offer, along with other recruitment mechanisms, such as giving priority for places to the siblings of students or the children of alumni, as found by Kenway and Koh (2013) in an ethnographic study in several elite schools in Commonwealth nations, and by Faguer (1991) in a Jesuit school in Paris.

For their part, the families have a series of strategies that reinforce these segregation mechanisms by means of school choice. Van Zanten et al. (2015) state that the educational strategies of elite families involve selecting schools in accordance with their status of *excellence* and by being members of an exclusive community, among *similars*. The ways in which they choose schools, the authors suggest, are not totally different from those followed by middle-class families, although the difference tends to operates in the broad abilities and advantages implemented by elite families. These abilities are economic (being able to pay for access); social networks, being able to join the educational community; and geographic, being able to locate themselves in privileged areas.

In addition, Gessaghi (2015) argues that the choice of schools by elite families in Argentina is associated with the transfer of certain values (mainly Catholic), rather than with quality education. In another study in the same country, Ziegler (2016) adds that the choice criteria are embedded into various levels, one being the search for social homogeneity, and then giving way to the internal political, cultural, and ideological orientations and distinctions of the elites.

Along with school choice, there is a series of long-term family strategies that successfully conduct students to elite positions (Nespor, 2014; Tiramonti, Ziegler, & Gessaghi, 2008). These family strategies imply that the production of elites is not merely subject to an educational institution, but to a whole process of support and socialization that begins at birth, such as extracurricular activities outside school, private teachers, visits to museums, the development of reading, among others, which has been demonstrated in various countries (Deppe, Maxwell, Krüger, & Helsper, 2018; Brandão, 2007; Faguer, 1991).

Nevertheless, the social closure described above is neither absolute nor static over time. Due to social, political, and cultural changes in recent decades, elite schools (and universities) have opened themselves up to accepting students from outside these sectors. The evidence reviewed shows that these changes usually occur on the basis of two logics: i) democratization via mechanisms for positive discrimination in admissions, as in certain

elite boarding schools in the United States with racial minorities (Cookson & Persell, 1991)[1], or ii) academic democratization, where part or all of the enrollment offered by these institutions is determined by entrance exams for applicants rather than by fees (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995; van Zanten et al., 2015).

The incorporation of inclusion mechanisms in these institutions is not only constitutive of the new agenda on how they adapt and legitimize themselves, but has also meant a cultural reconfiguration of the legitimization of elites based on the meritocratic discourse. This has led to a resignification of privilege, which is shifting from an ascribed status (inheritance, wealth, lineage) to one determined by merit (Baker, 2018) and the ability to perform in the face of various new contexts faced by the elites (globalization, democracy, migration, high competition, etc.), as shown by Khan (2011) in his ethnography in an elite boarding school in the United States.

This relative opening of the selection and inclusion mechanisms to other social sectors can thus be understood in terms of two opposing logics; they are changes that respond to reflective processes on the part of the elites regarding the need to move towards more inclusive and heterogeneous spaces or, instead, they respond to strategies of legitimization (Khan, 2015). In any case, these changes have not resulted in a significant increase in the enrollment of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and, even in increasingly competitive contexts such as the case of France, the degree of social mixing has been reduced (van Zanten et al., 2015).

"Us": membership, community, and ethos

Within the establishments, a sense of community and membership is created, which, as Gessaghi (2013) states, implies the construction of a *we* as a practice of identification that consequently creates relations of inclusion and exclusion. High selectivity, influenced by religious and military traditions, generates bonds of belonging and distinction (van Zanten, 2010; Gessaghi, 2013; van Zanten et al., 2015).

In Australia, Drew, Gottschall, Wardman, and Saltmarsh (2016) argue that students, when entering elite schools, gain the social status and cultural capital that the schools have accumulated over time, hallmarks that accompany them for the rest of their lives ("I *am* ... [appellation of the school"]). The authors' findings show that attending an elite school does not only entail obtaining a formal education, but also the acquisition of identity and access to a network of influence and power. In the narratives studied, going to these schools provides a specific *way of life* that ratifies an image of success and privilege. This ethos operates as the collective bases of a mode of identification and protection of the social class (Ball, 2003). Exclusion mechanisms guarantee interaction between homogeneous people, and extend and reinforce the social-economic-political networks of the students and their families, in addition to sharing the historical-symbolic capital that these establishments possess.

The institutional narratives, common symbols, discourses of triumph and self-celebration, and social activities operate as strong relational bonds between members (Bourdieu, 1989; van Zanten, 2010; Kenway & Koh, 2013). This sense of community includes students and alumni, and members of different segments of the elite; such as the intellectual and business elite, the aristocratic elite, and the emerging elite. Membership practices also become strategic when schools adopt admission mechanisms that allow some degree of social inclusion. The spirit or ethos of the institution erases the differences between the students (and alumni), and builds distances from *the others*, as observed by Maxwell and Aggleton (2010).

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1. At university level, the case of Sciences Po is an emblematic example: in 2000, the Institut d'études politiques de Paris (Paris Institute of Political Studies) created admission quotas based on criteria of inclusion and positive discrimination (Fernández-Vavrik, Pirone, & van Zanten, 2018).

These schools construct educational environments where "everything seems to be intelligent" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009b, p. 67), that is to say, there is a certain way of proceeding and operating marked by concepts such as excellence. This occurs together with an atmosphere of moral superiority with respect to other social groups (Gessaghi, 2013). Furthermore, in a more covert way, there is cultural and ideological work regarding privilege and power, a process of concealment and naturalization of privilege, conceiving their successes as something innate and meritorious (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009b; Howard, 2010). However, in his ethnography at St. Paul's (a North American boarding school), Khan (2011) shows that, although elite students constantly evoke long working hours and the high demands to which they are subjected, this operates at a discursive-ideological level and he was unable to demonstrate that the school's students did actually study and work more than students at other schools in the country.

In spite of this, while networks and belonging are a central feature of educational communities, teachers' membership of this community is problematic, and they may be excluded because they do not belong to this elite (Ziegler, 2016). Class asymmetries also create tensions regarding how teachers carry out their work, given that they perform their duties under the constant supervision and demands of the parents, and the expectations they have of their children at school (Kenway, 2018). Similarly, high levels of commitment and selfless dedication are required of these teachers. In the words of Deppe and colleagues (2018), they "oblige teachers to undertake intense intellectually and emotionally labour, to put in work hours, to offer much one-on-one teaching, caring and counselling" (p. 100). Therefore, the differentiated status exercised by students and families in schools has effects on the teachers' work and how they relate to the school community.

Formation of the elite individual: educational projects and curriculum

Historically, in countries such as the United States and United Kingdom, as well as in Latin America, elite schools have tended to be religious educational projects and to offer gender-segregated education, that is, either for boys or girls (Charles, 2013). In addition, these schools have traditionally taught the cultural codes of developed Western countries and are usually bi- or trilingual (particularly those in non-English speaking countries) (de Mejía, 2002).

A large part of the literature tends to agree that these schools have broad curricula, covering different knowledge and also various areas of human development (sports, arts, languages, etc.), aimed at developing analytical skills, conceptualization, and work for leadership (Anyon, 1980; Gaztambide-Fernández (2009b). We therefore observe the existence of a normative imaginary of the *Renaissance man*, that is, one who must be able to function in multiple spaces of society (knowledge, arts, sports), but also with the preparation to handle themselves naturally, as Khan (2011) would say, in spaces of privilege and power management (see also Watters, 2016; Rivera, 2016; Cookson & Persell, 2008).

Another of the constitutive elements of the elites' educational projects entails providing charitable services. These activities of solidarity with and support of the less fortunate are a central factor in the moral superiority of the elites as groups that solve problems, either local or global. Nowadays, these practices are not only seen as an element of the leadership and accountability of this sector, but also imply that elite schools decide which problems are worthy of being addressed. This operates as a contemporary colonial logic (Kenway & Fahey, 2015), where *showing solidarity* also enables the students to obtain personal benefits when applying to universities or the labor market (Sriprakash, Qi, & Singh, 2017).

On the other hand, the education of the elites has involved gender configurations from a traditional-conservative perspective. Studies by Delamont (1989) and Kenway (1990) in Scotland and Australia, respectively, show how the daughters of the elites are educated normatively, with the notion of respectability taking center stage. However, there have been changes within certain limits and continuities with the past. These can be observed in the works of de Saint Martin (1990) in France and Charles (2013) in Australia. In the latter country, an ethnographic

study was conducted in an elite college, observing how the process of identity construction and empowerment is marked by the tension between old elements of femininity (from the home) and new dynamics resulting from post-feminist and neoliberal ideas of sexuality and women's empowerment. An elite feminine identity has thus been constituted as a complex process in which women must appear to be successful and responsible citizens, but always safeguarding their *sexual innocence* (see also Allan & Charles, 2014; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010).

In the case of the construction of elite masculinity, this has been changing in order to embody what the nation demands (Cookson & Persell, 2008) and the new global contexts of great competitiveness (Khan, 2011). Research in this area has found how hegemonic masculinities comprise a duality between the physical facet of the man, where sport plays a fundamental role (the winning, warrior, and competitive man) and the intellectual aspect, in which he must distinguish himself (preferably in the areas of mathematics and science) to fulfill his role as a family provider and as being self-sufficient (Goh, 2015; Yeo, 2016).

Lastly, a group of emerging studies have studied how the institutions that educate the elites have adapted to new market dynamics and global circuits (Kenway & Fahey, 2014; Rizvi, 2014; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016). In these cases, adaptation has a background of survival and shelter from national or international market contexts, which—as with the resignification of privilege—means breaking away from historical logics and narratives, redefining their identities and tensions with the educational communities. Therefore, studies such as those by Perosa, Lebaron, and Leite (2015) in Brazil, Rizvi (2014) in India, and Maxwell and Aggleton (2016) in England, observe how market dynamics oblige schools to change the way in which they present themselves, appealing not only to the formation of an aristocratic elite, but also the incorporation of narratives on merit, the training of excellence (showing, for example, results on standardized tests), and incorporation into global educational alliances. This also creates tensions with educational communities, particularly with former students.

Brooks and Waters (2015) studied the way in which schools adapt to internationalization, as distinctive symbolism and marketing of the school, in addition to the transmission of social capital for the formation of students. Although these institutions develop plans and links with universities and schools in other countries, in practice their dissemination is low, ultimately highlighting aspects typical of the identity rather than global education and transnational educational networks (see Nogueira & Aguiar, 2008; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016). It is therefore found that cosmopolitanism, or global capital, operates mainly as a mechanism of distinction in competitive contexts, rather than the generation of curriculum and the formation of a global individual.

Review of the literature in Chile

As we have stated, studies addressing the education of the elites in Chile are emergent and sparse. However, based on those that were reviewed, it should be noted that the composition of elite schools has historically varied in the country. In the 19th and 20th centuries, this group consisted of emblematic public high schools and certain private schools in Santiago (Ilabaca, Falabella, & Madero-Cabib, 2020). The split from public education began to occur with the processes of massification of the school system, particularly during the Frei Montalva government in the mid-1960s. On the one hand, the expansion and popularization of school education triggered the migration of the liberal elite from the emblematic high schools to private schools with liberal projects (secular or progressive Catholic).

On the other hand, a division was created between the conservative elites of that time with historical Catholic congregations in the country (Jesuits and Sacred Hearts) that supported the agrarian reform and were linked to more progressive movements within the Catholic Church[2]. In this case, conservative Catholic

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2. Which can be observed in the encyclicals Rerum Novarum (1891) and Quadragesimo Anno (1931); the Second Vatican Council (1959); and the influence of the theology of liberation.

families tended to prefer schools linked to new congregations that arrived during the dictatorship, such as Opus Dei or the Legionaries of Christ, thus producing a differentiation within the private paid school segment (Aguilar, 2011; Ilabaca & Corvalán, 2020).

The current elite schools in Chile are private and have various practices of exclusivity and segregation. The location of these establishments in the wealthiest districts of the country sets an important precedent of geographic segregation (a phenomenon that complements the explanation of the elites' abandonment of public high schools). In addition to the high tuition fees, there are a number of other costs (enrollment fees, travel, materials), which reach sums of around USD 20,000 per year per student (Madrid, 2016a).

In accordance with what has been observed in the international literature, most elite schools have sophisticated mechanisms of selection, which are either academic (admission exams) or social, posing challenges even for elite families (Carrasco, Falabella, & Tironi, 2016; Gayo, Otero, & Méndez, 2019). Despite their high cost, it is interesting that, comparatively, these establishments do not achieve outstanding scores compared with the other OECD countries (2016b). Therefore, the cost is not necessarily associated with higher educational quality, but rather with elements of distinction and social closure.

The choice criteria respond to identification with certain segments of the elite (e.g., conservative/liberal, secular/religious, associated with a language and country, etc.) to which families feel they belong or to which they aspire to belong (Bellei, Contreras, Canales, & Orellana, 2019). These are the micro distinctions within the elite itself, that is to say, lateral and intraclass social closure, and not interclass, as argued by Carrasco, Falabella, and Tironi (2016). According to the international research, evidence in Chile regarding the role of families is not only limited to the choice of schools, but also to the support process, which, as shown by Gubbins (2014), consists of various pedagogical (private teachers) and extracurricular (sports, recreational, etc.) educational strategies.

Another aspect on which research has begun to focus entails the internal socialization dynamics of these schools. Madrid (2016b) observes that elite male schools tend to form and reproduce dominant masculinities, which are characterized by a hierarchical relationship and subordination of the female sex and other masculinities not considered legitimate, which also intersects with the social class factor. Meanwhile, Astudillo (2016) investigated the acceptance of homosexuality in elite Catholic schools. In this study, the researcher showed that, although the schools tend to have an attitude of acceptance towards homosexuality, it has a paternalistic nature, while the vision of a heteronormative family is communicated as the desirable life project.

More generally, some studies suggest that socialization in these schools transmits a work ethic (Thumala, 2007), a managerial type of curriculum (Madrid, 2016a), and interaction with low-income sectors of the welfare sector, which some authors have called minimalist or social work (Madrid, 2016a).

Therefore, the literature on elite schools in Chile, despite being somewhat sparse, shows high consistency with what is observed in the international literature; that is, they are highly homogeneous spaces, with a socialization based on the "superior academic and moral construction with respect to other schools" (Moya & Hernández, 2014, p.72). There is also evidence of the existence of narratives, such as the formation of a *community* or *family*, which enables these institutions to build loyalty in small niches, guarantee social closure, and reinforce discourses of self-celebration and symbolic capital. However, there are still several areas to continue researching in the country, which entail the new transformations and demands currently made towards the elites.

Conclusions: "The untouchables" and the new scenarios which they face

Understanding the elites entails understanding the systems of privilege and inequality in a society, hence their importance. In this paper, based on a systematic literature review, the various mechanisms of (re)production of privilege and social closure in the education of the elites can be seen across the board in the national and international literature. However, the international literature reviewed offers hints of the emergence of small openings and reconfigurations in certain aspects of their socialization and in their role in the creation of processes of social distinction.

In the context of societies whose normative horizons are democracy and merit as vectors of narratives, in addition to the increasing imposition of market and competition logics in educational systems, elite schools have had to carry out processes of adaptation, either in self-defense or as legitimization in the face of public questioning, or as part of internal processes of reflection and self-questioning. This has even meant disrupting elements of the school's socialization processes, such as the conception and meaning of privilege. Therefore, *the untouchables* have had to become more accessible and open themselves up, although these new movements and fissures are still limited and have been little investigated in Chile.

In this respect, the country is facing a challenge regarding studies of the education of the elites; this is not only a consequence of the intense social protests in recent times (the "Penguin Revolution"[3] in 2006, the university movement in 2011, and the social uprising in 2019, among others), but also due to the configuration of an educational system that started implementing anti-segregation measures after the School Inclusion Law (2015), while private paid establishments remain unaffected by these national regulations.

Because of this, it is necessary to consolidate a research agenda in this area in Chile, and investigate how the controversies and demands seen in recent years have affected these schools, observing their types of reactions and possible processes of internal reconfiguration. This agenda should also help inform the debate on the ways in which these schools can collaborate in building a more equitable and inclusive education system.

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