School Principals Faced to the School Inclusion Law in Chile: Between Engagement, Conformity and Resistance

Directoras y directores escolares frente a la Ley de Inclusión Escolar en Chile: entre compromiso, conformismo y resistencia

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of a study carried out in Chile on the attitudes of principals to the School Inclusion Law, legislation that promotes the desegregation of schools and which went into force in 2016. Considering the approach of inclusive leadership and social justice, the study was conducted based on an online survey of 157 principals from four cities. Because of its exploratory nature, the study followed a non-experimental quantitative design with a descriptive scope. The results show that principals agree with the provisions of this policy, but they anticipate that they will have problems due to the lack of training of teachers and the tensions involved in implementing inclusion policies in the context of a school system that measures quality based on results on standardized tests. Therefore, school principals show *commitment* to the principles of the policy, but, at the same time, they demonstrate *conformity* with and *resistance* to its more specific implications, since they do not believe that it structurally changes the operating logic of their schools.

Keywords: School inclusion; educational leadership; social justice; desegregation, educational policy

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Resumen

El artículo comunica los resultados de una investigación realizada en Chile sobre las disposiciones de directoras y directores frente a la Ley de Inclusión Escolar, regulación que promueve la desegregación escolar y que comenzó en 2016. Considerando el enfoque del liderazgo inclusivo y de justicia social, el estudio se construyó a partir de una encuesta en línea a 157 directoras/es de cuatro ciudades. Dado su carácter exploratorio, se siguió un diseño cuantitativo no experimental con un alcance descriptivo. Los resultados muestran que las y los directores comparten los principios de esta política, pero prevén que tendrán problemas por la falta de capacitación de las y los profesores y por las tensiones que supone implementar políticas de inclusión en un sistema escolar que mide la calidad a partir de pruebas estandarizadas. Se propone que las y los directores manifiestan *compromiso* con los principios de la política, pero a la vez un *conformismo y resistencia* con sus implicancias más específicas, pues no aprecian que esta modifique las lógicas de funcionamiento de sus escuelas.

Palabras clave: Inclusión escolar; liderazgo educativo; justicia social; desegregación, política educativa.

Introduction

The School Inclusion Law (LIE by the Spanish acronym) is an educational policy that started being implemented in Chile in 2016. It is focused on eradicating the market barriers that have segregated Chilean education in recent decades. Specifically, it is intended to regulate the Chilean education market that was created in the early 1980s during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, which has endured until the present day. This market was organized on the basis of free provision of education administered by municipalities and private education provision subsidized by the state, which was allowed to make profits and also receive co-payments from families. Various studies have shown that Chile is a country with high levels of school segregation (OECD, 2018; Murillo & Martínez-Garrido, 2017; Santos & Elacqua, 2017; Arcidiácono et al., 2014; Bellei, 2013; Elacqua, 2012; Mineduc, 2012). The measures proposed under the LIE include OECD recommendations to address school segregation, maintaining a balance between individual freedom of school choice and the social equality necessary to ensure less unequal and more cohesive societies (OECD, 2012). These measures are: a) eliminating the possibility of charging tuition and monthly fees to families, b) prohibiting the selection of students at all levels from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade, c) preventing the withdrawal of profits by school administrators, and d) restricting the expulsion of students only to cases of extreme violence that seriously affect the safety of the school community (BCN, 2014). This policy applies to all educational establishments, whether public or private, that receive contributions from the state, which represent 91.7% of the total number of schools in Chile (Mineduc, 2017). Private schools that are not subsidized are not subject to these regulations (with the exception of point d). It also establishes certain exceptions regarding school selection, making the criterion more flexible when it comes to establishments with a particular educational project (sports, artistic, etc.) or establishments known as emblematic high schools, which have a 30% quota to select students from the seventh grade onwards.

The agenda of the LIE stems from the demands of the 2011 student movement against the various exclusions and stratifying consequences of the Chilean school market, as well as the degradation of public schools under the current governance model. The broad public support for the student movement at that time motivated the educational reform conducted by Michelle Bachellet's second government (2014-2018), which endorsed the demands for free education, and an end to profit-making and segregation (Castillo, 2017).

Considering the issues regulated by the LIE, it can be considered a desegregation policy which, on the one hand, promotes social mixing in schools, since it gradually eliminates socioeconomic barriers to access all schools (Ayed, 2015). On the other, it favors school justice, since it equitably distributes the possibilities of accessing a state-subsidized school with the aim of constructing diverse communities in which there are no disparities in discrimination (Ryan, 2006).

From the perspective of school principals, these changes are a challenge for their management and leadership, since the LIE not only changes specific school practices by centralizing admissions processes, de-privatizing the source of economic resources and preventing withdrawal of profits, but it also emphasizes school culture by modernizing the notion of school inclusion in the educational system, promoting the acceptance of student diversity, and moving away from the model of integration linked exclusively to the attention of special educational needs. From this viewpoint, it is essential to know what school principals think about a policy of this kind in order to understand their attitudes to legislation that promotes desegregation and, at the same time, to examine the difficulties they experience or expect in the context of the new requirements of this public policy. This study is based on the assumption that the ways in which school principals address a policy that promotes desegregation and social justice affect their interpretation of this policy and the way they communicate it in the school. Therefore, knowing the attitudes of principals in the early implementation of this policy allows us to demonstrate the relationship between public policies and the forms of appropriation that school actors make of them.

Theoretical Framework

Inclusive leadership to promote desegregation and social justice

In recent decades, schools have seen growing diversity emerge within their classrooms. The student population has become an increasingly heterogeneous group in terms of nationalities, ethnicities, abilities, language, socioeconomic status, and gender. The existence of this diversity has challenged traditional educational systems to respond to demands for justice and recognition of the subjects. In this scenario, leadership for social inclusion suggests that school principals should critically consider the social inequality produced by the school system (Oplatka & Arar, 2015), which means moving away from the focus on academic achievement required by school systems and providing more time and importance to the moral and ethical development of the subjects. In this vein, Ryan (2006) states that leadership has emerged as a relevant factor when making efforts to improve schools, and that it should focus more on moral objectives such as social justice. The challenges of current schools are related to the citizenship and morality of the children, in order to promote better living conditions for increasingly multicultural populations. School leadership oriented towards inclusion and social justice makes civic and democratic education the focus of the school's educational objectives (Ryan, 2006).

Oplatka and Arar (2015) present a proposal for the principal's leadership that is oriented towards inclusion and social justice, the basis of which lies in the formation of a management team that has critical awareness of oppression, exclusion, and marginalization; in other words, a team that has an opinion on and an awareness of which institutional practices favor certain groups over others in a school or territory. This awareness, according to the authors, makes it possible to promote a school culture that is organized around goals such as the value of justice in relation to personal interactions and the individual in the school, in order to allow everyone's voice to be heard, respect for a wide variety of cultural and social expectations, and appreciation for the participation of students' communities, which can gradually involve teachers and students, among other things.

Meanwhile, Capper and Young (2014) identify the areas of action for school principals that promote the creation of more inclusive communities. In first place, they aim to consolidate agreement on the meaning of inclusion/ integration, which should be the guiding element of all policies and practices aimed at eliminating educational inequalities in schools. This consensus on the use and meaning of the term inclusion is particularly relevant to have clear educational goals that are shared by the entire community. The second aim is to transform student learning into the main objective of the principal's work. The authors argue that, although academic achievement is only one aspect of student wellbeing and that educational practice should be related to transformation of the community, in the long term it is necessary to train students who are able to read, write, and communicate at the level expected for their age or, even more importantly, to ensure that they have considerable educational and life opportunities. Civic education is inseparable from academic training that allows subjects to mobilize similar capabilities in different contexts. The third area of action is to be aware of the wide range of differences of their students and the intersections of these differences, such as their differing abilities, race, sexual orientation, gender, and linguistic diversity. Finally, they also contend that it is important to understand the promotion of justice as a collective effort among school principals, teams of teachers, and members of the community. Inclusive leadership is therefore explicitly oriented towards achieving social justice.

These premises are essentially normative, as they propose certain purposes and objectives of leadership aimed at social justice. However, in empirical terms, various studies have revealed the tensions faced by principals in efforts to contribute to inclusion and social justice in schools. For example, Archambault and Richer (2014) describe the implementation of a support program (Supporting Montreal Schools Program, SMSP) in schools in Quebec province, Canada, the aim of which was to end injustices—targeting teaching and learning against racist and classist biases and beliefs—and improve learning outcomes. The authors state that most principals lack a specific conceptualization of inclusion and social justice. They acknowledge that they have not had the opportunity or the conditions to reflect on this subject in their training and their management careers. Another study demonstrates that principals who have political awareness oriented towards promoting greater inclusion and justice spend a lot of time having difficult conversations about the meaning of pedagogical actions, creating awareness among teachers, identifying barriers to implement alternative ideas, and understanding and appreciating differences, among other things (Bogotch & Reyes-Guerra, 2014). In these cases, it is easier to observe discourse oriented towards inclusion and justice in the school, rather than a school management plan that proposes a different logic of school organization.

In the same vein, Theoharis (2010) points to significant barriers or resistance faced by school principals in terms of the reactions within the school and from the district and administration. There is not always agreement between the objectives of the school principal and the priorities of those who administer the school system in a given area. Ryan (2010) observes similar problems, noting that the implementation of inclusive practices tends to involve difficulties and impediments, such as extremely hierarchical systems; resistance from colleagues, parents, and students; quasi-market environments; and high workloads.

Ryan's (2010) study helps to acknowledge that the promotion of inclusion and social justice is a complex process that requires certain internal conditions in the school, but also the alignment of the public agencies that administer schools and the policies that regulate them. In this respect, he argues that it is highly incompatible to promote inclusion policies in educational systems that measure quality through standardized tests and establish related rewards and punishments. This is a real example of the differences that can be seen between leaders at different levels of management of the school system, a tension that affects a significant part of school systems at present.

In the literature there is a normative approach to inclusive leadership oriented towards social justice that prescribes and recommends actions and attitudes of principals and school leaders regarding this subject. Meanwhile, the case studies, located in a variety of contexts, allow us to identify the differences between what has been

recommended and the implementation of inclusive leadership. With respect to this point, it is necessary to look specifically at the weight of the attitudes and opinions of principals in the processes of implementing actions that can promote greater inclusion and justice in schools.

Attitudes of principals towards a desegregation policy that promotes social justice in the school

Implementation of educational policies is conditioned by a series of factors, including the material and professional resources for their implementation, local support systems for schools, their connections to other policies that affect the school, and the capacity of central government and intermediate bodies to communicate their purposes, as well as by the interpretation and translation of the policy by the school actors themselves (Draelants, 2018). Considering this latter factor, principals are key actors in understanding educational policies. Principals translate policies into practices and actions depending on the positions they hold and the resources they manage. Molla and Gale (2018) propose that principals faced with implementing policies to promote school equity and justice use different strategies and tactics to translate them into the language of school management and, at the same time, to work on them with their communities. Based on empirical studies carried out in Australian schools, the authors contend that principals translate policy with different attitudes, which are supported by specific tactics and depend on their contexts of practice. They propose that there are three characteristic attitudes: conformity, commitment, or resistance.

Conformity exists when a policy is assumed with passivity or resignation, that is to say, when principals mobilize a logic of conformity (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). This attitude is usually associated with principals who work in highly disadvantaged contexts and who believe that they have insufficient resources to implement laws based on social justice agendas, and even more so if they are not associated with new budgets. There may be relative agreement with the principles of a policy, but the perception that it will not have a major impact on the quality of learning and life of students is more important. In these cases, principals assume the new regulations as another job among their tasks, but without the conviction that the policy will lead to important changes in their context. Capper and Young (2014) project that, in these cases, it is probably that whoever leads the school does not reflect on the scope of social justice and, therefore, cannot lead inclusive processes because they have not formed a network of concepts that enable them to work on these processes in their management.

Meanwhile, an attitude associated with commitment refers to a certain alignment between the principles of a policy and the values or political opinions of a principal. It is probable that, if the principal has some kind of academic background in issues of inclusion and social justice, this alignment will be more favorable and will be facilitated. Commitment does not mean that the principal accepts everything that is included in the policy, but rather that the principles it promotes are aligned with his or her prior beliefs and what they consider feasible and important to implement in their school (Lipsky, 2010). There is a certain agreement between the public policy proposal and the way in which the principal conceives of their work as a school leader, which favors their identification with the state's agenda of inclusion or justice.

Finally, an attitude of resistance or criticism refers to suspicions that may be aroused in principals by the contradictions between the principles promoted by a social justice policy and the resources with which they are provided to implement them. A policy that promotes a desegregating or inclusive rhetoric can cause new frustrations if the school lacks the resources or networks to implement it or mobilize the expected effects. In this case, unlike the attitude of conformity, the principal interprets the policy as a regulation that is impossible to implement or whose implementation can be postponed, because it does not fit into the reality of their school. This type of attitude reinforces the position that laws are imposed from the top down, that is to say, mandated by state authorities to schools, excluding the opinions of school actors and ignoring their real priorities (Molla & Gale, 2018).

Methodology

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, we used a non-experimental quantitative design with a descriptive scope, justified by the short time since the implementation of the LIE. The data collection work was carried out in 2018, two years after the legislation went into force.

The sample was selected using the simple stratified sampling method. To do this we used a criterion of inclusion by convenience, including all of the schools belonging to the regional capitals of the country that—at the time of the study—had joined the new admissions system (SAE by the Spanish acronym) outlined in the School Inclusion Law. These regional capitals are Iquique, Coquimbo, Puerto Montt, and Punta Arenas. Subsequently, considering each city as a stratum, we proceeded to obtain a representative sample of the 273 schools that represented the study universe. With a confidence level of 95%, an error margin of 5%, and assuming a population variance of 50%, the required sample totaled 160 schools distributed in each stratum according to the proportions of the sample universe. Finally, 157 school principals fully answered the survey. The survey was administered online.

In order to demonstrate the attitudes of principals regarding the LIE, the survey included five dimensions: 1) level of agreement with the principles of the law, 2) actions implemented since the application of the law, 3) perception of the profile of students who have been admitted through the new admissions system, 4) level of participation of the school community, and 5) obstacles and requirements to implement the LIE.

The survey was validated by three experts who made judgments to clarify its contents. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with four respondents, which produced a high degree of reliability (Cronbach's alpha over 0.8).

Finally, we analyzed the results based on the development of descriptive statistics, through which we could explore the main trends in the information in order to identify patterns that were relevant to the research. These analyses were carried out using the SPSS 22.0 statistical package.

Results

Characterization of the sample

Of the 157 principals who participated in the survey, 21% were from the city of Iquique, 22.3% from Coquimbo, 37.6% from Puerto Montt, and 19.1% from Punta Arenas. Most of them worked at municipal-run public schools or those administered by local education services (72%), and 28% at private schools subsidized by the state.

Some 66 (42%) of those surveyed were men and 91 (58%) were women. Most of them had worked in managerial positions for more than seven years (59.2%) and only 18.5% had held managerial positions for less than three years.

In terms of their training, 80.9% of them had completed postgraduate studies in the area of administration, management, or school leadership. However, only 19.1% of them stated that they had some kind of training in issues related to school inclusion.

High levels of agreement on the principles promoted by the Inclusion Law

When asked about the level of agreement with the fundamental principles promoted by the Inclusion Law, most of the principals stated that they agreed with them. A total of 91.1% agreed with the end of profit-making in education, 84.7% with the end of selection, and 78.3% with the end of co-payment, demonstrating broad adherence

to the basic tenets of the new legislation. On the other hand, with regard to the limitation on arbitrary expulsions, 69.4% strongly agree or agree with this measure. This is related to the perception that the law will pave the way for an educational system that is more equitable, diverse, and respectful of differences between students (77.1% strongly agree/agree). In other words, the general provisions of the law are accepted by the principals surveyed.

However, as the data indicate, there is a minority group that is more reticent about certain components of the new regulation. Specifically, 36% of principals of subsidized private schools disagree with the elimination of co-payments made by families, and 18% of principals are not in favor of the prohibition of selective admission processes.

The new school admissions system favors inclusion and equity

With respect to the new school admissions system (SAE), principals take a position regarding its effects on educational equity, freedom of choice for parents, meritocracy, quality, and freedom to undertake educational projects. A significant percentage of principals think that the new admissions system reduces the freedom of families to choose the school they want for their children (56.1%). However, at the same time, 81.5% think that the new system outlined in the law helps implement an admissions process that does not discriminate against students on the basis of their social origin or abilities.

The survey also asked the general opinion of principals on the SAE, with a majority of them responding positively: 66% think that this system guarantees inclusion and respect for the diversity of subjects, and 61% believe that it supports non-discrimination of families. Among those who disagree, although they are a minority, their concerns are centered on possible negative effects on the most talented and hard-working students (10%), the detriment to the academic quality of the school (9%), and possible obstacles to carrying out diverse educational projects (6%).

Who does the Inclusion Law include?

The principals think that the new admissions system (SAE) proposed by the LIE will mean an increase in the number of students with cognitive diversity and learning needs in their school (90%). However, other identity categories can also be observed, such as: Spanish-speaking foreign students (51%), students belonging to a lower socioeconomic level (39%); those from diverse religious cultures (34%); with different sexual orientations (26%); with physical-motor, visual, or hearing disabilities (25%); or those with a different native language (18%). Only 8% said that they had enrolled students from higher socioeconomic levels after application of the SAE.

Some phenomena are relevant when considering the possible effects of the LIE on the student composition of schools. For example, 49.5% of school principals believe that the LIE encourages students from public schools (administered by municipalities or local education services) to migrate to subsidized private schools. It is also interesting to look at the opinion of school principals regarding the parents/guardians. Some 55.4% of principals believe that families will prefer to choose schools with a social mix, compared with 22.9% who believe that families will reject the mixing promoted by the LIE and will try to move their children to schools with fewer vulnerable students.

The Inclusion Law and its impact on academic results

It is interesting to note that the majority of principals do not believe that the Inclusion Law will have a significant impact on the quality of their school's academic results, as measured by the national standardized test (SIMCE). Only 14% believe that their results will worsen, and a more considerable group (22.3%) thinks that their results are likely to improve.

The first decisions on the School Inclusion Law

When the principals were asked about the first measures adopted in the context of the implementation of the Inclusion Law, the respondents stated that they had informed the school community about the beginning of free education (83.8%) and did not charge any monthly fees to families (70.3%). On the other hand, with regard to the use of the economic resources that the school will receive, most stated that they will invest them in hiring professionals to support the educational psychology (72%) and psychosocial (48%) areas, in addition to educational materials (64%). These opinions could again indicate that school principals associate the desegregation law with a likely increase in the number of children with special educational needs.

Teachers' working conditions: an obstacle to leading inclusion in schools

Considering the perception of obstacles to appropriate implementation of the LIE, the principals consulted believe that their teachers are not trained to manage the social diversity of the student body (64%), that they lack the time to plan inclusive actions collaboratively (66%), and that there is no consistency between the national assessment system (SIMCE) and the proposals included in the Inclusion Law (57%).

From this perspective, training on diversity is mentioned as one of the main requirements for implementation of the law. A total of 66% of the principals state that they need training on inclusion, and 43% want training on inclusive leadership for the school management team. At the same time, a high percentage of principals (66%) say that they need less pressure in terms of comparative test results, both nationally and internationally.

Finally, it should be noted that the principals surveyed stated that their main demand of the government is to have more pedagogical guidance regarding the organization of teaching in contexts of diversity. They also mention the need to reduce the number of children per classroom (34%), acquisition of adequate teaching resources and materials (46%), investment in infrastructure (ramps, Braille buttons, signage, etc.) (46.5%), and better dissemination of the principles and scope of the LIE (27%).

Discussion of Results

The results of the survey reveal different attitudes towards certain aspects of the School Inclusion Law (LIE) and the new admissions system (SAE) that operationalizes its inclusive principles. Generally speaking, there is a high degree of *commitment* to the main principles promoted by this new regulation. There is agreement that the law promotes fair principles, such as ending student selection and family co-payment. However, there is resistance, which, although not manifested by the majority, is seen among the principals of the subsidized private schools in the sample. Specifically, almost a third of principals of this type of schools express an attitude of *resistance* to the end of family co-payment. This is probably related to the perception that this disbursement by families generates commitments and responsibilities that free education could put under strain, very much in line with the logics of the educational market that has regulated the Chilean school system over the last few decades.

In addition, just over half believe that the new admissions system (SAE) will affect families' right to choose schools, but the absolute majority of those surveyed think that this type of admissions system reduces social discrimination. In this respect, the principals think that the new regulation is oriented towards social justice, as they relate it to non-discrimination and increasing the diversity of the students. At the declarative level, the *commitment* to these measures is reiterated, which underlines that there is a generalized perception that social discrimination against students violates social justice.

It should be noted that the new admissions system (SAE) does not reduce the ability of families to choose schools; on the contrary, it increases them because, by breaking down the barriers of academic and economic selection, it now enables families who were previously unable to access schools that required co-payments to choose these establishments. The new admissions system also prioritizes allocation to schools with certain criteria, including the obligation for each school to receive priority or vulnerable students as at least 15% of their enrollment (Carrasco, 2018). Despite this clarification, principals feel that the new admissions system is a mechanism that limits the freedom of families to choose. It is probable that the media discussion that has previously taken place about the law in Chile has acquired more weight in this respect, rather than institutional or official information.

With regard to the social composition of the students, the majority of those interviewed think that the elimination of selection barriers under the LIE will mean their schools will see an increase in students with special educational needs. This data could be interpreted as indicating a somewhat *critical* or *resistant* attitude, since they later warn that they lack the professional skills to deal with a more diverse student body. Another possible interpretation is that desegregation or social mixing are not visible concepts for principals and that, as Capper and Young (2014) contend, they are not familiar with or have not incorporated a notion of social justice that problematizes the logics of school inequality.

Associating *inclusion* with children with special educational needs is reductionist, but it is understood within the context of a long tradition of inclusion policies that have emphasized student deficits and comprehending diversity as a process of including children that are different or who do not respond to the conventional standards of the school, rather than in terms of recognizing the multiple sociocultural identities of the subjects (Rojas, 2018; Rojas & Armijo, 2016).

There are conflicting attitudes regarding the association between the LIE and the educational results of the students. A certain *conformity* predominates, since the majority of those surveyed do not link the new law to the quality of academic results. A desegregation policy would have effects on the composition of the student body, but not necessarily on the logic of learning. The LIE is partly based on the fact that the social mix of the students enhances the *peer effect*, that is, the positive advantages that are produced on children's learning when classrooms are more socially and academically heterogeneous (Bellei, 2013). However, this is not clear to most of the principals who responded to the survey. There is a small group who believe that their students' results will deteriorate and they probably *resist* any changes because of the risks that this may entail for their results on national tests, while 22% believe that the students' results will improve. The latter tend to be principals of schools in the lower-middle sectors in the sample, who probably think that the greater social mix in the student body could benefit them over time. In this respect, they could express an attitude more *committed* to the effects of the law on learning. On the other hand, those who feel that their students' results will worsen due to the implementation of the LIE are principals who educate the children of families in the middle-income sectors. It may be that they prefer to maintain the current social composition of the school, given the possible risk of incorporating students with less economic, social, and cultural capital.

By contrast, there is a prevailing idea among the principals that an inclusion policy is contrary to the logic of standardized tests that measure quality. Although it does not affect them directly, they see it as a contradiction. On the one hand, this may indicate *commitment* to laws that promote inclusion but, on the other, *resistance* to this new regulation if it is not coupled with questioning the logic of standardized tests to measure educational quality. Leadership oriented toward inclusion and social justice is conditioned by reasons that are external and internal to the school (Ryan, 2006). The external reasons include the existence of standardized assessment associated with the funding of schools. This is strongly acknowledged in the survey. The pressure for academic results seems incongruous with demands for greater inclusivity. This is an issue that is central to the possibility of promoting inclusive policies in a high-stakes quality assurance system such as that in Chile. The international literature

reviewed reveals a profound tension between efforts to encourage leadership that promotes social justice and high-stakes accountability systems (Anderson, 2009). This is because the pressure for academic results conditions the professionalism of teachers and reduces spaces for autonomy and innovation to plan teaching that takes into account the social, ethnic, cognitive, gender, and age diversity of students. Meanwhile, the demand for ethical and moral training, which underpins the leadership approach for inclusion and social justice, does not focus on academic learning, but instead on the process of creating a climate of democratic coexistence within the school.

The survey results also illustrate the difficulties and tensions that principals observe. On the one hand, this refers to the capabilities of male and female teachers to cope in pedagogical terms with socially diverse classrooms. There is a *critical* attitude here regarding the academic and professional preparation of the teaching staff on the part of those who lead the schools. This demonstrates that there is little trust in teachers on the part of their own principals, and, furthermore, that it could be very difficult to lead processes of desegregation and social inclusion with a professional staff that is considered to have weaknesses in this area. Indeed, the principals are committed to increasing support for professionals in the area of psychology and educational psychology as a more specialized resource for issues of social diversity. With regard to this point, the literature states that social inclusion is an objective of the entire school community (principals, teachers, parents, students, etc.), and not just that of a specialized type of professional (Blackmore, 2009; Shields, 2004).

Conclusions

The Inclusion Law is an example of a desegregation policy that intervenes in the market mechanisms that lie at the basis of social segmentation processes in the Chilean school system, such as school selection and co-payment (Bellei, 2013). It essentially operates against barriers to access schools, simultaneously stipulating that children cannot be exposed to arbitrary discrimination. For this reason, the law establishes limits on the suspension and expulsion of students. These cases of *arbitrary discrimination* have a broad definition, which involves issues such as discrimination due to racism, sexism, classism, age differences, prejudice towards people with different abilities, and religious beliefs, among others. The concept of this wide definition emphasizes that inclusion refers to multiple aspects and cannot be reduced to a single condition of the subjects. Promoting diversity and mixing of students is a benchmark of justice in the school, as it is an advance on the old discussion about the equal distribution of opportunities and conditions to educate all children without their social origins affecting the education provided to them by the state and society (Ayed, 2015).

These principles are accepted by the principals of schools that have begun to experience the implementation of the Inclusion Law in Chile. An attitude of *commitment* prevails with these general provisions that promote the end of all discrimination. However, the research reveals areas of *conformity* and *resistance* on the part of the principals due to the lack of conditions to implement legislation of this nature, including deficiencies in pedagogical and professional resources, and the existence of a logic based on the assessment of quality that is geared towards the standardization of academic results, a principle that is contrary to diversity and inclusion.

In this scenario, it seems necessary for school leaders to have opportunities for training to reflect on the scope of a desegregation policy and, essentially, to understand its relationship with social mixing, diversity, and justice. In order to mobilize these concepts, school actors require the conditions to incorporate them in more complex ways, to reflect on them, and to work on them with their communities.

A policy of this magnitude requires a system of communication and dissemination on the part of governments that is intensive, effective, and explicit about the objectives it seeks to achieve. Otherwise, there is a risk that this law will be considered simply as one more regulation among the many public policies that school leaders must deal with on a daily basis. Furthermore, this study suggests that a significant percentage of school principals

see this law as an extension of policies that regulate the integration of children with special educational needs into schools, thus associating school desegregation with an increase in the number of students who require specialized psycho-pedagogical attention. This manner of comprehending the law is consistent with the rationalities that have prevailed in the educational policies of the last 30 years in Chile. The policy is seen as a device for the remediation of individual subjects and their weaknesses, and not as a mechanism to remediate social inequalities, which are not the responsibility of the subjects, but of structural inequities that are expressed in children's performances. As Oplatka & Arar (2015) state, principals will perceive themselves as protagonists of the implementation of the Inclusion Law if they have the conditions they need to build critical awareness regarding the social inequalities in the school system.

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