

Children's rights in elite schools: A necessary regulation

Derechos de infancia en escuelas de élite: Una regulación necesaria

Paula Ascorra  *

Escuela de Psicología, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile (paula.ascorra@pucv.cl)

Claudio Allende 

Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación. Universidad de Chile (callende@ciae.uchile.cl)

Javiera Pavez Mena 

Escuela de Psicología, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile (javiera.pavez@pucv.cl)

*Corresponding author

Received: December 10, 2022

Accepted: June 30, 2023

Published: July 15, 2023

Recommended citation: Ascorra P., Allende C., & Pavez Mena, J. (2023). Derechos de infancia en escuelas de élite: Una regulación necesaria. *Psicoperspectivas*, 22(2). <https://dx.doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-vol22-issue2-fulltext-2873>

Background

As a social group, the elite has been scarcely studied globally. It is important to note that the available literature has highlighted the barriers imposed by elites to be studied, making it difficult to explore phenomena of great importance, such as the children's experience of learning and growing up in elite educational settings. In this context, this study advances in analyzing the protection and guarantee of children's rights in elite schools. Although the different regulatory bodies have aimed to safeguard the rights of all children and adolescents, the literature informs that, in the case of Chile and the field of education, it is possible to observe a differential legislative treatment between the rights of students who participate in public schools (which receive state funding) and public schools (which do not), among which are the elite schools.

Aims

Thus, this study aims to investigate how children's rights are protected and guaranteed in elite schools concerning the quality of education, school coexistence, and school participation.

Method & procedures

The design of this research is a qualitative multiple-case study that used descriptive quantitative data to contextualize elite education in Chile. For the descriptive quantitative context, we used multiple databases whose analyses were performed with the support of STATA 17 software. The qualitative multi-case study was composed of two cases corresponding to convenience sampling. For each case, we used two techniques to produce information: Publicly available institutional documents related to the topics of interest and semi-structured individual and group interviews. The material produced was analyzed following a thematic categorical analysis.

Results & discussion

Our results show that within the elite schools, there is vast heterogeneity in their educational outcomes, as well as in the quality of education they provide to their students. These findings show that there is a group of schools with the results expected by the national educative standard. Still, there is a not insignificant number of schools ($n=110$) with a non-negligible enrolment ($n=13,742$ students) in this sector, which does not meet the minimum learning standards and would require safeguards to guarantee the right to quality education. Moreover, looking at the cases, the main findings are the tension of the right to quality education, presenting a managerial and persuasive curriculum; the right to a healthy coexistence and the expression of one's own identity, finding dynamics of silence around situations of violence, enhanced by an experience of hegemonic masculinity; and the tension around the right to participate, be heard and give an opinion, given that adults develop a tutored participation.

Conclusion

This research, focused on the protection and guarantee of children's rights, provides evidence to sustain that more than a privilege, in elite schools, there are no safeguards for the exercise of children's rights. The narratives of quality exhibited by elite schools could be linked to the reproduction, consolidation, or projection of the social class of origin. Thus, the school experience is related to acquiring cultural markers that sustain and maintain class differences. Qualitative analyses show that students' experiences in these schools regarding coexistence, the right to their own identity, and participation should be better safeguarded and protected. These findings show that the lag in fulfilling children's rights in our country is a cross-cutting issue for both vulnerable and privileged social groups. We need to move forward in listening to the voices of all children on issues that affect their lives, redefine childhood as an actor in the political community, and advance in greater regulation of public schools. Regarding this study's limitations, we underline the sample design, which did not include mixed or female-only schools and the impossibility of directly accessing the observation of educational practices in elite schools. Future research should address the education and rights of children in girls' and mixed schools and the differences in educational projects in elite schools (religious or secular or between conservative and progressive schools).

Keywords: child protection, children's rights, elite education

References

- Ascorra, P., Cárdenas, K., Gálvez, P., Ávila, A., González, C., & López, V. (2021). Relación entre estilos de convivencia e indicadores de desarrollo personal y social en escuelas chilenas. *Revista de Psicología*, 30(2). <https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-0581.2021.57840>
- Barrera, J., Falabella, A., & Ilabaca, T. (2021). "Los intocables": La educación escolar de las élites, sus privilegios y nuevos escenarios. *Revista PEL*, 58(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.7764/PEL.58.1.2021.3>
- Ilabaca, T. (2021). La legitimación del privilegio en colegios de elite chilenos: De la responsabilidad social al discurso del mérito. *Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, 29(98). <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.29.5618>
- López, V., Ortiz, S., Allende, C., Valenzuela, J. P., & González, L. (2020). La segregación invisible: Prácticas punitivas y de ordenamiento académico en escuelas chilenas. *REICE. Revista Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*, 18(4), 301-324. <https://doi.org/10.15366/reice2020.18.4.012>
- Ziegler, S., Gessaghi, V., & Fuentes, S. (2018). Las propuestas curriculares en escuelas de elite en Buenos Aires: Diferenciación institucional para educar en el privilegio. *Página de Educación*, 11(2), 40-60. <https://doi.org/10.22235/pe.v11i2.1640>

Acknowledgments: The authors are grateful for access to databases of the Education Quality Agency. All the findings of this study are authors' responsibility and in no way commit that agency.

Financial support: Fondo Basal para Centros de Excelencia Proyecto F80003 PIA-CONICYT; FONDECYT 1230581 y Proyecto SCIA ANID CIE 160009. Claudio Allende cuenta con apoyo ANID Subdirección de Capital Humano Doctorado Nacional/2023-21230926.

Conflict of interests: The authors declare to have no conflict of interests.



Published under [Creative Commons Attribution International 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)