The Emergence of a Political-Pedagogical Teacher Subjectivity: Chilean Teachers' Struggle to Bring Pedagogy Back into the Political Sphere

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the emergence of a dissident subjective position among Chilean teachers as they struggle against a new Teachers Career Policy (TCP). Since the early 1980s, comprehensive neoliberal policies have reshaped Chilean society. During this period, teachers were described as an absent subject. However, in 2014 dissident teachers spontaneously asserted themselves against a new TCP inaugurating *the teachers' spring*, which in 2015 involved a 57-days strike, and again 50 days in 2019. Using the Foucauldian notion of subjective limits, I present the results of a study based on a narrative approach to understand the formation of a dissident subjectivity among Chilean teachers. I conducted 35 interviews with ten leaders and eight grassroots teachers of seven different dissident teachers' organizations. The findings focus on analyzing *political-pedagogical dissent* as the central discourse mobilized by teachers to disrupt the new TCP. This discourse enables dissident teachers to clarify the current limits of their work, allowing a set of experimental

practices to unfold. Finally, I discuss the emergence of a dissident teacher's subject as a case that evokes and illustrates how new forms of political subjectivities enable us to understand the current crisis of neoliberalism experienced in Chile.

Keywords: teacher subjectivity; teaching profession; teacher career policy; teacher organisation; neoliberalism; Chile

La emergencia de una subjetividad docente político-pedagógica: La lucha del profesorado chileno por restituir la pedagogía en la esfera política

Resumen: Este artículo analiza la emergencia de una posición subjetiva disidente entre los docentes chilenos en la lucha contra una nueva Política de Carrera Docente (PCD). Desde principios de la década de 1980, profundas políticas neoliberales han remodelado la sociedad chilena. Durante este período, se describió a los profesores como un sujeto ausente. Sin embargo, el año 2014, un levantamiento espontáneo de docentes disidentes contra una nueva PCD inauguró *la primavera docente*, que el 2015 implicó una huelga de 57 días, y nuevamente 50 días en 2019. Utilizando la noción foucaultiana de límites subjetivos, presento los resultados de un estudio basado en un enfoque narrativo para comprender la formación de una subjetividad disidente entre los docentes chilenos. Realicé 35 entrevistas con diez líderes y ocho docentes de base de siete organizaciones diferentes de profesores/as disidentes. Los hallazgos se centran en analizar la *disidencia político-pedagógica* como el discurso central movilizado por los docentes para problematizar la nueva PCD. Este discurso le permite a los/as profesores/as disidentes esclarecer los límites actuales de su trabajo, permitiendo que se despliegue un conjunto de prácticas experimentales. Finalmente, analizo la emergencia de un sujeto docente disidente como un caso que evoca e ilustra cómo nuevas formas de subjetividades políticas nos permiten comprender la actual crisis del neoliberalismo vivida en Chile.

Palabras-clave: subjetividad docente; profesión docente; política de carrera docente; organización de profesores; neoliberalismo; Chile

A emergência de uma subjetividade político-pedagógica do ensino: A luta dos professores chilenos para restaurar a pedagogia na esfera política

Resumo: Este artigo analisa a emergência de uma posição subjetiva dissidente entre professores chilenos na luta contra uma nova Política de Carreira Docente (PCD). Desde o início dos anos 1980, políticas neoliberais profundas remodelaram a sociedade chilena. Nesse período, o professor foi descrito como sujeito ausente. No entanto, em 2014, uma revolta espontânea de professores dissidentes contra um novo PCD inaugurou *a primavera dos professores*, que em 2015 implicou uma greve de 57 dias, e novamente 50 dias em 2019. Usando a noção foucaultiana de limites subjetivos, apresento os resultados de um estudo baseado em abordagem narrativa para compreender a formação de uma subjetividade dissidente entre professores chilenos. Conduzi 35 entrevistas com dez líderes e oito professores de base de sete diferentes organizações de professores dissidentes. Os achados enfocam a análise da *dissidência político-pedagógica* como o discurso central mobilizado pelos professores para problematizar o novo PCD. Esse discurso permite que professores dissidentes esclareçam os limites atuais de seu trabalho, possibilitando o desdobramento de um conjunto de práticas experimentais. Por fim, analiso o surgimento de um sujeito dissidente de ensino como um caso que evoca e ilustracomo novas formas de subjetividades políticas permitem compreender a atual crise do neoliberalismo vivida no Chile.

Palavras-chave: subjetividade do professor; profissão docente; política de carreira docente; organização de professores; neoliberalismo; Chile

The Emergence of a Political-Pedagogical Teacher Subjectivity: Chilean Teachers' Struggle to Bring Pedagogy Back into the Political Sphere

Between October 2019 and March 2020, a series of massive protests and severe riots took place in all the regions of Chile. This process, known as *estallido social* or social outbreak, began on October 18, 2019, and produced the major socio-political crisis in Chile in the last 30 years. As Antonio Gramsci (1971) reminds us, a crisis "consists precisely in the fact that the *old* is dying and the *new* cannot be born" (p. 276, emphasis added). Chile has long been recognized as the "first experiment with neoliberal state formation" (Harvey, 2005, p. 7) and the one country where "a pure neoliberal experiment was put into place" (Robertson, 2008, p. 14) during the early 1980s under the dictatorial civil-military government of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). Thus, the *old* Chilean neoliberal order is in crisis. Now, what are the main effects of this *old* social order? Furthermore, what are the main characteristics of the *newness* that tries to be born in the country?

A way to address these questions is by analyzing previous social crises in Chile. The current crisis is a radicalization of a set of social mobilizations that have been piercing the legitimacy of the neoliberal order for some time. Education is one of the most important fields where this set of social mobilizations has been deployed (Bellei, 2015). The cycle of struggles in the educational field started with the secondary students protest of 2001 in Santiago and 2006 in the whole country (Thielemann, 2016), was then followed by the educational movement of 2011 led by university students (Bellei et al., 2014; Hernandez, 2019), and continued with the strikes and demonstrations of teachers in the years 2014/15 and 2019 (González, 2015, 2019). Secondary students also lit the spark that produced the October 18 *estallido social* by organizing a fare evasion campaign which led to spontaneous takeovers of Santiago's main subway stations. These processes are forceful expressions of a deep malaise with how life within and around schools and universities is experienced. As "the first nation to engage in a thoroughgoing market reform of education" (Ball, 2008, p. 55), different educational actors from Chile have been manifesting for more than 20 years against the neoliberal government of education.

This article focuses on teachers' subjectivity as an angle of observation of the crisis of Chilean neoliberalism in the educational field. More specifically, the article has a dual purpose: on the one hand, I am interested in analyzing the notion of ontological insecurity as a significant effect of 40 years of working as a teacher under a neoliberal regime. The *old* that is dying for Chilean teachers is precisely this experience of ontological insecurity. On the other hand, I am interested in analyzing *political-pedagogical dissent* as the condition of possibility for the emergence and formation of critical teachers in Chile. This new teacher subject articulates one of the versions of the new that arises by disrupting and moving beyond the neoliberal production of fear, insecurity, and precarity through bringing pedagogy back into the political sphere.

I have organized the work into four sections: first, I will present as a historical and theoretical background the problem of ontological insecurity from three perspectives: i) the formation of a neoliberal teacher subject, ii) the effect that ontological insecurity has on teachers, and iii) how teachers, particularly in Chile, have found a way to transgress this subjective limit. Second, I will detail the methodology I used to produce the empirical material I analyzed. Third, I present the main results organized in two sections: i) ontological fear as a process of depoliticization and ii) pedagogical validation as a tactic of pedagogical re-politicization. Finally, I end with a brief discussion of these results.

Teachers' Ontological Insecurity as a Subjective Limit

The Formation of a Neoliberal Teacher's Subject

Understanding the configuration of the teaching subject in neoliberal times implies recognizing the importance that knowledge has for neoliberalism. Jenny Ozga (2008) calls the knowledge economy a new ensemble that takes place in the 1980s and 90s, which involves a "policy meta-narrative that assumes and requires the commodification of knowledge in a system of global production, distribution and exchange" (p. 265). She argues that a country's competitiveness no longer depends solely on its level of industrialization but also on the level of knowledge of its economy. The success of a country is linked to the effectiveness and improvement of the human capital of its population.

Teachers are central in the struggle for a country to achieve economic growth and competitiveness. In this scenario, *governing by numbers* becomes a major trend of the governance turn in education. As Ozga (2008) argues, it aims to promote "the collection and use of comparative data on performance as a way of controlling and shaping behavior" (p. 266). Governing teachers by numbers implies that education has redefined learning as capable of being measured, compared, managed, improved, and efficiently delivered. Table leagues, benchmarking, and comparison, as Ozga (2008) claims, are "core governing processes across a «learning society» shaped by economic reforms, citizenship obligations, employability and the use of OECD policy tools in education" (p. 267). She refers to standardized tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) that act on a global scale.

Pasi Sahlberg (2016) coined in the mid-00s the notion of *Global Education Reform Movement* (GERM) to articulate this complex combination of globalization and neoliberalism. According to Sahlberg (2016), the five main features of GERM are competition and choice, standardization of teaching and learning, focus on reading, mathematics, and science, corporate models of change, and test-based accountability. He acknowledges Chile as the site of one of the earliest attempts "to transform educational systems through free market principles" (p. 130). However, he argues that it was the *Education Reform Act* of 1988 in England that "became the most well-known and globally [sic] research act of its kind" (p. 130), inspiring "other large-scale school system reforms in North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific" (p. 130). Sahlberg (2015) speaks about a "Finland vs. the GERM" (p. 166) conflict, adding that "unlike the Chilean system, among many others today, the Finnish system had not been infected by market-based education reforms that typically emphasize competition between schools, high-stakes standardized students-testing policies, and privatizing public school" (p. 168). The Chilean educational system, in his view, is almost a replica of GERM.

Chile's case is emblematic because the context of military dictatorship introduced neoliberal policies based on market principles and competition to regulate the educational system and teaching work without any opposition (Bellei, 2015). Among the various changes that were implemented in the 1980s, four stand out as the central ones to enact an educational market system: the voucher system, which activates competition by monetizing student enrolment; the encouragement of private subsidized schools; the measurement of the quality of education employing a standardized System of Measurement of the Quality of Education (SIMCE); and the municipalization of schools.

Of these four changes, the municipalization of the schools implied the most explicit transformation in teachers' working conditions. This policy meant that teachers lost their historical status as public servants, and thus, a significant number of rights acquired over decades of struggles with their primary employer: the state (Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991). Indeed, in 1980, 80% of teachers were employed by the public sector (Cox & Jara, 1989). As they began to work in the municipalities, they were transferred to the labor code, working under the same conditions as any private worker in

the country. As Lomnitz and Melnick (1991) put it, teachers were "thrown onto the labor market, with a considerable loss of prerogatives – job stability, salary increases, social security, and so on" (p. 68). As Nuñez adds (2007), teachers claimed they were thrown into "the generic status of «workers», made subject to the standard labor law" (p. 157, mt[1]). Therefore, as Cornejo and Reyes (2008) explain, the most evident impact of the dictatorship's new policies on teachers' professional and personal lives was the abrupt drop in their remunerations.

Ontological Insecurity as a Key Effect on Teacher's Subjectivity

The neoliberal policies implemented in the early 1980s that threw teachers into the generic status of workers produced, as one of its major impacts, economic insecurity (a decline in salaries and job insecurity) in a subject that, not long ago, used to have job stability, salary increases and social security concerning their civil servant' identity (Cornejo & Reyes, 2008; Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991; Núñez, 2007). However, this fear is not merely a *material* fear in the sense of not having the means of paying the rent or buying food should one be fired, but it is also an *ontological insecurity*.

This type of insecurity is not a fortuitous effect of the enactment of neoliberal policies. On the contrary, the rationale embedded in the ensemble of neoliberal policies put in motion in Chile had as one of its basic principles to foster competition to improve teachers' quality and performance. As can be seen in the book *The educational modernization* by Alfredo Prieto (1983), Minister of Education under Pinochet between 1979 and 1982, the objective of the new policies regarding teachers was to deregulate and destabilize their salaries as a way to create a new system based on competition and performance. As Prieto puts it, the aim was to "lead to a sort of competition among teachers, which forced them to further training and better perform their functions to qualify for better remunerations or employments" (p. 84, mt). The idea was "to retain and keep the good teachers and marginalize those whose work is inefficient, inadequate and harmful to the community" (p. 85, mt).

Following Foucault (2008), a double shift was enacted: on the one hand, the juridical nature of teachers' work, their *homo juridicus*, was transformed by being moved from the status of a civil servant to that of a private worker. On the other hand, a new ontology based on the neoliberal *homo economicus* was imposed on teachers elaborating a new teacher subject. The historical economic subject based on selling one's labor force for money is reshaped by the need to become an entrepreneur of oneself. As Foucault (2008) puts it,

> (…) the stake in all neoliberal analysis is the replacement every time of *homo economicus* as a partner of exchange with a *homo economicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being from himself his own capital, being from himself his own producer, being from himself the source of his earnings. (p. 226)

Even if a teacher manages to find a job in a school as a private worker (as partners of exchange), they must demonstrate that their performance is good and can be improved, becoming responsible for their own (un)employment. As a result, economic precariousness and insecurity, a constitutive feature of neoliberalism according to Lazzarato (2009), became teachers' norm by the end of the 1980s. Gerado Jofré (1988), advisor of the Minister of Treasury from 1985 to 1989, argues that "[t]he optimal situation is that the worker – and the teacher – feels that he can obtain [job] security with his efficiency and dedication, but unemployment waits for him if he does not provide a quality service" (p. 205, mt).

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[1] From now on, I will use the abbreviation 'mt' to indicate when quotations are my translation.

Teachers are required to prove that they are efficient workers to keep their jobs. A self-improvement practice is enacted, making an ontological insecure teacher subject aware that "unemployment waits from him if he does not provide a quality service." As Ball (2003) puts it, teachers working under a neoliberal performative regime feel that they are "being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies" (p. 220). They need to constantly prove that they are good teachers and are constantly asked to improve as effective teachers.

The overregulation and control over the field of judgment of teachers' work produce strong "feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity" (van den Berg, 2002, p. 612) and a "high degree of uncertainty and instability" (Ball, 2003, p. 220), unfolding ontological insecurities (p. 220) and ontological dilemmas (p. 222). These insecurities are related to teacher malaise, suffering, and sickness. As Penteado and de Souza (2019) argue, one of the main effects of these sufferings is that "teachers, as caregivers of the students, have little aptitude to take care of themselves!" (p. 45). The possibility of being teachers in a neoliberal regime involves constantly proving themselves as good teachers engaged in self-improving practices. On the one hand, if teachers do not comply and refuse to play the game, they can lose their jobs and become unemployed. On the other hand, if they accept playing the game, the workload of performing a set of self-forming activities that they do not necessarily believe starts to create a critical disaffection with their own practice.

"Not More Agobio" as a Possibility to Transgress Ontological Insecurities

In the intense educational social movements of 2006 and 2011, one of the leading actors of the school system, teachers, were described as "an absent subject" (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013). The 2011 conflict produced an educational momentum against profit in education and in favor of free, public, and quality education for all, the main mottos of the demonstrations (Bellei et al., 2014). Thus, the central campaign promise of the left-center Government of Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018), organized under the *New Majority* coalition, was an educational reform that would abolish market-oriented structures and reinstate the view of education as a social right.

The *New Majority* coalition signaled a change from the old *Concertación* third-way coalition by including the Communist Party and other smaller left-wing parties for the first time since the return to democracy in 1990. In addition, four significant changes were proposed and enacted in different laws: a new free education model in the tertiary system, the de-municipalization of the school system, the ban of practices of student selection, profit-making and fee charges in public and private subsidized schools, and a New Teachers Career Policy (TCP).

The government counted on the support of, and an alliance with, the *Colegio de Profesores* (CDP), the principal teachers' union of the country. The CDP was led by Jaime Gajardo, a communist militant at the head of the CDP from 2007 to 2016. Before discussing the TCP, in 2014, a "short agenda" of five demands was negotiated between the CDP and the government. Four of these five demands were related to economic improvements of their labor conditions (fixed-term contract to teachers under a temporary contract, retirement incentive bonus, increase of the Minimum Teaching Income, and reparation of historical debt produced in the 1980s with the municipalization). Only the demand 'to stop *agobio*' related to their pedagogical and everyday practices as teachers by, for example, demanding to increase the hours of non-teaching duties or reduce the role of standardized tests in their work. In Spanish *agobio* means "to impose to someone excessive activity or effort, to seriously worry, to cause great suffering"; and also, "to render, depress

or bring down" (Real Academia Española, RAE)[2]. This demand was original in the sense of going beyond the traditional labor and economic demands and describing their actual subjective experience as teachers. The government reacted to this "short agenda" by offering a deal that took partially care of some of the more traditional economic demands but not of the suffering's teachers signaled with the idea of stopping *agobio*. This deal was supported straight away by Gajardo. However, a grassroots and spontaneous movement of teachers rallied and called for a strike against this deal. This movement was called *dissident* because they were mainly against Gajardo's uncritical partnership with the government. After a couple of weeks on strike, they won a better deal.

In 2015, the negotiation for the new TCP began. The TCP included a 30% increment in teachers' salaries, an increase of 10% in hours for non-teaching duties, a new mentoring process for new teachers and possibilities of continuous training along with the career. All these improvements were part of a new design of teachers' careers throughout their professional life. However, teachers were distributed and classified by a mechanism called *encasillamiento* (pigeonholing) into five levels of performance: Initial, Early, Advance, Expert I, and Expert II (Acuña, 2020). Teachers rejected this policy and were on strike for 57 days, the second-longest strike of Chilean teachers after the one held in 1968 (Núñez, 1990). One of the main reasons for their rejection was that the new classificatory mechanism implied an additional form of evaluation, increasing the sensation of an intensification of work and, therefore, neglecting their demand to stop *agobio*. Hence, even though they managed to change some elements of the new TCP, teachers did not feel it was their career.

In the heat of the 2014 protests, the campaign's name that articulated dissident teachers' concerns was *For a New Education: To Dignify the Teacher Career*, the same name that in 2016 was adopted by the electoral list of the dissident teachers who won the Presidency of the CDP. In 2019, teachers experienced their second massive demonstration with 50 days of strike, rearticulating some of the same demands of 2015: job stability, reparation of the historical debt, to stop labor *agobio*, and adding two new demands: to deal with salary/gender discrimination and to participate in the educational project of the country (González, 2019). As Lomnitz and Melnick (1991) argue, at the end of the 1980s, "the demand most frequently mentioned in recent times by the profession – through the *Colegio de Profesores* – is the recovery of dignity, both of the profession and of the teacher." (p. 68). The problem of dignity, 30 years later, is still current. Dignity is one of the strongest ideas in Chile trying to name and give sense, as Gramsci (1971) puts it, to the *new* that cannot be born.

In a more theoretical lens, the dissident teacher subject brings forward a dissent regarding how their everyday field of experience is organized and experienced. *Agobio* is the name found by teachers to recognize and signify the precarious conditions of their everyday work. In this sense, *agobio* can be understood as a subjective limit. Foucault argues that modernity can be envisaged "as an attitude rather than as a period of history" (1997, p. 309). This attitude, he adds, unfolds the possibilities of analyzing ourselves as free and autonomous subjects who are historically determined "and not as a cog in a machine" (p. 307). This process of analysis is oriented towards "the «contemporary limits of the necessary," that is, towards what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects" (p. 313). To experience *agobio* as a teacher is not something necessary for the constitution of the teacher subject. The dissident teacher subject seems to be an original response to the effect of ontological insecurity. At first sight, they are not attached to the neoliberal way of being governed; they are neither silent nor submissive (Acuña et al., 2019), absent (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013), or disaffected (Pardo, 2013), and they are not thinking of

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[2] I will use the word *agobio* because not only it does not have an exact translation in English but also because it is the way Chilean teachers have themselves named their current subjective state of affairs.

abandoning their profession (Ávalos & Valenzuela, 2016; Gaete et al., 2017). Faced with the same everyday experience of *agobio* that teachers go through in their work, the dissident teacher subject elaborates and articulates a different response.

Foucault (1997) calls this sort of attitude of dissent a "critical ontology of ourselves" which "may be characterized as a limit-attitude" (p. 315). That is, a process of analysis and reflection upon the frontiers or limits of "what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory" (p. 315). This critical process considers those singular, contingent, and arbitrary "events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (p. 315). A limit-attitude is then a way of criticism of our own subjectivity, which "consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits" (p. 315), our own subjective limits. Then, if the historical limits imposed on oneself constitute a crucial dimension of the subject, subjectivity, as Ball (2016) puts it, becomes a necessary site of struggle. This struggle involves a dual-task: a "historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (Foucault, 1997, p. 319). Therefore, *agobio* and Chilean teachers' dissent delineate a subjective limit that can unfold this dual-task. In the next half of the article, I will address what enables dissident teachers to elicit dissent as a different response to the problems they experience in their everyday lives as teachers.

Method: Narratives of Organized Dissident Teachers

I focused my research on teachers who were part of dissident organizations that led the 2014/15 teachers' demonstrations[3]. I worked with the assumption that organized dissident teachers were critical towards the historical consensus of what it means to be a teacher. I have found the notion of narrative (Goodson, 2006; Phoenix, 2008) useful to research a subject who is not well attached to the historical consensus of the truths of what it means to be a teacher.

I conducted 35 interviews with 18 school teachers: ten were interviewed as leaders of seven of the most important organizations leading the 2014/15 teachers' mobilizations. The idea was to capture with them a well-structured narrative or, as Phoenix (2008) puts it, a "canonical narrative" about the "current consensus about what it is acceptable to say and do in their local (…) cultures" (p. 73) as dissident teachers. The interrogated subject with these ten leaders was *the dissident organization*. The interview guide asked questions about these recently formed organizations in three different topics: history and characteristics of their organization, their diagnosis about teachers' main problems according to their organization, and the concrete strategies they were putting forward to challenge these problems.

Additionally, eight teachers were interviewed as grassroots members of these dissident organizations. Instead of looking for the "canonical narrative" of the organization, the idea was to capture with them a less-structured and more situated narrative of their everyday problems as teachers. The criteria for inclusion were to be working in a school and not be the leaders of the organization. With each of these grassroots teachers, I conducted a set of three interviews. The first one was about their personal story and trajectory as teachers. At the end of this first meeting, I gave them a notebook and asked them to take as many notes as possible regarding any moments or situations when they had felt constrained or limited as a teacher in their school workplace. The focus of the second interview was to unfold these constraining and limiting situations by following their own writing. At the end of that interview, I asked them to do a similar exercise, but regarding

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[3] The research is based on primary data sources of my PhD thesis (Acuña, 2020). I gained my PhD from the Education, Practice and Society Department, Institute of Education, University College of London under the supervision of Professor Stephen J. Ball.

moments where they had felt they had gone beyond the limits we had just analyzed. The idea was that they could write down and produce some analytical reflection upon some moments where they have "experiment with the possibility of going beyond" (Foucault, 1997, p. 319) their subjective limits. Thus, the third interview was focused on the possibilities of transgressing these limits. Finally, a group interview took place with four of these eight teachers who had the time to participate. The group was focused on collectively analyzing the limits and transgressions I have worked with them individually in the interviews, producing further insights regarding their subjective limits.

All the fieldwork was conducted in 2017. In all the cases, the interviews were recorded, and I asked them to sign an informed consent. In the case of the dissident leaders, I asked them to use their full names as they were being interrogated as public figures. However, for the case of grassroots teachers, I offered them confidentiality, i.e., their names and any other relevant information that could lead to their identification has been anonymized using pseudonyms[4].

The preliminary analysis consisted of elaborating a personal narrative for each one of the eight grassroots teachers. Each personal narrative consisted of transcribing, merging, and editing the three interviews into one document and identifying *in vivo* codes (Rivas, 2012). The analysis I present here is mostly but not exclusively based on specific extracts of these personal narratives related to the notion of *political-pedagogical dissent*[5]. This *in vivo* code became an essential category of analysis to understand how dissident teachers articulated a discourse not only to criticize *agobio* as a subjective limit but also to disrupt and move beyond the neoliberal production of insecurity and precarity. By putting particular emphasis on the denotative dimension of language (Zemelman, 2007), I focus my analysis on the ways teachers' narration, instead of specifying an object, can suggest and evoke both the limits of what is real for them and the possibilities of going beyond these limits.

Political-Pedagogical Dissent

The results focus on analyzing *political-pedagogical dissent* as the central discourse mobilized by teachers to disrupt and critique the new TCP. I will analyze the two critiques composing *political-pedagogical dissent*, one aimed at clarifying the current limits of teachers (*the pedagogical critique*) and the other enabling a set of experimental practices to unfold (*the political critique*).

The Pedagogical Critique: Moving Beyond the Historical Split between the "Political" vs. the "Classroom" Teacher

In our second interview, Rosa wrote down as an important limit, "fear: to lose your job and privileges." In our conversation, she elaborates about this limit as concerning to her colleagues. Rosa's description is helpful to understand better what the idea of ontological insecurity means for teachers.

> Fear. Fear, the fear is massive. Fear of everything. Fear of lots of things. Fear of losing your job. Fear of losing privileges. Fear of being yourself. Fear, I don't know, of being told off. Fear that, I don't know, you're doing something wrong. Fear that they'll tell you "you're ignorant." Fear of everything. Fear of everything. Of being wrong. That thing… to be introverted, maintaining a low profile, they don't believe in themselves or just stay quiet, dejected, doing the job below-par [*por debajo*]. All the bad habits, all the bad habits. "Oh, I'm not going to get involved in this because

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[4] The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the IoE – UCL.
[5] Some of these extracts were first ensembled in a more extended version on the second analytical chapter of my PhD. Even though the following analysis draws importantly on this chapter, I have re-elaborated and rearticulated important parts of it in order to construct a more compact and direct analysis.

> afterward, I'll lose my job." (…). It's a real shame. The fear's a shame. Well, I was scared too. (Rosa)

"Fear of everything," "fear of being yourself," fear of being "ignorant," fear of "being wrong," "introverted," "low profile," "quiet," "dejected," working "below-par," refer to a more profound existential and ontological insecurity. In this sense, to lose one's job is not only to lose the very material means to feed one's family but also whatever sense of ontological security has been reached through being employed as a teacher, regardless of the precarious working conditions. Following Butler (2005), this fear involves the difficulty of giving an account of oneself as a teacher, worker, and person. The possibility to claim "I am," in this case, "I am a teacher," is diminished by the permanent fear of unemployment as a genuine fear of no longer being a teacher. This state implies that one is not a teacher but just a generic worker who can be replaced at any moment by anyone. As Lazzarato (2009) states, this fear "has produced a situation of permanent insecurity and precarity, conditions necessary for the new [neoliberal] apparatuses to work" (p. 111). The threat of unemployment has become a critical subjective limit for teachers.

Therefore, gaining economic security has been a central political demand of the CDP. Since the late 80s, as I argued, the problem of dignity has been a crucial demand of teachers (Lomnitz & Melnick, 1991). The process of moving from resistance to agreement with different governments, as happened in the early 2000s with the discussion of a new evaluation policy for teachers (Ávalos & Assaél, 2006), has been a way for teachers to gain certain wage prerogatives by accepting to participate in policies that regulate their work through different processes of evaluation. These policies regulating the field of pedagogy have been bargained to gain better job conditions. This negotiation dynamic evokes the same process at the center of the 2014/2015 debates for a new TCP. Teachers expressed their dissidence about the uncritical support that the head of the CDP gave to the new TCP. In the interview with Eduardo González, leader of the dissident organization *Movimiento por la Unidad Docente* (Movement for Teachers' Unity) he argues that, for Gajardo the TCP "was a *step forward,* and that position is coherent with their way of thinking." Adding that "[t]he biggest problem we see is that the CDP has focused on an economic struggle as the central element in recent years, and when it raises pedagogical issues, it does it in a shallow way".

The opposition to the traditional way of running the CDP requires distinguishing two forms of struggles: the economic and the pedagogical. The new TCP law offered a mechanism called *encasillamiento* or pigeonholing to increase teachers' earnings by employing a classificatory system based on their results in the teacher evaluation policy, which has been in force since 2003. If teachers' problems are mainly economic, then the law can be interpreted as a "step forward." However, if the economic struggle is linked to a pedagogical struggle, this is no longer possible. The *encasillamiento* system implies a mode of regulation of teachers' work that fosters processes of individualization and competition among teachers and involves additional activities that contribute to increased *agobio.* The problem is not about how much the salary was raised but about the mechanisms used to raise it. For the dissident teachers, the TCP clearly expressed two different ways of understating how neoliberalism operates today and how, according to Eduardo, it has been updated: "neoliberalism today operates under the logic of management and not only through means of classical privatization."

Therefore, the *pedagogical critique* focuses on the new mechanisms of management as a form of governing teachers' work. During the 2014/2015 demonstrations, the head of the CDP, Jaime Gajardo, became a symbol of teachers' problems because he neglected this pedagogical dimension of teachers' work.

> As teachers, you need to have technical and pedagogical validity to do stuff inside the school. The most explicit example, one that has a lot of sense for all of us, is Gajardo. One of the most significant critiques towards his leadership was that "hey, this guy is a terrible teacher." (Maria - Workshop)

The dissident teachers enable us to see the historical formation of a split between two ways of being a teacher during the 90s and 00s: a "political"/unionized teacher vs. a pedagogical/ classroom teacher. Gajardo represents a rep, a "political" teacher in the sense of being a member of the CDP but without "technical and pedagogical validity" or "a terrible teacher." The point for the dissident teachers is that full-time union reps at the national level embody a way of relating to teachers' problems that neglects the pedagogical dimension of teaching.

Victor's narration of his second teaching job helps to de-personalize this critique and better understand the rejection against being a "political" teacher that Gajardo represents. After a challenging job experience of five years in the small private subsidized school, Victor found a job in an emblematic public school of 4,000 students and 170 colleagues located in the city center of Santiago. During 2013 he worked in both schools, experiencing two deeply contrasting realities. He felt very attracted to the teachers' discourse at the public school: "they have a discourse and rhetoric much more elaborated and intellectual. Really attractive to observe." However, and this is one of the critical effects of the 2014/2015 teachers' demonstrations in Victor's experience, the aura of "empowerment" surrounding the discourse of those teachers began to fade in the context of the protests: "During 2014 that discourse was transformed into something, I don't know, disappointing because I realized that it was just empty politicking [*politiquería vacía*]". There was too much gossip, too many secrets, and a lot of internal rivalry and competition among colleagues without focusing on what was going on at the national level. As he adds: "I felt like "okay, strike for what purpose? Is it to discuss internal affairs and fight among ourselves?"" He considered that his colleagues had "a super rhetoric and interesting discourse, a political discourse, but in any case, they were elaborating pedagogical argument for what was going on (…), their demands were mainly salary adjustments."

The question "strike for what purpose?" and the fact that the demands were "mainly salary adjustments" involved a form of politicization empty of pedagogical arguments. The problem of this type of mere economic struggle, as Victor adds, is that it can produce a type of struggle that produces hopelessness:

> In the end, it is politicization, but a teacher's politicization based on hopelessness regarding what is happening. This will sound awful, but they [his colleagues] vote "yes" to the strike, and they stayed at home. I mean, a month and a half at home without coming to the school. (…) The problem is not about giving or not giving classes; it is about supporting your action, movement, revolution, whatever you want to call it, but how you support it using pedagogical arguments. That's what we are; we are pedagogues, we are teachers! What you saw on the national leaders and my school leaders was the absence of pedagogical arguments. On the contrary, on some occasions, they even spoke badly about giving classes, like if it were something insignificant: that's outrageous! We must give classes, and we must care for the classroom. (Victor)

Victor describes a form of politicization expressed by the national leaders and his school reps that make sense in the context of 25 years of neoliberal precarity and privatization policies (Lazzarato, 2009). A generic and technical worker is someone hired to give classes that can be replaced at any moment by anyone. The only bargaining tool that a generic and technical worker has is their ability

to refuse to give classes. The care is not for the classroom but for the job. Under this discourse, it is possible to vote yes to the strike and stay at home for the 57 days of the 2015 strike. It is the act of not giving classes that makes this type of teacher a critical teacher. It is the political articulation of an economic teacher subject. However, if a teacher thinks, as Victor does, that "we are pedagogues, we are teachers," a different type of problematization emerges, "we must give classes, and we must care for the classroom." If the teacher cares for the classroom, the question shifts from whether giving/not giving classes to what is so essential that it justifies stopping doing what one cares about, that is, a question for the purpose of the strike.

All the dissident teachers I worked with mentioned the idea of a more traditional union rep at the school level that embraces a form of politicization critical towards the educational policies in general but uncritical towards the specific pedagogical dimensions of these policies. As I quote above, Maria argued that Gajardo represented "a terrible teacher", which, as Lis puts it, involves that "I'm also a union leader as he [Gajardo] was, but I'm worried about being up-to-date and providing good classes to my students because there is an ethical component when you are also a classroom teacher." For the dissident teachers, salary adjustment is a necessary struggle but not sufficient for not giving classes. Victor felt that his politicized colleagues did not care for the classroom and, as he puts it, "I began to stray afield from the school's union." He felt "curious and the need to participate" but not from a discourse that disrespects and expresses disdain for the classroom. His curiosity led him to "the other side," that of his history colleagues, most of whom did not participate in the 2015 strike. However, he also found it challenging to engage with them. As he puts it:

> There is the other side, to become, I don't know, a technocrat. In this school you have people who are very well trained in terms of doing classes, preparing classes, I really admire them, but when it's time to, I don't know, have a position, they don't have it and are not interested in having one, "no, what's the point, we are going to end the same as we are." (…) They are very well prepared, with an MA in history or evaluation, but when it's time to do politics, no. They have become depoliticized because of the disappointment that their same leaders have produced in them: "hey, that guy that speaks in the assembly cannot oversee a classroom," or "she is not able to deliver a proper plan of her classes." (Victor)

Victor describes the other side of the historical split between two ways of being as a teacher: the classroom or *technocrat* teacher. This type of teacher subject is "well trained in terms of doing classes, preparing classes" but they have become depoliticized in terms of articulating a position regarding the different problems teachers face.

The problem that the dissident teachers put upfront with their political emergence during the 2014/15 demonstrations is the limits of these two ways of being a teacher: a political teacher fighting for their labor conditions without caring for the classroom and a technocrat teacher caring for the classroom without fighting for their labor conditions. The first embraces "empty politicking", whereas the second has "become depoliticized." In a way, until the 2014/2015 demonstrations, politics was absent from the field of pedagogy, which relates to teachers' absence on the educational movements of 2006 and 2011 (Cornejo & Insunza, 2013).

The *pedagogical critique* of the dissident teachers shows that by expressing disdain for the pedagogical field as a site of struggle, the traditional political discourse of teachers has enabled the use of pedagogy as a site of experimentation from a "logic of management," offering teachers a way to cultivate their fears under this logic. Victor's admiration for his technocratic colleagues entails a recognition that the technocratic mode of being a teacher offers a possibility of turning away from fear by learning the specifics of how pedagogy is standardized: planning classes every day, the

modalities of evaluation, and the possible rewards, promotions, and paths of self-improvement. Following these steps, it is possible to become an "outstanding" or "expert" teacher. This label, once achieved, can diminish the fear of being replaced. Attaining pedagogical validity enables a teacher to move from a "generic" one to a "specific" one if, and only if, the validity achieved is framed under the parameters of "good" of the logic of management. The politics regulating the field of pedagogy becomes the only possible way to achieve some sense of ontological security. Both sides of the traditional split between ways of being a teacher cannot address this problem: one side neglects it and the other embraces it uncritically. The failure to see the importance of pedagogy in the current mode of governing the teaching force is the essence of the *pedagogical critique* of the dissident teachers.

The Political Critique: Pedagogical Validation as a Way to Re-Politicize the Field of Pedagogy

If the *pedagogical critique* shows the limits of the split between the historical ways of being a teacher to resist the neoliberal mode of being governed, the *political critique* aims to bridge the split by re-politicizing the field of pedagogy. The *political critique* is directed towards the technocratic pedagogy, and it can be analyzed in how dissident teachers refer to the problem of being "a good teacher". The dissident teachers employ different tactics to recover a sense of ontological security through re-politicizing the field of pedagogy. These tactics relate to defending the possibility of being both a "good classroom teacher" and a "political teacher" simultaneously, a new subjective position for Chilean teachers. For example, forms of collective tactics include participating in demonstrations or being a member of a dissident organization. In these spaces, teachers can put a parenthesis to *agobio*, tracing back and becoming aware of the historical conditions that have made their precarious teaching conditions possible. Forms of individual tactics include becoming the school rep and helping to resist the school's technocratic pedagogy and refusing to be co-opted by the school's leaders, avoiding, as Lis puts it, the "seduction of power."

All of these tactics are forms of transgressing the current subjective limits of teachers. Therefore, these tactics could lead to different types of problems, losing one's job being the most frightful for teachers. Six out of eight grassroots teachers I worked with experienced some kind of punishment for trying to test some limits. Three of them were fired, and all six suffered retaliations from their managers because of their transgressive actions. For this reason, two additional tactics are relevant because they enable to struggle from a secure position: "closing the classroom's doors" and "pedagogical validation." The first is the most significant tactic for teachers to unfold a creative practice of self-formation, enabling a sense of freedom, delight, and community in the pedagogical encounter. However, it is a tactic that takes place in the intimacy of the closed doors, where a protected and safe relationship with the students can unfold. The second, "pedagogical validation," is the most common and public tactic for dissident teachers to gain a sense of ontological security in their school to act politically in front of their colleagues and managers. I will focus my analysis on this second tactic.

As Maria mentioned above: "As teachers, you need to have a technical and pedagogical validity to do stuff inside the school." This idea is very similar to Rosa's argument that first comes a "professional validation" and then a "union validation":

> You validate yourself professionally and then comes a union validation. First comes the professional validation, and then comes the union validation. (…) I think that always, always, always the teacher needs to be an intellectual in their work, an intellectual of pedagogy, of education, they need to know what they are talking about. (Rosa)

For Rosa, pedagogy is a form of intellectual work from where a sense of "professional validation" can be elaborated. A "good teacher," as Rosa puts it, needs this specific validation to gain her colleagues' and managers' trust and confidence. Lis expands on this:

> The teacher, like the Romans, must be above suspicion [*debe serlo y parecerlo*] and be the best in what you do (…) in the sense that experts from outside will come, and the teacher needs to have the last word. (…) So, if you came to talk to me about the TCP, "What are you saying to me, man? I have been certified, and your shitty evaluations certify me." I did the teachers' evaluation; I filmed my class and all of that; I entered the enemy's logic to understand how these guys see this type of evaluations, that it's a terrible way of seeing it, like "beginning, development, and closure." We, teachers who work in the classroom, know that the classroom transgresses far beyond that shit. (…) If the enemy puts tests on you, well, go to know them, go and look at how they are. In the end, if you do your job okay, you are going to do well in the tests they are elaborating for you because the work is done. So, you must be above suspicion in all places. (…) It is an ethical attitude; you try to be a good union leader and be a good teacher. (Lis)

A "competent" or "good" teacher for Lis is not only someone who has been evaluated positively but also, and most importantly, someone who is "above suspicion." To have "pedagogical validation" means to be "above suspicion." For Lis, this means entering "the enemy's logic" to discuss with "the experts from outside." In a way, this tactic recognizes that the field of pedagogy is currently managed by an "outsider" or "enemy" logic that disregards the classroom. Pedagogical validation, in this sense, is a tactic that involves "an ethical attitude," becoming a way to bridge the historical split between the classroom teacher and the union leader. By complying and excelling in the practices of self-improvement, teachers find a way to cultivate their fear to experiment on the path of politicization as a practice of self-formation.

In this sense, it can be seen as a tactic of *responsibility as resistance*, the other side of the coin of Ball and Olmedo's (2013) "irresponsibility as resistance" (p. 88). They state for the UK context that "the responsibility to perform" (p. 88) can be resisted by acting irresponsibly and putting into question and resisting the responsibilities of the performativity regime. These practices can bring teachers "back into the sphere of the *political*, as an actor who takes up a position in relation to new discourses and truths and looks critically at the meaning and enactments of policy" (p. 92). In the case of Maria, Rosa, and Lis, the way to bring themselves back into the sphere of the *political* is by performing well in the different evaluations of the performativity regime. Many interpretative paths can be pursued to understand the differences between the tactics of irresponsibility or responsibility as resistance: the gender of the participants, the relationship of power within the schools, the sociocultural context, the political project of the participants, the difference between standing alone and being part of an organization, among others. The image discussed above of union reps as "bad teachers" links resistance/politics with disdain for the classroom. First, dissident teachers criticize this "path of politicization," making pedagogical irresponsibly difficult even in its technocratic form. In this sense, it can be argued that a different set of tactics are available for teachers to get "back into the sphere of the *political*," and for the dissident teachers, this relates to a sense of responsibility captured by the idea of having "pedagogical validation" to be "above suspicion."

The teacher subject is both pushed and seduced to gain security through being subjected to a set of individual self-improvement practices, forming an individualistic and competitive ethic. As a form of power, technocratic pedagogy uses the disciplinary power of pedagogy to "dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it embedding itself"

(Foucault, 2004, p. 242). Pedagogy becomes a space from where a specific "kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself" (Foucault, 1997, p. 263), technically oriented, is being produced. Therefore, the problem seems to be how to enable oneself with space within the field of pedagogy to unfold a different practice of ethical self-formation and not be constrained by the limits of the technocratic pedagogy. The tactic of pedagogical validation seems to provide a way to speak from a different ethical position by enacting a different ethical attitude. Maria's example of painting the courtyard of her school helps illustrate how the practice of pedagogical validation offers a way of getting back into the sphere of the political. I quote at length to evoke the idea:

> A teacher who is well recognized in their school, pedagogically, can question some things. Because if not, if you do not have recognition in your school, even though they might not tell it to you publicly, they can talk behind your back, "what are you speaking about if you are not capable of…" In my case, this is super clear. My class is completely exposed. If I make a mistake, everybody sees it. The same if I do things well. Because the courtyard [for physical education classes] is in the middle of the school. So, I feel that there are some things that I can say because my work is validated inside the school. If it were not validated, I think that there are some things that I would feel ashamed to say or I wouldn't dare to say. Even if I didn't feel ashamed, I don't know if it's possible to say it. (…) My headteacher is (…) very determined that the school needs to be a "dignified school" [*escuela digna*]. So well, you say, "Okay, I can contribute to the dignified school, and I can use three days of my holidays painting the court so that when the students arrive, they don't slip and I can do my classes. But the system is bad because if we didn't have all this bureaucracy, all the economic control and embezzlement that we have, I could have asked that someone, a professional painter, could have come to paint the court and not me". Therefore, for example, if I didn't do my work and understand that pedagogically I need a decent court, I could probably be questioned when I put into question the structural problems that we have today because they would say to me: "Well, what are you doing to make a more dignified school?" (…) Today I can say, "I was here in the summer painting the court. I'm not bothered for doing that; I did it this time and could do it five more times if necessary. But this is unacceptable. It shouldn't be like this. I do it in a good vibe [*en la buena onda*], but it's not okay…" And I have said it. When you do that, you can say: "Okay, we want a dignified school, but at the expense of whom? At the expense of our own lack of dignity". (Maria)

By painting the courtyard, Maria elaborated for herself an ethical space from where she could speak her own truth. Painting the courtyard so that "when the students arrive, they don't slip and I can do my classes" is a way for Maria to have initiative and be responsible for a matter affecting her students' interest. To "put into question the structural problems that we have today," she needs to feel ontologically secure, i.e., pedagogically validated. It is from the field of pedagogy that dissident teachers cultivate a sense of ontological security that enables them to "question some things." From this point of view, the tactic of pedagogical validation can be understood as a set of different experimental practices, from performing well in standardized tests or evaluation policies to painting the school's courtyard, which enables the dissident teacher to fight from the pedagogical field on different battlefronts. This tactic is an untested and feasible one (Freire, 2005) to articulate a different way of speaking, which is political in a *parrehesian* sense (Ball, 2016); that is, it involves a

particular "ethics of speech," related to speaking frankly (Foucault, 2005) about what teachers consider is unacceptable.

However, how different is Maria's tactic to validate herself pedagogically through painting the courtyard to gain the legitimacy to question structural problems in her school to the tactic followed by the CDP to accept a technocratic and managerial policy as the TCP to ensure that their claims for pay increases were "above suspicion"? The difference is that the CDP accepted the TCP without articulating a *political critique.* Thus, when the CDP leadership argued that the TCP was a step forward, their discourse, as Eduardo argues, was "coherent with their way of thinking." Therefore, even though the structural problems of teachers' working conditions are crucial for both Maria and the CDP leadership, they elaborate their critique situated in different fields of struggle. Maria's tactic is based on gaining pedagogical legitimacy to criticize different problems she sees in her school. It is difficult to imagine that Maria would have accepted structural improvements by trading how she organizes her work in the courtyard. However, that is precisely what the CDP did: they negotiated, not the painting, but the regulation of the courtyard to gain economic improvements.

Therefore, pedagogical validation involves a willingness to be subjected to an ideal of the "good teacher" or "dignified school" mobilized by a set of devices that the dissident teachers do not necessarily share. As a tactic, it uses self-improvement practices as a way to open the field of pedagogy as a site for self-formation. As Lis argues, it is a tactic that acts under the ethical principle of "if the enemy puts tests on you, well go to know them." By engaging in self-improvement practices, a sense of self-validation is recovered, as Maria states, "I can say because my work is validated inside the school. If it were not validated, I think that there are some things that I would feel ashamed to say or I wouldn't dare to say". A sense of ontological security, of not feeling ashamed and daring to speak, is recovered by the tactic of pedagogical validation. The capture of the field of pedagogy by a technocratic mode of governing, in a way, has made it necessary for the dissident teachers to become "good teachers" within its technocratic and narrow parameters to be able to gain some sense of ontological security and speak their truths. Pedagogical validation is one of the most common tactics making possible a *political critique*. From this ethical self-configuration, the problem of the classroom teacher, the main subject of governance articulated by the technocratic pedagogy, becomes a site of struggle. However, one of the risks of this tactic is that it is not clear to what extent this ethical self-configuration is being attached to the narrow parameters promoted by these technocratic policies.

Discussion: The Emergence of a Political-Pedagogical Teacher Subjectivity

To conclude, I want to highlight three ideas based on the previous analysis that illustrate the emergence of a new teacher subjectivity.

In the first place, and following Gramsci (1971), understanding how the old order of things operates in our daily lives is essential. The dissident teachers' critique, articulated in the idea of *political-pedagogical*, offers a way to understand the specific ways in which 40 years of neoliberalism has reconfigured a particular field of experience of our daily life: teaching and learning. From this perspective, the traditional union teachers' struggle against low salaries and neoliberal precariousness is necessary but not sufficient. This conventional perspective does not clearly understand how the logic of management operates, leaving the technocratic set of practices that regulates and organize the field of pedagogy unproblematized. The dissident teachers' struggle shows us two ways in which the technocratic pedagogy, as a dominant form of power governing teachers, operates today. First, the practice of teaching and learning only makes sense, and makes sense of its practitioners, teachers, and students, in terms of their measurabilities. The different sets of end products have

become *the* purpose of teaching and learning. Second, it denies, that is, it renders invalid or unthinkable, other forms of teaching and learning. Following Foucault (1997), it captures the *telos*, or the problem of "which is the kind of being to which we aspire when we behave in a moral way?" (p. 265). By fixing the practices of self-formation within the narrow grid of practices of self-improvement, it excludes other ways of problematizing pedagogy, making it difficult to think of other forms of pedagogical relationships.

Second, the relevance of articulating and formalizing a dissent around everyday problems. Reading the present is the first step that dissident teachers show us. The second is disrupting the present by moving beyond the neoliberal production of fear, insecurity, and precarity. This disruption requires the articulation and formalization of a critical perspective around our phenomenological experience of the present. In this case, the dissent was double: on the one hand, against the leaders of the CDP who neglected the everyday experience of teachers by expressing disdain for the classroom. On the other hand, against the classroom-teacher who could not take a position and elaborate a political critique towards the way they are governed in the classroom. This fundamental space-time of relationships between the teacher and the student is the primary setting of technocratic pedagogy. The classroom-teacher subject has been intensively subjected to a set of managerial and governmental policies by this technical pedagogy. By neglecting the classroom, the CDP traditional leaders could not understand the bodily experience of *agobio*. As a result, a whole field of everyday problems for teachers was unproblematized by their union leaders. Then, space was opened for organized teachers to elaborate a dissent or a new conception to read their everyday experience consciously and critically. Dissident teachers felt *agobio* and, at the same time, were able to articulate and formalize a critical perspective to try to make sense of why they were feeling ontologically insecure. *Political-pedagogical dissent* creates a bridge between organized and everyday teachers that links a shared experience of being subjected to technocratic pedagogy and managerial neoliberalism. They became organic leaders of this unproblematized experience by offering a more articulated and political reading of their present.

Third, the significance of creating and experimenting with new practices to politicize everyday life experiences. The dissident teachers, choosing *pedagogy* as their sphere of activity to elaborate a *political critique*, unfold a set of experimental practices refusing to accept being molded by the technocratic pedagogy. Pedagogical validation is one specific tactic the dissident teachers use to be their own guides in a field hegemonized by technocratic pedagogy. The dissident teachers accept actively and consciously to participate in self-improvement practices imposed by the technocratic pedagogy. This participation is necessary to resist the ontological insecurities that this same order of things produces in them. This ethical self-configuration is relevant because it opens the problem of who is and what it means to be a good classroom teacher as a site of struggle. Pedagogical validation is just one of a different set of practices of experimentation within the field of pedagogy. The main effect of this tactic is providing a sense of ontological security, which puts into question the whole technocratic pedagogical ensemble. In this sense, the emergence of a political-pedagogical teacher is a struggle to move beyond ontological insecurities by bringing pedagogy back into the sphere of the political.

These three ideas, taken together, offer an empirical-theoretical example of the emergence of new subjectivities to struggle for something different to what neoliberalism has to offer. Since the 2010s, teachers at a global scale have been more aware of the importance of resisting GERM (Compton & Weiner, 2008). The US has had some emblematic movements, like that of the Chicago Teachers (McAlevey, 2016), which in 2012 had their "largest strike of the new millennium" (p. 101). Another example is the teachers' movement from Los Angeles in 2019, which as Weiner (2019) argues, in their "recent victorious strike" can become an example for teachers around the country to

"roll back free-market education reform." These protests have in common their straightforward anti-neoliberal narrative and, as Stevenson (2015) argues for the case of England, the emergence of "antagonistic relationships" (p. 616) with neoliberal policies. As the work edited by Gawain Little (2015) shows, the target is GERM, and the objective is to build resistance and solidarity. In this broader context, the dissident teachers from Chile can contribute to their colleagues worldwide by sharing how they resist and struggle with the world's oldest and most profound neoliberal school system. The primary way Chilean teachers are struggling with neoliberalism is by recovering back a sense of ontological security in the field of pedagogy. *Political-pedagogical dissident* illustrates then a broader political strategy that can be useful for teachers in other parts of the world: the agenda of recovering control and autonomy over the daily process of teachers' work.

Acknowledgements

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