

Cultural relevance of the curriculum in schools in Chile's northern tri-border region: dilemmas and challenges

Pertinencia cultural del currículo en escuelas de la trifrontera norte de Chile: dilemas y desafíos

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Abstract

The study analyses the contents alluding to migration, respect for cultural diversity, nationalism and chileanness, in the curriculum of the subjects History, Geography and Social Sciences and Language and Communication/Language and Literature, implemented in urban and rural schools in the tri-border region of Arica and Parinacota (Chile) with the highest concentration of students of Andean or Afro origin, and children born in Chile of migrant parents. Through thematic content analysis with the QSR-Nvivo 12 programme, the corpus of curricula and school texts used at seven educational levels between 2018 and 2020 is analysed. The results reveal the scarcity of content referring to migration and cultural diversity. The contents of chileanness and nationalism refer to present and past tensions and disputes between Chile and neighbouring countries, with a predominantly nationalist position of sovereignty. It is concluded that the curriculum is not culturally relevant to the tri-border region.

Keywords: education, curriculum, border conflicts, cultural diversity, border studies.

Resumen

Se analizan contenidos alusivos a migración, respeto hacia la diversidad cultural, nacionalismo y chilenidad en currículos de las asignaturas historia, geografía y ciencias sociales y lenguaje y comunicación/lengua y literatura, implementados en escuelas urbanas y rurales de la región trifronteriza de Arica y Parinacota (norte de Chile) con mayor concentración de estudiantes de origen andino o afro e hijos

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nacidos en Chile de padres inmigrantes. A través del análisis de contenido temático, con el programa QSR-Nvivo 12, se examina el corpus de programas de estudio y textos escolares utilizados en siete niveles educativos, desde sexto año de enseñanza básica hasta cuarto año de enseñanza media, entre 2018 y 2020. Los resultados revelan la escasez de contenidos sobre migración y diversidad cultural; los contenidos sobre chilenidad y nacionalismo remiten a tensiones y disputas políticas —presentes y pasadas— entre Chile y los países vecinos, donde predomina una posición nacionalista de soberanía. Se concluye que los currículos no presentan pertinencia cultural para la región trifronteriza.

Palabras clave: educación, currículo, conflictos fronterizos, diversidad cultural, estudios fronterizos.

Introduction

The curriculum, as a concept, can acquire various meanings due to the variable nature of schooling and its inherent experiences. The curriculum is usually understood as the official program taught in the Chilean education system. In other words, those devices through which cultural homogenization is conducted in schools (Mardones, 2020). Through them, the State of Chile historically standardizes and centralizes the dynamics of teaching at the national level; this implies a nationalization policy of monocultural character in state schools (Mansilla Sepúlveda et al., 2016), chilenizing (Stefoni et al., 2016) and centralizing (Latorre et al., 1991).

The official curriculum is the formal content of education; it fulfills standardization functions within the school to produce an imagined community (Anderson, 2016). At the same time, it delivers a cultural legacy to the territory's citizens. Therefore, the selection of curricular content is relevant as a cultural choice to be transmitted to another generation; in addition, it is essential because of its impact on the formation of the socio-cultural identity of students in national schools and on how they face the future (Quintriqueo Millán & McGinity Travers, 2009).

In the 21st century, the standardizing function of the curriculum is challenged by an increasingly multicultural society, which generates the need to provide a place for dialogue and intercultural construction in schools, challenges that have been discussed in curriculum theory to present new contextualization proposals (Pinto Contreras, 2009). Accordingly, the intercultural approach presents itself as a challenge and, simultaneously, an opportunity to end the contrast between the cultural content provided by the official curriculum and the culture of particular sectors of society. This opportunity implies a curriculum oriented to the interaction between people and different cultural practices, an interaction that does not make social, economic, political, and power skewness invisible but recognizes it (Walsh, 2005).

Nevertheless, for the Chilean reality, this challenge is complicated; even during periods of educational reforms, the incorporation of cultural diversity was not emphasized. On the contrary, the transformations focused on subordinating the regional educational administrative structure to the central authority; this perpetuated the lack of reflective practices that hinder cultural changes necessary for cultural relevance (Alfaro-Urrutia, 2017). That is, the curriculum fulfilled a standardization purpose under a paradigm that did not consider diverse cultural realities; this gives certain indications of the little cultural relevance in the implementation of education programs

(Ibáñez-Salgado & Druker-Ibáñez, 2018). For example, those that address diversity, such as intercultural bilingual education, aim to reinforce assimilation (Mondaca et al., 2018; Mondaca Rojas, 2018) and lead to the establishment of monocultural dynamics in schools (Cuevas & Carrillo, 2020), which lead to the Chileanization of the student body (Stefoni et al., 2016). In other words, assimilation makes diversities invisible. In this manner, ways of thinking, knowing and understanding the world different from what is established in the national curriculum, which establishes the Eurocentric perspective as the only valid model, are excluded (Walsh, 2008). Thus, welcoming diversity becomes a challenge in the new schooling of the 21st century, implying a change in the homogenizing paradigm of the “Chilean school culture”.

The need for a curriculum relevant to the context of cultural diversity in the region of Arica and Parinacota, in the extreme north of Chile, is based on its tri-border nature, which treasures a complex historical panorama characterized by territorial tensions and economic conflicts between neighboring nations. Nevertheless, at the same time, it comprises dynamics of exchange and mobility because of the neighborhood (Tapia Ladino, 2017). An example of this proximity is the Alianza Estratégica Aymaras sin Fronteras, a foundation comprised of 57 municipalities in Peru, Bolivia and Chile, created to protect the natural resources and identity of the Aymara people. This entity acquires relevance because it was born from the municipalities, not from the countries (Bello Arellano, 2012).

This need becomes stronger when considering the presence of the Aymara people in the region of Arica and Parinacota. Navarro indicates that

most authors agree that around the 13th century AD, people of one or several ethnic groups that spoke an archaic Aymara language were already settled in the Andean highlands, organized in territorial and political units. (Navarro Martín, 2021, p. 12)

In addition to the fact that at present

the Aymara are most numerous in the departments of Puno and Tacna, in Peru; the regions of Tarapacá and Arica and Parinacota, in northern Chile; and the departments of La Paz, Oruro and Potosí, in Bolivia. (Navarro Martín, 2021, p. 7)

Historically, from the beginning of the War of the Pacific, the Chilean military-national-state discourse would comprise and lay the foundations for a supposed moral, political, cultural, and racial superiority in Chile towards neighboring countries. This strains interactions between Chilean, Peruvian, and Bolivian citizens in the border region of Arica and Parinacota. Nevertheless, in the 21st century, worldwide migration and technological globalization have partially exposed States to a reconfiguration of their societies based on cultural diversity due to the growing visibility of new ethnic and religious communities. Accordingly, Chile has not remained exempt from these migrant flows, where the causes for emigrating and immigrating from the Peru-Chile or Bolivia-Chile land borders are diverse (Berganza Setién & Cerna Rivera, 2011) and in which there are growing migratory movements that are characterized by their spaces where transnational interactions and relations are developed that constitute contact zones with internationality (Tapia Ladino, 2012, 2015).

Migration is not alien to educational contexts. To this end, Riedemann et al. (2021) raise the complexity that exists in the ability of national students to recognize their

migrant peers as legitimate subjects of rights in Chile. This situation has been aggravated by the influence of adult discourses that promote the perception of the migrant population and students as a potential threat and competition for scarce resources and rights in an unequal society. In this context, citizenship training at school is presented as an appropriate and necessary space to address some aspects that, once again, highlight the need to discuss these issues within the learning processes.

The border region of Arica and Parinacota is also culturally diverse and is characterized by particular ethnic and tribal groups. In 2017, they reached 36 % (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas Chile [INE], 2018), with the Aymara people being the predominant one, followed by the Mapuche, Quechua, and Diaguita. Nevertheless, these data do not consider important socio-cultural groups, such as the Afro-descendant tribal (De la Maza & Campos, 2020; Espinosa Peña, 2015; Milien, 2015), which creates a climate of broad multiculturalism in which different cultures coexist that do not necessarily relate from interculturality. On the contrary, from the difference and recognition of the belonging group. In this way, the region comprises a space of cultural diversity, even with peoples present who are not recognized by the Chilean State, which highlights the unique opportunity to face this modern panorama with new educational tools. According to this background, the area where this research is conducted comprises an area of international interest, providing a transnational zone conducive to studying cultural diversity and interculturality. Furthermore, in the school context, migration is recognized by its actors “as part of the cultural *ethos* of northern Chile” (Joiko & Cortés Saavedra, 2022, p. 9).

Cultural diversity is understood as those relations at different levels (individual, collective, experiential and institutional) articulated in contexts of cultural heterogeneity (Dietz et al., 2009), as is the case in the region of Arica and Parinacota. Likewise, this heterogeneity and the consequent relations are also present in the classroom, enabling the adequate and necessary study of intercultural education, considering a critical sense and conceiving—in practice—a political and epistemic project (Walsh, 2005). The idea is to promote, through proposals incorporated into a formal, taught and hidden curriculum, the formation of citizens for this nation and the multicultural world.

This intercultural proposal requires, from an epistemological balance, the recognition of diverse cultural practices, which makes the opening of free space that enables symmetrical interactions necessary. The local wisdom of cultural practices pluralizes knowledge and needs to be incorporated to generate universality in a balanced world (Fornet-Betancourt, 2006). Nevertheless, in a study conducted in Viña del Mar, Valparaíso region, Chile, according to the voices of school actors, it was revealed that these do not feel considered by the school curriculum (Navarro Reyes & Trazar Badilla, 2017) and in the region of Arica and Parinacota, northern Chile, other dilemmas are found that hinder education, for example, the conflict of sovereignty definition between nation states and indigenous peoples (Choque-Caseres, 2019).

In the region of Arica and Parinacota, the school system is attended by children and adolescents from countries with historical disputes and constant and ongoing national or ethnic tensions with Chile. This scenario highlights the need to review and analyze the curriculum concerning plans, programs and study texts in subjects in which it is expected to find a greater amount of content associated with interculturality,

among them, history, geography and social sciences (HG&CS) and language and communication/language and literature (L&C/L&L), in 6th grade of elementary education (E. E.) to 4th year of secondary education (S. E.).

There is a need to analyze the curriculum's cultural relevance for the region of Arica and Parinacota to enable the contents taught in the subjects under study to be valued. This analysis, according to its contribution to inclusion based on respect and equity for all students attending educational establishments in this region, regardless of their national origin. Therefore, the objective is to analyze, from a critical intercultural approach, the contents alluding to *migration, respect for cultural diversity, nationalism* and *Chileanness* in the subjects HG&CS and L&C/L&L in urban and rural schools, colleges, and high schools with a higher concentration of students of Andean and Afro origin, children of Chilean and foreign immigrants in the region of Arica and Parinacota.

In order to accomplish this task, the article first describes its methodological design and research resources. Secondly, it analyzes thematic frequencies and interest categories: *migration, respect for cultural diversity, nationalism* and *Chileanness*. Finally, the discussion of results and conclusions is offered.

A critical intercultural approach to curriculum analysis

In Latin America, educational systems “continue to be tools of cultural homogenization, although this is not so evident and explicit in curricular instruments” (Méndez Méndez, 2022, p. 75) that constitute one of the mechanisms of reproduction and exercise of power “as an ideological apparatus in the configuration of subjectivities” (Redon, 2016, p. 26). Education in Chile is no stranger to this situation, governed by technical rationality, which deepens the current curricular bases, the basis of the study programs of the subjects and school texts that, as a whole, contribute to configuring a school order functional to the dominant social order (Oliva, 2017).

Faced with this scenario, for the analysis of curricula and school texts, an option was taken for a *critical intercultural approach* (Ferrão Candau, 2013, Walsh, 2017), understood, in the first place, as a look that enables articulating equality and recognition of cultural differences, as proposing alternatives to the monocultural and westernizing character that predominate in most countries of the continent (Ferrão Candau, 2013).

Furthermore, Walsh's (2017) reflections on critical interculturality are collected in the second mode from the small hopes exercised by decolonial pedagogies. This idea is a possibility to crack the curricular monoculturalism hand in hand with the transformative critical curricular conception (Pinto Contreras, 2008, Pinto Contreras & Osorio Vargas, 2014) that does not pursue to build curricula and school texts of its own for the region of Arica and Parinacota. In short, the aim is for the official curriculum to incorporate local topics in the search for the cultural relevance of the school curriculum.

Methodology

Design

The study comprises a qualitative methodological design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) using the thematic content analysis technique using the QSR-Nvivo 12 software.

The research corpus corresponds to the study programs and textbooks of the HG&CS and L&C/L&L subjects of the SM and Santillana publishers, used between 2018 and 2020 in the 6th year of basic education up to the 4th year of secondary education by the teachers of these subjects in seven educational communities of the xv region of Arica and Parinacota, four of them located in the rural sector of the foothills and valleys (Putre, Azapa, Lluta and Codpa) and three schools located in the urban area of Arica, the regional capital.

The study prioritized the analysis of the subjects of language and communication and history, geography and social sciences, which, due to their formative identity purposes, seek to incorporate students into the cultural community and the development of competencies that enable them to understand and develop in society.

The set of curricular documents was analyzed to answer the research question: what, how and how much are the topics of *migration*, *respect for cultural diversity*, *nationalism*, and *Chileanness* addressed? For this purpose, as analysis resources, the units referring to these topics were used to cover the written content, images, and photographs were excluded.

These themes¹ were the most recurrent concepts, derived from the thematic analysis in an emergent manner, conducted with the support of the Nvivo program, whose procedure consisted of reviewing all the plans, programs and texts of HG&CS and L&C/L&L students from the 6th year of elementary school to the 4th year of middle school. Of 53 school texts analyzed, 31 included topics alluding to interculturality; 76 units of analysis (paragraphs) with 1 622 coded references were identified. In the case of plans and programs, out of 58 reviewed, 90 units of analysis were obtained, with 1 424 coded references. According to the content analysis conducted on the two subjects, the following total frequencies were found: 29 referred to *migration*, 106 to *respect for cultural diversity*, 12 to *nationalism* and 17 to *Chileanness*.

¹ The data are derived from the Fondecyt Regular Project No. 1181713 Interculturality in diverse and sometimes adverse schools: curriculum, curricular content and values in the border context of Arica and Parinacota. These topics are in line with the specific objective of identifying and characterizing the contents of the subjects of history, geography and social sciences, language and communication in the Chilean national curriculum, which considers historical, political, cultural and social aspects. At the same time, they are the basis for the development of the continuity project Fondecyt Regular N° 1221330 Distance education, intercultural curriculum and ICTs in times of COVID-19 in rural primary and secondary schools in the northern border of Chile.

Results

The findings are presented based on the thematic content analysis for the four axes of the article: *migration, respect for cultural diversity, nationalism and Chileanness*.

Migration

The study programs of the HG&CS subject view this category from a local and national perspective by studying the causes and consequences of Chile's rural-urban migration process of the mid-twentieth century. It refers to the north of Chile based on migration statistics between 1907 and 1960, asking questions such as: "Why do you think that the Norte Grande and Norte Chico areas tend to expel population? Who will these people be, and what motivates them to move?" (Ministerio de Educación, 2018a, p. 65). Meanwhile, in the HG&CS elective plans, the focus is broadened towards the Latin American and global reality.

Within the guidelines for the professor, in the contextualization of the program, it is indicated that the processes related to migration should consider a local expression of particularity to rescue links in daily life (Ministerio de Educación, 2020a, p. 28). Nevertheless, it does not provide tools for that. On the other hand, the Chile and the Latin American Region Program (Ministerio de Educación, 2020a) presents the current Latin American migratory context as a problem, a social and cultural process that involves an economic and social challenge, approached from a research perspective, especially in Chile (Ministerio de Educación, 2020a, p. 161). The study program links migration with the concepts of diversity and interculturality, particularly in the Chilean case, describing it as a process that is part of the country's history, refers to statistics and builds a profile of the migrant.

Meanwhile, the HG&CS Global World General Education Program (Ministerio de Educación, 2020b) addresses the subject of migration with a formative purpose; it seeks to have students understand the processes on a global scale by analyzing the relation between migration and the transformations of the nation-state (Ministerio de Educación, 2020b, p. 39). The activities proposed in the unit deal with migration from different angles: as a common phenomenon with other societies, anchored in the history of humankind; a concept from which a typology of migrants is derived, differentiating it from refugees; a factor in the transformation of the modern State; and from an economic perspective, as a contribution to development, highlighting the activating role of family remittances. This information is consistent with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):

(...) most families that make use of remittances are committed to meeting their SDGs [sustainable development goals]: reducing poverty, improving health and nutrition, increasing educational opportunities, improving housing and sanitation, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and reducing inequality, as well as improving the ability to cope with uncertainty in their lives by increasing savings and building assets that will guarantee them a more stable future. (Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola [FIDA], 2017, p. 2)

Furthermore, this curricular proposal links migration with culture, the valuing of diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion, reflected in activities aimed at making students “understand the positive impact that migration can have on the host society and value the actions taken to strengthen the inclusion of migrants” (Ministerio de Educación, 2020b, p. 55).

The L&L programs address aspects of identity and discrimination involved in migrating through a more everyday type of displacement for Chilean students and students from the northern region, such as rural-urban migration and the literary character of the provincial. The opportunity to discuss biases and encourage the professor to explain their effects (biases) and how social stereotypes are constructed is visualized (Ministerio de Educación, 2018b, p. 94). In this way, literary texts are approached concerning the subject of migration, problematize the phenomenon in terms of identity and belonging, “bringing into play culture, worldviews, different languages, customs, religions, landscapes, etcetera. In short, the relation with otherness” (Ministerio de Educación, 2020c, p. 198).

As a controversial topic, the migration category is approached through argumentation and debate. The program offers topics to be discussed: reactions to people with different cultures, effects of the increasing entry of migrants to the country, and the voluntary abandonment of the country of origin; also, it emphasizes that “the discussion be developed in an environment of respect and non-discrimination” (Ministerio de Educación, 2018b, p. 105).

In L&L school texts, the approach to the migration issue is developed with the difficulties involved; it seeks to raise awareness about them, as in the text of the first year of high school (Berríos Muñoz et al., 2018), through the viewing of a fragment of the 2014 documentary *Abrazos*, by the Guatemalan filmmaker Luis Argueta.

Among the difficulties faced by people who migrate is xenophobia, which is not named as such in the text of Editorial SM (Domínguez Ureta et al., 2018) for the third year of high school, it is alluded to as “discrimination”. It is the subject of a round table discussion, a 2008 Unicef report that states: “In Chile, the highest degree of discrimination exists concerning foreigners”. “Do you think this situation has changed today?” (Domínguez Ureta et al., 2018, p. 245). In contrast, in the Editorial Santillana text (Barros Cruz et al., 2018) for the second year of middle school, “Unit 3. Cruce de horizonte” is dedicated to migration. Through the analysis of a vignette, xenophobia is defined as:

(...) a feeling of fear and hatred that leads some to think and act against certain foreigners, believing that they should return to their country. Xenophobia shows great ignorance because migration has always been part of human history. In Chile, migrants have rights that must be respected, and the mixture of cultures is always good. (Barros Cruz et al., 2018, p. 121)

As shown, this school text highlights migrants as subjects of rights. The unit progresses to the migration situation in Chile, plotted in figures, and through exploratory questions and the description of the International Organization for Migration’s concept of migrants (Barros Cruz et al., 2018).

In summary, in school curricula and textbooks, migration is approached as a human experience, coupled with unpleasant situations for the migrant, such as discrimination and xenophobia exercised by the receiving society. It is striking that none of the curricular documents do their objectives, and learning activities aim to unveil the reasons for those situations (Riedemann et al., 2021).

Respect towards cultural diversity

In the HG&CS programs, the concept of *cultural diversity* carries a negative semantic load; on the one hand, the ideas of border conflicts and land possession and, on the other hand, the lack of knowledge of the indigenous cultural diversities present in Chile. In the curricula, respect for otherness appears as a learning objective (OA), in attitudinal terms: “(...) respect cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, and ideas and beliefs different from one’s own, considering the importance of dialogue for coexistence and the achievement of agreements, avoiding prejudices” (Ministerio de Educación, 2018c, p. 46).

Likewise, cultural diversity is understood, in a positive sense, as a characteristic of human beings and, as such, implies respect for it. In the educational field, it constitutes a challenge and an enrichment of learning contexts. In the guidelines of the HG&CS Global World Program for the third and fourth year of secondary education, this category is expressed as: “(...) the valuation of diversity and multiculturalism, mainly in the area of migration and culture that enriches the contexts, while demanding greater complexity in the analyses that are performed” (Ministerio de Educación, 2020b, p. 30).

In HG&CS textbooks, cultural diversity is related to conflicting situations, represented by education/barbarism, miscegenation and the exercise of homogenization experienced in the 19th century. This conflict is “metamorphosed” by conceptualizing cultural diversity as a challenge to coexistence and identity.

The L&L curricula would represent an inclusive gesture towards cultural diversity, from the curricular point of view, reflected in the attitudinal orientations, encouraging respect and appreciation of diversity. In addition to the use of literature as a way to access other cultures, the study of it is identified as “(...) a cornerstone of the curriculum also insofar as it enables the perception of the diversity that exists in the world, a condition for the development of an open and inclusive society” (Ministerio de Educación, 2018c, p. 35).

In the L&L study texts, the approach to cultural diversity is paired with identity and mass media. The sources of indigenous knowledge, mainly Mapuche, are understood through the voices of their intellectuals and writers, including Pedro Cayuqueo, journalist and writer, and Elicura Chihuailaf, poet and National Literature Prize 2020. Furthermore, *Andean culture* appears on one occasion; it alludes to Quechua in a text whose main theme is Mapuche culture. In Chile, although the Mapuche are the majority among the native peoples, this hegemonic presence in the textbooks makes other indigenous peoples, such as those of the study region, invisible.

In summary, in both subjects, the concept of *cultural diversity* seems to be constructed from the conflict/valuation binomial. According to the fragments analyzed, the texts are culturally irrelevant to the context of northern Chile. This fact could be

explained by the predominant and hegemonic presence of the Mapuche people to the detriment of other native peoples.

Nationalism

In the HG&CS texts, this category is problematized from a nineteenth-century perspective and a topic currently being discussed. On the one hand, from a nationalism whose value or moralizing perspective evokes the importance of maintaining a national identity unaffected by cultural differences among people and, on the other hand, with voices that question the above. This fact is reflected in the secondary source quote from a text by philosopher Fernando Savater:

(...) we, men, were not born to live as uniformed battalions, each with his flag at the front, but to mix with each other while recognizing an essential similarity despite all the cultural differences, and from this mixture to invent ourselves again and again (...). (Morales Mery et al., 2018, p. 97)

This category (nationalism) is examined from a military or army perspective, which is predominant to the amount of related content. It reviews war confrontations in which Chile participated; it addresses issues about the disputed territories and how the feeling of nationalism is strengthened in the face of victories: “After the end of the war, José Zapiola composed the *Hymn to the Victory of Yungay*, giving explicit form to the nationalist sentiment that had been generated during the war” (Morales Mery et al., 2018, p. 115).

In the school study text of L&L for the first year of secondary education of publishing house SM (Berríos Muñoz et al., 2018), nationalism is approached from a Chile divided by social and political differences, originated in the media and in economic-political managements that maintain the social gap. It shows a part of Chile, the one that interests the power groups; nonetheless, in the text, *Chiles Divided*, the National Council for Culture and the Arts, regarding the bicentennial of the nation in 2010, calls for the formation of a feeling of national unity, which goes beyond the historical events that mark the country and that would form a Chilean identity:

It seems that it is time for this country to be indeed that: Chile. It should have a national meaning beyond the exceptional moments in which the community spirit was expressed in the year of the Bicentennial: the generalized anguish of more than half the country with the tremors of an earthquake or the enthusiastic and shared shouts provoked by the three goals of “La Roja” (...). (Berríos Muñoz et al., 2018, p. 326)

Also, in the L&L study texts, nationalism is approached from the point of view of Chile’s immigration reality without delving into any specific origin. A perspective of openness and equal opportunities, conditions, and dignity for those who enter the country is proposed: “This requires a great political and pedagogical effort, especially when xenophobic feelings or narrow nationalism arise or, even worse, when there are external manifestations of contempt or lack of welcome towards immigrants” (Barros Cruz et al., 2018, p. 144).

The category evidence in the L&L school textbooks shares Bernardo Subercaeaux's statements, which rely on Nietzsche and Mapuche's literature to propose the diversity present in Chile. It raises changes in areas of diversity through which the nation is moving thanks to globalization and how it benefits to advance as a society, despite the discourse that regrets the loss of local customs. On the other hand, this historian raises how certain cultural aspects change without losing their essence and endure over time: "(...) It is about two different logics or matrices that concur to outline the national, and that shape discursive fields that are also different" (Domínguez Ureta et al., 2018, p. 282).

Chileanness

In L&L school textbooks, the category of Chileanness is approached from the construction of identity, what it means to be Latin American and Chilean. It is the most developed topic. For example, in the SM L&L first-year middle school book (Berríos Muñoz et al., 2018), in the unit "Collective identities, what do we have in common?", the concept of identity is understood as a "(...) complex construction that is modified over time. Its complex character derives from the fact that diverse elements converge in it, such as traditions, history, languages, contact with other peoples, etcetera" (Berríos Muñoz et al., 2018, p. 318).

This complexity is illustrated in the reflections of four intellectuals on Latin American and Chilean identity. For the latter, as an example, the essay *Menos cóndor y más huemul*, by Gabriela Mistral is used; the author reviews the complex Chilean identity by stressing the symbolism of these species, present in one of the national emblems: the national coat of arms. For the 1945 Nobel Laureate in Literature, the condor represents "the dominance of a strong race" and, in contrast, the huemul alludes to "(...) the sensitivity of a race: fine senses, vigilant intelligence, grace (...)" (Berríos Muñoz et al., 2018, p. 322).

Historical events such as the First Government Board, earthquakes, and participation in sports championships also shape part of the Chilean identity. Native peoples and migrants are rarely mentioned; compared with other topics, they appear at least twice as part of a more complex whole comprising the *Chilean identity*. At the same time, the texts refer to *Chileanness* from the perspective of rural-urban migration and how these people seek to maintain the identity of their place of origin. They meet with their fellow citizens, and, with this, they originate a cultural mixture in the inhabited area to the point of acquiring Chilean characteristics, such as the characteristic accent.

For the third year of middle school, in the SM L&L book (Domínguez Ureta et al., 2018), the category of Chileanness points to the supposed *patriotism and hospitality*, which would characterize the population in a text from a service agency for foreigners entitled *Patriots and hospitality. Guide to Chile* (Domínguez Ureta et al., 2018, pp. 125-126). The textbook uses this text in unit 3 as a didactic resource on argumentation, and one of its objectives is to resolve controversies; nevertheless, this purpose is not worked out in the suggested activities. Nor does it seek to unveil, critically, statements that become commonplaces of "patriotism". This concept would take force when discussing topics about a neighboring country or participating in a soccer championship.

Moreover, that alluded hospitality, reserved for one type of immigrant, the European, “(...) who were granted the same citizen rights as any Chilean” (Domínguez Ureta et al., 2018, p. 126). Likewise, the activities formulated for this argumentative text—of an advertising nature—seek that the students identify theoretical aspects (argumentation) but do not stress the representation of patriotism and hospitality that characterize the Chilean culture, of effort and mutual support among compatriots. Neither is the feeling of hospitality regarding receiving immigrants, as it is only exemplified by European people.

Discussion and conclusions

In summary, the Chilean school curriculum presents little content alluding to *migration*, *respect for cultural diversity*, *nationalism*, and *Chileanness* in the border region of Arica and Parinacota. Specifically, those included in school textbooks visualize the indigenous person, the immigrant, or the person belonging to a minority group as an *other*, scarcely associated with the Aymara culture.

This finding is in line with that evidenced by Canales Tapia et al. (2020) for the case of school texts where native peoples:

(...) they are still subaltern subjects, colonized and a “but” for national coexistence; this makes the teaching in school texts a discursive-structural continuum since it gives validity and notoriety to the nineteenth-century thinking referred to indigenous peoples, racist, stereotyped and lacking any desire to look and know the otherness, from their identity processes and with others. (Canales Tapia et al., 2020, p. 13)

In short, there would be a silence of the curriculum in terms of cultural representativeness (Jiménez Vargas et al., 2018), where “Chilean schools in ethnic contexts have made indigenous knowledge invisible and have only promoted nationalist and assimilationist discourses” (Canales Tapia et al., 2020, p. 8).

At a macro-social level, these results refer to the current challenges of the transformation of the State in the context of globalization and the consequent migration and cultural diversity that constitute today’s Chile. At the micro-social level, an idea of Chilean identity is developed around Chileanness and nationalism. These topics are based on *a*) contents on the teaching of war conflicts with neighboring countries; *b*) historical events in America and Chile, contextualized in the processes of colonization and conquest, mainly referring to the limits and challenges to Chilean sovereignty and territoriality, associated with the War of the Pacific; *c*) native peoples, addressed generically; and *d*) border context in tension and disputes. It should be noted that Castro Palacios understands Chile’s war victory over Bolivia as “(...) the definitive consolidation of nationality through military success” (Castro Palacios, 2014, p. 50).

Nevertheless, these topics are treated in an apparent way, unspecific in value terms, but they transmit a hegemonic and homogenizing national ideology, not representative of the diverse cultures that coexist in the study region. They are neither explicit nor critical, only descriptive and general. In other words, they are treated with few options to make indigenous and migrant groups visible, Chilean national centralization predominates, and the cultural diversities of the northern zone are made invisible. This

pattern is because they discuss issues relevant to cultural groups in the country's center, which are addressed as "national". That is to say, a hegemonic "national centralist and ethnic" predominance sustained in the Mapuche culture. Furthermore, in agreement with Mondaca-Rojas et al. (2020), the curriculum presents nationalistic tendencies based on the assimilation of culturally diverse groups, which would guarantee the good performance of students, even in the case of children of immigrants, Chilean children of foreign parents, indigenous people, people of African descent, etcetera.

According to the results obtained, in which there is little content alluding to cultural diversity and the cultural realities present in Chile and, especially in the region of Arica and Parinacota, it is affirmed that the Chilean national curriculum does not consider cultural diversity as a space for dialogue and discussion. This idea, as proposed by Pinto Contreras (2009), highlights the need for the school institution to provide a space for intercultural dialogue and construction. Following the prevailing model of curriculum development, the school curriculum studied is the contributions approach (Banks, 2015). In other words, the propositions discussed in curriculum theory are not currently considered, i.e., to direct the dialogue towards a mutual construction through contextualizations.

This point underlies the challenges of the cultural diversity of the tri-border zone of Arica and Parinacota, a call to reorient these educational practices that tend to a dialogue between different cultures. In this way, it would be possible to advance in the construction of the conditions for the development of a critical intercultural educational approach (Tubino, 2015; Walsh, 2010) that would make it possible to incorporate into the curriculum the cultural diversities existing in the educational communities of the region under study, that is, to ensure cultural relevance.

On the other hand, according to the findings of the study, the school, as an institution that trains citizens in multicultural contexts, would not deliver content that promotes the appreciation of the different coexisting cultures in the country's classrooms, which is a dilemma, especially in culturally diverse environments, such as the case of the region of Arica and Parinacota, characterized by mobility and long-standing transnational cultural exchange (Núñez & Nielsen, 2011; Vicuña & Rojas, 2015).

Nonetheless, when analyzing the contents alluding to the topics of *migration, respect for cultural diversity, nationalism* and *Chileanness*, the predominance of the Mapuche people over other native peoples of Chile can be seen. Although this is an important step forward, it is not relevant for the north of the country and makes invisible the peoples and cultures present in the region of Arica and Parinacota, as in the case of the Aymara and Quechua peoples, or the Afro-descendant communities.

Similar results were reached by the studies of Villalón Gálvez et al. (2018, 2021) around school texts of history, geography and social sciences. In the first case, the 2016 textbook for the second year of secondary education of the SM publishing house was analyzed, and the findings concluded that the presence of indigenous, Afro-descendant, and migrant groups is rather scarce. It can be concluded that "(...) it generates a difficulty for students, through the learning of history, when using the text of study to have the opportunity, at least, to identify the diversity of social and cultural groups that (are) constituted in the past and today" (Villalón Gálvez et al., 2018, p. 622).

In the second case, the 2013 school textbook for eighth grade of elementary school of SM publishing house was studied from the description of the narratives presented about the Mapuche people. They appear “as an alien other and often defined by opposition to those subjects, stories, and values that ‘traditionally’ constituted the nation’s identity” (Villalón Gálvez et al., 2021, p. 363).

For language and communication school textbooks, Valenzuela Rettig and Ivanova (2020) analyzed the one corresponding to the sixth grade of basic education of 2016 from the SM publishing house. The results show the absence of the native peoples of northern Chile. The Pehuenche, Huilliche, Selk’nam and Mapuche peoples represent the Chilean indigenous cultural identities. The subjects and categories show scarce content alluding to regional topics with cultural relevance. In sum, the curricular content mentions, scarcely the peoples and cultures of northern Chile, and how cultural diversity is addressed is unspecific in terms of the different native and tribal peoples that make up the country, articulating, then, content from a technical approach (Grundy, 2018). The above is explained because the Chilean educational reform is supported by foreign models of knowledge construction (Oliva, 2019), such as the Tuning Project, of European origin, where the curriculum pursues the standardization of knowledge (Assaél et al., 2018) and, with this, invisibilizes the actors in their context (Mora Olate, 2018), because they are called upon to implement the reforms, but without these actors being participants in their development.

In the texts studied, this standardizing exercise is transferred to understanding Chile’s ethnic diversity, where a more recurrent presence of the Mapuche people is observed relative to the local native peoples. This exercise homogenizes the differences between indigenous peoples and even assimilates them to “the Mapuche”.

Dealing with border issues refers to past and present tensions and disputes between Chile and neighboring countries. A nationalist position of sovereignty predominates, and, in some cases, general information is presented that teachers can develop according to their assessments.

The evidence concludes that the curriculum of the subjects under study is not culturally relevant for the region of Arica and Parinacota. According to the current demands of the social context of the northern Chilean border, the official curriculum does not address cultural diversity, which results in colonizing and centralist perspectives that make cultural diversity invisible. This situation could hinder entry into the school system and the educational trajectories of students attending schools in the region from diverse foreign transnational backgrounds.

In the school texts analyzed, Chilean identity continues to be reinforced bi-univocally from militarized thinking and a homogenizing cultural individualism (Mena et al., 2012) that seeks to defend itself from an “invasion” of the “foreign”. Moreover, it is centered on the “Chilean-foreigner” identity axis and is nourished by implicitly accentuating and inciting a certain “love for the homeland” based on historical territorial tensions with neighboring countries. For example, HG&CS texts the strengthening of the “feeling” of nationalism through victories in war battles (Ministerio de Educación, 2018a). The above guides the texts to a contraposition of Chilean hegemonic culture and the “others”. The culture of the “human waste” comprises superfluous populations (Tijoux Merino & Córdova Rivera, 2015) and the damned of the earth (Fanon,

2018). This type of Chilean identity is not oriented towards an openness to cultural diversity; on the contrary, it gives way to segregating discourses maintained in everyday ties through the overrepresentation of otherness, reproducing the subordination and segregation of non-hegemonic cultural groups.

Thus, in agreement with Mondaca-Rojas et al. (2020), the official curriculum presents nationalistic tendencies reinforcing the assimilation of diversity. It affects the call for valuing cultural diversity by invisibilizing divergent discourses. For example, in the approach to nationalism in the HG&CS texts (Morales Mery et al., 2018), the idea of an essential similarity is reinforced through identification with the Chilean nation-state and its war conflicts. This idea (similarity) ends up overcoming cultural differences in a pedagogical attempt to call for “overcoming” them. Nevertheless, this overlapping gives way to strategies segregating ethnic, cultural and economic diversities. This situation is due to the despotic deterritorialization of cultural particularities and its nationalist ideology, an option subordinated to the cultural diversity in the region of Arica and Parinacota, northern Chile.

Therefore, it is a challenge to critically analyze the role played by the curriculum about issues related to the education of culturally diverse students and to move towards a model of curriculum development with a transformational approach (Banks, 1989, 2015) that manages to be oriented towards an interaction that does not make asymmetries invisible (Walsh, 2005). Furthermore, it should form citizens who recognize and value their different origins for an intercultural world that promotes and cultivates a culture of peace and respect for diversity. Therefore, in terms of citizenship education, school institutions face the challenge of “enabling citizenship learning that takes diversity into account and teaches how to function within it adequately” (Riedemann et al., 2021, p. 48).

Therefore, when understanding the particular demands of the region of Arica and Parinacota, northern Chile, another challenge arises: to question the school curriculum’s cultural relevance and the teachers’ competencies to meet the cultural diversities of their students and their values. These concerns are based on the lack of an appropriate approach to cultural diversity and the presence of unspecific approaches in plans and programs, which do not provide an adequate plan to address the region’s cultural diversity.

It can be concluded that it is necessary to incorporate strategies in the national curriculum (e.g., providing values for an ethical and rights-based debate on interculturality) to address and guide discussions among different educational agents from diverse backgrounds. This would make visible and address the asymmetries (Mondaca-Rojas et al., 2020) of the diverse cultures and the recognition and respect for their problems, particularities and territories.

These strategies would make it possible to orient educational work towards a deterritorialization of the overcoding of otherness. In this case, overcoding is understood as how the educational plan generates patterns of Chileanness/otherness. This mechanism produces a subtle use of linguistic codes to attribute absolute exteriority to migrant groups and native peoples, to define them as an external position and opposed to the hegemonic position that teaching books have referred to as “Chileanness”, which obscures and makes cultural distinctions invisible. That is, to avoid overemphasis on the categorization and representation of those who are different in cultural, ethnic and racial terms in the country, among others, to avoid the idea of a cultural hierarchy superior to another.

In order to counteract this situation, it is necessary to approach polyvocal spaces that recognize the multiplicity of valid voices, for example, by incorporating the cultural practices of local communities in a way that pluralizes knowledge (Fornet-Betancourt, 2006). It is suggested to modify the segregative and bi-univocal framework of the current Chilean national curriculum, which, as evidenced in this research, presents *nationalistic* and *centralizing* tendencies that favor the effects discussed in this article; they include dilemmas that hinder intercultural education, such as the approach to the sovereignty conflict between the nation-state and the treatment of native peoples and tribal groups.

Thus, installing competencies in the actors to develop a culturally relevant curriculum in the region of Arica and Parinacota (Zapata Sepúlveda et al., 2022) and other areas of Chile would enable their educational communities to train their students to recognize and respect their cultural diversity. In doing so, to develop citizens for an intercultural world based on a culture of peace.

It should be recalled that this study also highlights the need to address the approaches and evaluations found in the curricular content of the social sciences regarding cultural diversity and their formative role in citizenship issues in multicultural contexts.

In this context, the absence of intercultural content and the generic approach to “the indigenous” and “Chilean nationalist values” present in topics in tension between neighboring countries—for example, the War of the Pacific or migratory processes—are evidence of a national curriculum with little cultural relevance for students in the region of Arica and Parinacota, and other regions of Chile (Mora-Olate, 2022).

Finally, with the treatment of the data obtained in this research, it is expected to contribute elements for the reflection and analysis of the national curriculum, according to the evaluations that are evidenced in the formal education received by children and adolescents in multicultural contexts, and to the role that these (evaluations) play in the formation of citizens.

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