

**Women's Life stories about the decision to become teachers in Chile: A case study on
socio-psychic factors influencing professional choice.**

Tesis para optar al grado y/o título de Licenciatura en Educación con mención en Inglés y
Pedagogía en Inglés

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Dedico a:

Mi familia, por su amor y apoyo incondicional, por cada oportunidad y enseñanza brindada que me han llevado hasta este momento.

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Abstract

This study analyses how social class, gender, and socio-familial life trajectories influence the professional decision-making of a group of five young Chilean women who became English teachers. Using a qualitative socio-clinical case study, a Group of Implication and Research was implemented, in which life stories about professional choice were shared and co-analyzed by the participant-researchers. The findings indicate that the choice to become a teacher can be interpreted as a professional decision that mediates between the opposing needs for belonging to the social group of origin and the need for individual differentiation. This tension, in turn, is framed by the interplay of social class, gender, and the participants' psychic coping mechanisms. It is concluded that professional choice is a multi-factorial socio-psychic process that needs to be considered in public policy and teacher education in order to achieve more equitable teacher education that addresses class and gender differences more effectively.

Key words: professional choice, gender, social class, life stories, psychic defense mechanism.

Este estudio analiza cómo las clases sociales, el género, y trayectorias socio-familiares dentro de la trayectoria de vida influyen en la toma de decisiones de un grupo de cinco mujeres jóvenes chilenas que se convirtieron en profesoras de Inglés. Mediante un estudio de caso socio-clínico cualitativo, se implementó un Grupo de Implicación e Investigación, en el cual las historias de vida sobre la elección profesional fueron compartidas y coanalizadas por las participantes-investigadoras. Los resultados indican que la decisión de convertirse en profesoras puede interpretarse como una elección profesional que media entre las necesidades opuestas de pertenecer al grupo social de origen y la necesidad de diferenciación individual.

Esta tensión, a su vez, está enmarcada por la interacción entre la clase social, el género y los mecanismos psíquicos de afrontamiento de las participantes. Se concluye que la elección profesional es un proceso socio-psíquico multifactorial que debe ser considerado en las políticas públicas y en la formación docente para lograr una educación de profesores más equitativa, que aborde de manera más efectiva las diferencias de clase y género.

Palabras claves: elección profesional, genero, clase social, historias de vida, mecanismos psíquicos de afrontamiento.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Each year, enrollment in Chile's most socially valued and lucrative university degree programs follows a consistent trend: students who come from affluent backgrounds are admitted to prestigious programs at the most prestigious universities. Thus, year after year, the best students coming from the best schools in the country, especially from the wealthy neighborhoods in northeastern Santiago, enroll in programs like medicine, law, and engineering at the Universidad Católica or Universidad de Chile, both of which have traditionally led the country's university rankings. This trend suggests that choosing a degree -and career- is not a phenomenon solely influenced by individual preferences but also a reflection of a broader social phenomenon. An example of this is a news headline (figure 1) reporting that the UC, a university historically associated with the Chilean economic elite, was the university preferred by almost 70% of the top students in the country (Bolumburu, 2021). Not only that, but these students also chose the most prestigious and high-paying degrees at this elite university.

Figure 1:

News headline of the Chilean top students

De las 225 personas que obtuvieron puntajes nacionales, 155 decidieron estudiar en la UC. Los puntajes nacionales que postularon a la UC lo hicieron preferentemente a las carreras de Ingeniería, 97 postulantes, Medicina 29, Ingeniería Comercial 11, Matemáticas 3, Derecho 2, Física 1 y Astronomía 1.

Por otro lado, según dependencia educacional, los estudiantes que seleccionó la UC provienen en un 64,9% de colegios particulares pagados, un 25,1% de particulares subvencionados y un 9,9% de establecimientos públicos (9,5% municipal + 0,4% servicios locales de educación pública).

Note: Screenshot of “*La UC fue la universidad preferida por el 69% de los puntajes nacionales*” Adapted from Bolumburu (2021, March 22).

This news reflects how privileged social groups tend to concentrate in elite institutions, reinforcing the social reproduction of class differences and educational access gaps.

Similarly, gender plays an essential role in this issue. For instance, high-income scientific and technological careers remain male-dominated, and women struggle to have more representation. Initiatives to increase female representation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) exist, such as *Más Mujeres Científicas (+MC) Ministerio de Educación* [MINEDUC] (n.d.), which aims to promote science education for women to reduce gender disparities. In contrast, fields like applied social sciences and healthcare are female-dominated and poorly paid despite their social importance. This gender-based division of labor reflects broader social inequalities affecting certain occupations’ economic and social recognition.

From a political perspective, conservative groups argue that gender differences in career choices should not be regulated through public policies, claiming that professional decisions stem from personal preferences rather than structural inequalities. This perspective aligns with an anti-feminist discourse that frames gender equity as a matter of individual freedom rather than state intervention (Valdés, 2025). However, the scientific literature proposes that gender constraints and differences in capital distribution impact individuals’ trajectories (Bliez-Sullerot, 1999; Gaulejac, 1999; Kergoat, 2009).

From a sociological perspective, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that education serves as a mechanism for social reproduction, where academic and professional trajectories are influenced by an individual’s cultural and social capital. In Chile, education has

historically been viewed as a pathway to social mobility (Matear, 2008), suggesting that the decision to pursue teaching is influenced by social factors and not only vocational interests.

At the family level, professional choices are also influenced by family and social group expectations. Gaulejac (1999) and Salomone and Grasselli (2016) argue that socio-familial history significantly shapes career choices as individuals navigate the tension between fulfilling family expectations and asserting autonomy. In this sense, teaching can represent a balance between the need to comply with family expectations to reinforce the subjective sense of belonging. However, this decision may also be accompanied by a desire for independence despite the constraints imposed by those same mandates. In this context, when making a professional decision, what Gaulejac (2020) refers to as socio-psychic knots emerge, intertwining social history with personal life experiences. Such a concept illustrates how the “family novel” (Gaulejac, 1999) and transgenerational stories influence identity construction, including professional choices.

Regarding gender, professional choices are marked by a strong sexual division of labor. Fiorucci et al. (2022) argue that there is a concern that the education system tends to reinforce gender roles by portraying women as teachers influencing their career choices. Furthermore, Ávalos (2003) and the *Ministerio de Educación* (2022) noted that although teaching is dominated mainly by women, they encounter obstacles in advancing to leadership roles and experience pay gaps.

Extensive research exists about the trend of women entering the teaching profession and its connection to the hierarchy in education circles. There is a gap in understanding how personal family narratives influence women’s choices when opting for a career in teaching. This study will address this gap by examining the transgenerational heritage and family mandates shaping the decision to become a teacher within the border of social class and gender constraints. According to Gaulejac et al. (2006), families transmit unconscious

mandates that guide individual trajectories, creating tensions between family belonging and individual differentiation.

This research will examine the crucial role of transgenerational heritage, where family expectations and inherited narratives influence professional choices. Furthermore, Gaulejac et al. (2006) elaborates that family narratives impose unconscious mandates that guide individual trajectories, creating tensions between belonging to family histories and the desire for differentiation.

This study will explore the biographical narratives on the professional choice of five middle-class Chilean women who have chosen teaching. Through analyzing their life narratives, the study seeks to understand how social and psychological factors have influenced their career choices. The methodology will be based on a socio-clinical approach (Gaulejac, 1999), which aims to understand social issues using analyzing both social and psychological factors in the process of co-construction of knowledge. The research-intervention device used in the study will be a Group of Implication and Research -GIR hereafter- (Gaulejac, 2019a), which consists of a space where participants can share their experiences and collectively reflect on the socio-psychic factors that influence specific social phenomena. The information analysis procedure will follow Clarke's (2016) thematic analysis approach, identifying patterns and relationships between various factors influencing career choice.

Empirically, this study will contribute to understanding the professional choices of women who become teachers in Chile, a country marked by a recent history of dictatorship, democratic transition, and neoliberalism. Considering the specific experiences and challenges women face when choosing teaching as a profession will also inform the design of educational policies and teacher training programs.

This study is significant theoretically because it provides insights from clinical sociology, which integrates social and psychological analysis to understand social issues. It is also relevant in focusing on the intersection of social relations, family trajectories, and coping mechanisms as a place of socio-psychic tension that fosters subjective agency.

This research also has methodological implications, as it employs life stories as an innovative tool for exploring and understanding professional choice. Using the GIR (Gaulejac, 2019a), this study sheds light on how teachers navigate their career paths, cultivate a sense of belonging, and address internal conflicts, tensions, and resistances. This approach enables a deeper understanding of teachers' challenges and the motivations that drive their pedagogical choices. It emphasizes qualitative analyses highlighting personal experiences, family expectations, and social influences.

Finally, this study seeks to contribute to the literature on the feminization of education, social class differences and teaching, and the sociology of professions and education. It highlights the role of social and subjective factors in career choice focusing on understanding the extent to which choosing to become an educator is a choice. Viewing English pedagogy as a vocational path accessible and relevant to specific groups, this study questions whether pursuing this career is a personal choice or influenced mainly by societal conditioning, familial expectations, and unconscious psychological factors.

The present research report is structured into five chapters, each addressing key aspects of the study. Chapter One introduces the research topic, its relevance, and the socio-clinical approach, providing an overview of the thesis structure. Chapter Two presents the literature review, exploring the historical and social context, key conceptual definitions, a critical literature analysis, the research gap, and the theoretical framework. In chapter three, we outline the methodology used in this study, detailing the epistemological and methodological approaches used in this piece of research, as well as life stories, the GIR

methodology, and the data analysis process. Chapter Four unveils the discoveries and their interpretations. Chapter Five wraps up this research report by summarizing the core conclusions, highlighting the study's contributions and limitations, and providing suggestions for research endeavors.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Social Transformation and Professional Trajectories of Women Teachers

To this day, women make up more than 70% of the workforce in most educational institutions. Nonetheless, *Ministerio de Educación* (2022) reported that women face professional growth barriers. Men still dominate leadership roles and positions, such as principals, with 53,3% of the positions. This is evidence of the social perception of pedagogical work and the persistence of gender biases in the educational field. Like other professions linked to care, teaching work tends to be less valued than other areas regarding recognition and working conditions.

The feminization of teaching in Chile stems from a conventional perspective that considers women as the natural and perfect educators for children as it has glimpses of care and service (MacDonald, 1980, as cited in Acker, 1995), in which women can carry out a maternal expected role (Barreto & Álvarez, 2013). Fiorucci et al. (2022) state that this process, which evolved during the 19th and 20th centuries, was driven by political, ideological, educational, and economic influences particular to Latin America. As Veneros (2001, as cited in Ávalos, 2003) indicates, advances in rights and opportunities for women were the product of several social movements encouraged by modernization processes, such as the changes caused by the Second World War and the liberal ideologies that followed.

Despite all this, Ávalos (2003) mentions that women's access to the educational and labor system was not the result of equity aspirations but rather a response to the economic demands of the time. In the Latin American context, Fiorucci et al. (2022) point out that the early feminization of teaching, in parallel with the expansion of the *Estado Docente*, was essential to consolidate teaching as a female professional option. Chile, in this sense, led the region in establishing the first regular school aimed at “civilizing and moralizing” the popular

sectors, promoting a model of imparting values and norms based on a maternal approach that ultimately pursued the strengthening of the country's socio-political stability.

Social changes in Chile have significantly affected women teachers' careers, especially since the last decades of the twentieth century. As more women entered the labor market and fought for gender equality, the role of female teachers within the educational system has become more relevant. Thanks to reforms like the General Education Law (Congreso Nacional, 2009), women now have greater access to leadership and school administration roles and increased chances for everyone. When the percentage of women in teaching began to surpass that of men in the second half of the 1980s, Guerrero (1997) states that the feminization of the educational system gained importance. However, this procedure has proven to be complicated. Despite their increased recognition, female academics still face challenges such as pay disparities and work-life balance issues compared to their male counterparts. Guerrero (1997) suggests that the increasing feminization of the teaching profession has been accompanied by higher visibility of women in secondary education. This means they have been allowed to explore different career paths and have access to higher positions, such as school principalship or participation in educational research projects.

Despite these advances, we still face essential structural challenges in education. The most important of them is the feminization of the teaching profession. Dubet (2006) mentions that teaching is still perceived as a profession of "low prestige," which affects female teachers despite their increased representation. Besides, many women face significant obstacles to advancing in their careers. Discrimination continues within educational institutions, expressing itself through differences in pay and treatment. The author discusses this by proposing that women in educational positions face pay inequality and lack of institutional recognition compared to their male colleagues. This factor has limited the

progress of women teachers in their professional development and their ability to take full advantage of the opportunities that social changes have afforded them.

Significant structural challenges persist in education, particularly regarding the feminization of the teaching profession. This problem is related to the growing number of female teachers and the ongoing discrimination they encounter in their career advancement. Inequalities in pay, a lack of institutional recognition, and obstacles to professional progression are still daily in the educational sector. This illustrates how deeply ingrained societal systems continue to impact women in education, limiting their possibilities for professional advancement despite social and regulatory advances. In this situation, deciding on a professional path like teaching is not just a personal choice; social variables that affect women's career paths also significantly impact them.

2.2 Professional Choice as a Socio-Psychic Phenomenon

The choice of a profession is not only an individual choice but is strongly determined by social elements. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that individualization begins in childhood in an environment defined by the social environment. According to them, the connection with other people is crucial in socialization and the construction of identity since individual identity originates in interactions with others, considering social backgrounds and family information. This highlights the crucial importance of the social in the construction of individual identity. The writers also examine "lived worlds," which show the existence of robust social structures that directly influence our daily choices. They also analyze the role of language as a connection between external pressures and internal desires, external responsibilities and personal plans, the demands of others, and the initiatives of the individual. This connection between the external and the internal demonstrates how social elements guide our choices, including those of professionals.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1964), in *Les Héritiers*, propose that the school plays a key role in this dynamic, not only as a place of learning but also as a space that perpetuates social inequalities related to social class. The culture transmitted in classrooms often favors social groups that concentrate capital and symbolic power, elites, by validating specific knowledge and behaviors that align with those acquired in privileged families. This creates the illusion that academic success results from personal talent when, in reality, it stems from inherited advantages, a concept Bourdieu refers to as cultural capital. Students from working-class backgrounds must adapt to a cultural system foreign to their own, facing what the sociologist describes as symbolic violence. Academic success becomes more difficult due to these extra obstacles imposed by this adaptation process. Furthermore, the concept of meritocracy obscures the structural advantages favoring particular social groups and perpetuates the impression that scholastic success depends entirely on human effort.

While social factors influence our choices and life trajectories, individual factors also play a role in decision-making. One such factor is an objective transaction, which mediates between ascribed or externally imposed identities and those we assume or internalize. The authors argue that individuals do not construct their identities in isolation. However, the influence of other people is crucial in forming identities.

Two primary factors influence our feeling of individuality. On one side, religion influences if an individual sees themselves as Catholic, atheist, practicing, or non-practicing. Nevertheless, identity is also shaped by their career, whether self-employed or working for someone else. These distinctions aid in shaping our self-image and relationships with others.

2.2.1 Socio-historical determinants.

Not only have the factors mentioned above influenced the professional choice of teachers in Chile, but socio-historical determinants have also influenced this choice. Iván Núñez (2007) examines four fundamental factors that shape this reality: the progress of the

educational system, the need for education, socioeconomic circumstances, and professional identity. The author also mentions four significant revolutions that contributed to the progress of the evolution of the formal education system: 1. The establishment of the school as an institutional entity; 2. The development of national education systems; 3. The expansion of education systems; and 4. The impact of the knowledge society and globalization.

The creation of regular schools and educational expansion policies in the 20th century increased the need for competent teachers, making the teaching profession both an opportunity and a challenge depending on the socioeconomic and political environment. However, increasing enrollment generated an urgent need for teachers. Núñez (2007) stated that demands for the massification of schools and high schools led to the continued recruitment of teachers without degrees, which led to the discussion about the quality of education and teacher professionalization. Although access to education increased, the demand for improving teacher training and working conditions to ensure high-quality education also intensified. The author mentions that teachers' organizations had an intense conflict with governments over salaries and working conditions and that the State responded without being able to significantly improve salaries but guaranteed employees' rights such as job stability. When Núñez (2007) mentions teaching identity, he refers to a process that has evolved over the decades to conclude that what an education professional should aspire to is to foster learning and social and emotional engagement, to learn to interact differently with others, replacing simple threads of interaction with solid connections and lasting relationships, and to commit to constant growth, not just professional growth. He also refers to the burnout of professionals and their careers, noting that teachers in today's society face the weakening of support for their work, limited remuneration, increasing stress, restricted opportunities to learn from and with their colleagues, workload overload, and standardization.

This means that socio-historical factors and a growing demand for teachers influence Chile's choice of teaching profession. This emphasizes sufficient training and improved working conditions, which are vital to guarantee educational quality.

Adding to this idea, teaching English in Chile has been shaped by various socio-historical events and educational policies, reflecting the increasing importance of English in a globalized world. Glas (2011) states that public discussion around English language learning is focused on economic reasons. Nowadays, it is a crucial instrument for accessing information, higher education, and good salaries. In this regard, Matear (2008) states that English remains the preserve of the elite with access to private schooling. As such, it demarcates and divides social groups by reinforcing an unequal distribution of wealth, resources, and knowledge within and between social groups. This reveals that, far from being a tool that promotes equal opportunities, restricted access to English contributes to preserving existing social and educational inequalities.

2.2.1.1 Social class.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) define social class as the social structures directly affecting people's decisions and life paths, defining their capacity to ascend or stay in a given social group. Social class refers to economic capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), which is defined as material resources like money and property. By contrast, social capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) refers to social links and networks enabling access to resources, opportunities, culture, and education. Various studies have expanded this perspective on the relationship between social class, economy, and education in Chile. For example, Lambrecht Plaza (2011) states that after the dictatorship, the country aimed for economic stability, but policies that reduced social spending contributed to higher unemployment and inequality, worsening the living conditions of the lower classes. The *Reforma Agraria* of the 1960s and 1970s aimed to enhance the conditions of peasants; nonetheless, it failed to diminish

inequality, as most workers persisted in receiving poor pay. Furthermore, numerous individuals in the 1960s were deprived of fundamental education, perpetuating socioeconomic disparity. Lambrecht further points out that low educational levels among those without access to it arose from education mainly reserved for wealthy people in this era. Piketty (2014) offers an economic perspective, stating that while economic growth creates opportunities, each generation must acquire new skills to take advantage of these opportunities, which is directly linked to access to education. Barozet et al. (2021) describe the middle class in Chile as a diverse group that relies on labor income and seeks social mobility through education. However, they face obstacles due to persistent inequality. Espinoza and Barozet (2009) note that the economic stability of the middle class varies depending on education level, income, and work styles, factors essential for improving social mobility. Regarding labor segmentation, Kergoat (2009) highlights that despite advances in inclusion, a gender gap persists, with men continuing to earn higher salaries and hold better positions than women. Rodríguez (2019) points out that greater access to education has increased educational mobility, enabling young people to surpass their parents' educational level, which opens up new opportunities for improving their economic situation. However, Paz (2010) warns that students who work often have less time to study, negatively affecting their academic performance and limiting their chances of advancing in education and social status.

2.2.1.2 Gender.

In the Chilean context, gender roles are shaped by a division of labor that assigns differentiated responsibilities to men and women within the family and work spheres. According to Valdés (2009), in families with traditional gender roles, mothers may work outside the home but remain primarily responsible for household tasks, highlighting a

significant inequality in the distribution of domestic responsibilities. Aviv et al. (2025) reinforce this idea, stating that household chores are not equally shared and are predominantly carried out by women. As a result, women often experience a double burden, as they are expected to manage domestic and professional duties, not only physical labor but also emotional labor. Joseph (2019) emphasizes that caregiving reflects genuine concern for others and is a type of labor typically associated with women. This aligns with the concept of the sexual division of labor proposed by Kergoat (2003), who argues that women perform a significant amount of unpaid labor, justified by societal notions of love and maternal duty. Ultimately, this combination of material and emotional responsibilities puts women in an exceptionally demanding position within the family.

Conversely, men's roles within the family are primarily associated with financial provision. Valdés (2009) suggests that in families adhering to traditional gender roles, fathers often serve as the primary economic providers, leading to a strong emphasis on work success and professional prestige. Additionally, Valdés (2009) notes that these fathers typically adopt a supportive rather than primary role in parenting, resulting in limited involvement in child care and household responsibilities. This detachment within family dynamics can negatively impact children's emotional well-being. Estrada et al. (2014) argue that a father's physical or emotional absence can adversely affect children's development, leading to emotional crises that foster feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and loneliness, ultimately shaping their relationships with male figures. These dynamics illustrate how traditional gender roles continue to define familial responsibilities and expectations.

2.2.1.2.1 Adultification of children.

Adultification means that children's roles, responsibilities, and behaviors are not aligned with the age of children, typically leading to them taking responsibility for adults as

figures of care or labor. According to Burton (2007), children will assume a role within their family regarding the characteristics of the disadvantages of their context, such as family needs, capital, or culture. The author also points out that a child can be adultified due to the beliefs, norms, and expectations they must follow, becoming a “quasi-parent” for their siblings, acquiring a part-time or full-time job to help financially, and even being a place of emotional support because of the lack of parenting in their house. Moreover, this role can also be associated with child attributes, such as gender. Elder brothers are idealized by becoming breadwinners. Meanwhile, even if they are the second sibling or the youngest of several brothers, girls are more likely to fulfill a homemaking and caretaking role.

Jurkovic (1997) and Minuchin et al. (1998) state that this situation is an adultification that comprises contextual, social, and developmental processes in which youth are prematurely and often inappropriately exposed to adult knowledge and assume extensive adult roles and responsibilities within their family networks. Boo (2001) states that these scenarios are generally reflected in economically pressed families. However, the issue arises when families generate a necessary dependence on children to meet the family’s survival needs. Because of this, families may unintentionally depend on children to perform household chores or care for their siblings and contribute financially or emotionally, especially in vulnerable contexts.

2.2.2 Rapports sociaux.

Social *rapport* significantly influences professional choice, and these influences are essentially the result of social constructs. According to Dujarier (2019), social *rapport* is an interdependence of nature, in many cases economic, that facilitates interactions between different groups around essential issues, such as the division of labor and the distribution of wealth. These relationships shape identities and differences, influencing roles’ configuration

and institutions' transformation. Social interdependence, usually economic, generates interactions between groups on crucial issues such as the division of labor and wealth. These relationships create identities and separations and affect the construction and transformation of institutions. Similarly, Lahire (2013) points out that the division of labor impacts people, leading them to lose skills and aspirations cultivated in their childhood and adolescence, which often causes them to feel misunderstood or socially restricted. This highlights how personal choices, especially professional ones, are not individual decisions in isolation but rather a reflection of social structures.

Kergoat (2009) also argues that the conditions in which men and women live are not the product of biological destiny but, above all, of social constructs, emphasizing that these conditions deeply influence professional choices. Throughout history and in different societies, there has been a marked tendency to assign productive work to men and reproductive work to women. This structure has transformed conceptions of family care, increasingly recognizing it as work. However, the author also points out that this evolution has led to a segmentation of salaried work, usually considered in terms of production and linked to white male workers. This implies that, despite progress in inclusion, wage employment continues to be segmented, giving greater importance to the conventional profile of the white, qualified male. On the other hand, other forms of work, often performed by women or individuals of diverse ethnicities and classes, continue to require valuing and remuneration, which evidences the structural inequities of the labor market.

2.3 Family Novel and Parental Project

According to Gaulejac et al. (2006), the parental project refers to the representations and expectations that parents form about their children's future, serving as a "transmission belt" for family and social history. This project not only reflects the conscious and

unconscious desires of the parents but also shapes the child's trajectory through a dual identification process: parents project on their children ideals and aspirations they were unable to fulfill, while the children either attempt to imitate or differentiate themselves from their parents (Gaulejac et al., 2006). Additionally, the author highlights that the family novel pertains to the family history internalized by the individual, encompassing inherited values, narratives, and conflicts that influence their identity formation. This illustrates how family expectations can conflict with the individual's desire for autonomy. Therefore, the tension between adhering to inherited values and pursuing one's identity can create obstacles to personal development, reflecting the complex balance between family continuity and individual differentiation. The seeking for independence is correlated with the implementation of the neoliberal system, which promotes a framework of competition and individualism (Ramos, 2009; Soto, 2008; Todaro & Yañez, 2004, as cited in Araujo, 2013), leading to the abandonment of collective connections and bonds, such as the family unit (Gañán, 2020, as cited in Gañán et al., 2022).

2.3.1 Class neurosis.

Class neurosis, according to Vincent de Gaulejac (1987, as cited in Gaulejac, 2019b, p. 430), refers to the denial or disruption of internal difficulties that an individual experiences when confronted with psychological conflicts and disorders arising from social changes. Within these psychic conflicts, Freud (n.d., as cited in Gaulejac, 2019b, p. 431) highlights frustration and the inability to adapt to reality through fixation. The latter refers to a child's conflict between the need to remain in a state of dependency and the capacity to adjust to a new world of demands (Freud, 1973/1896, as cited in Gaulejac, 2019b, p. 431). Therefore, class neurosis arises from the interrelation of social, sexual, and relational conflicts that, rather than being isolated, continuously affect and modify one another. This sociological conception of class neurosis gives rise to the reciprocity between social contradictions and

psychic vulnerability. As Gaulejac (1987, as cited in Gaulejac, 2019b, p. 430) suggests, it does not deny the specificity and relative autonomy of each of the two spheres but sustains their interconnection. In class neurosis, these elements are intertwined, making it impossible to pinpoint a single triggering factor. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, it is crucial to conduct a detailed analysis of the interconnected elements in the psyche, such as feelings, affections, defensive reactions, and emotions that arise in different situations. In other words, we must explore and reflect on what Gaulejac (2020) defines as “socio-psychic knots.”

2.3.1.1 Socio-psychic knots.

Tension can be understood as an internal opposition within the subject, generated by “contrary, internal demands,” which are not always consciously accessible. As defined by Vorgy and Vincenot (2019), these latent tensions, not always accessible, result from a psyche conceived as dynamic, constantly working to reduce conflicts between psychic instances. According to Lagache (1949, as cited in Vorgy & Vincenot, 2019), this can be seen in the fact that every human being is confronted with indetermination that results from the interplay among the social *rappports*. This internal conflict is related to the intrapsychic tensions described in Freudian psychoanalysis, defined as “the opposition, within the subject, of opposing internal demands” (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967, as cited in Vorgy & Vincenot, 2019). Psychic conflict, although internal, is not isolated from external influences since, according to Vorgy and Vincenot (2019), the construction and organization of the individual psyche are inextricably linked to the subject’s environment. This bond is perceived in how the individual’s experiences modify their internal positions to react to external pressures. At a group level, tensions persist, and although the shared project is not always sufficient to overcome contradictions, groups produce symbolic meanings for collective action.

These types of internal conflicts, which often appear as shame or even trauma, are the result of social, cultural, or personal pressures that are difficult to resolve. Gaulejac (2020) denominates socio-psychoic knots, allowing us to understand how individuals cope with difficult circumstances related to their internal world and societal position. Therefore, we will use the term socio-psychoic knots to refer to these tensions, as it makes it easier for us to observe how personal problems are linked to broader social elements, generating conflicts that are difficult to solve. Using this concept, we can better understand how our research participants have dealt with the pressures and expectations that have influenced their decisions and paths.

2.4 Psychoic Elaboration Processes and Professional Choice

Psychoic elaboration entails a process of metabolization in which idea representations, mental images, and initial thoughts emerge. They manifest continuously with the self and its physical-psychoic surroundings (Aulagnier, 1975, as cited in Giust-Desprairies, 2003, p. 58). According to Giust-Desprairies (2003), this approach shows how the individual's identity and choices are affected by his social environment, adapting his expectations to those of the collective to which he belongs. As Aulagnier (Ibid.) previously indicated, the psyche and the world are mutually formed through the other. Also, the author emphasizes that these internal representations are closely related to the satisfaction of desires and the defense mechanisms that the subject employs in order to accomplish proficiency, given that, in the actual neoliberal society, anything less than excellence is regarded as a failure (Dujarier, 2005, as cited in Guerrero et al., 2019, p. 242). In addition to this, Dujarier (2021, as cited in Vaessen, 2022) argues that we seek what aligns with our values and gives us identity, meaning, and coherence. All these elements will be addressed in the following sections.

2.4.1 Defense mechanisms.

Defense mechanisms can be understood as elements of psychopathology and possible stages in the development of the self (Freud, n.d., as cited in Vaillant, 1992, p. 3). According to Freud and Klein (1954/1936; 2009/1946, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016), these mechanisms emerge unconsciously from the beginning of an individual's psychic growth, functioning as a natural reaction to impulses and anxieties not only in the individual himself but also in external elements through different degrees of denial of reality. Pla Caballero (2016) states that mechanisms act as a defense against experiences of suffering generated by internal factors. They are part of an emotional regulation process group, classified between conscious or unconscious, adaptive or nonadaptive, intrapsychic and interpersonal. In this context, Bleger (2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47) describes defense behaviors as techniques through which the personality operates integrally, seeking to preserve its equilibrium by eliminating insecurity, danger, tension, or anxiety.

2.4.2 Conflict resolution mechanism.

Conflict resolution mechanisms function as defensive strategies that, as indicated by Pla Caballero (2016), deny certain aspects of reality perceived as overwhelming, allowing individuals or communities to avoid directly confronting these situations. As a result, forms of symbolic control are exercised over stressful situations that, as Menzies (1994, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 51) argues, restrict the individual's ability to reflect and act in a way that allows them to manage reality and overcome anxiety effectively. Once subjects enter and belong to an organization, defense mechanisms can manifest themselves at a social institution level (Jacques, 1994, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 50), especially considering that, in the words of Pla Caballero, both real and symbolic demands arise in the work environment. Pla Caballero (2016) also argues through Jacques' (Ibid.) work that these mechanisms can be

individuals, in which the subject tends to unconsciously select and project their impulses on other members to divert and deny their anxiety. As Pla Caballero (2016) indicates, they can also be collective, wherein a typical representation of the world is aimed to produce unity, allowing the group to co-exist. It seeks balance among the different defensive strategies placed at the ego's service to obtain intrapsychic regulation and elaboration.

2.4.2.1 Types of conflict resolution mechanism.

Tensions arise from the individual's dynamic psyche, which is often inaccessible and constantly strives to resolve conflicts between psychic instances that are intrinsically connected to the subject environment (Vorgy & Vincenot, 2019). This highlights the tendency to react to, or sometimes avoid, certain situations by unconsciously employing defense mechanisms as a natural protective barrier to cope with the ongoing pressures and anxieties that a subject faces (Freud, 1954/1936; Klein, 2009/1946, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 46). As Giust-Desprairies (2003) notes, personal choices are influenced and shaped by the collective projections that one inherits. However, as the subject matures, internal conflicts surface as it questions whether to comply with the family mandate and meet external expectations or to forge and follow its desires. This aligns with Gaulejac et al. (2006) proposal of tensions arising from the struggle to uphold the family legacy while differentiating oneself in pursuit of a more personal path. Collective defensive strategies manifest as defensive ideologies (Dejours, 2001/1980, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016), which, within a value system, transform defenses into desires, goals, or objectives, concealing their primary purpose: defending against suffering. Among these mechanisms, we can identify the following:

2.4.2.1.1 Denial (démenti).

Denial of reality is a defense mechanism that enables individuals to continue their daily lives without directly confronting the pain they experience. This mechanism involves refusing to acknowledge disturbing aspects of both external and psychological reality, repressing thoughts, memories, and emotions (Freud, 1924/1961, 1925/1961, as cited in Costa, 2020, p. 1045).

2.4.2.1.2 Rationalization.

Rationalization is a defense mechanism closely tied to the tendency to justify our actions and those of others, even when they contradict our beliefs or values. Through rationalization, individuals create explanations that allow them to confront emotional conflicts, whether internal or external, avoiding the discomfort that could arise from acknowledging an uncomfortable reality. This results in a distorted reinterpretation of our own or others' actions, thoughts, or feelings (Perry, 1990, as cited in Knoll et al., 2020, p. 4302).

2.4.2.1.3 Defensive Cynicism.

Humor is another defense mechanism present in the narratives of our lives. According to the theory proposed by Spencer and Freud (n.d., as cited in Balmores-Paulino, 2020, p. 2082), humor helps release tensions by allowing excess accumulated energy to be discharged (Morreall, 1987, as cited in Balmores-Paulino, 2020, p. 2082). Humor fulfills three key psychological functions: stress relief and coping with emotionally intense or conflict-laden situations (Martin, 2006, as cited in Balmores-Paulino, 2020, p. 2085). Thus, humor serves as an escape and a tool for processing and coping with suffering while offering a healthy way to relieve emotional burdens.

2.4.2.1.4 Hypervaluation of Labor.

Idealization is a defense mechanism that distorts the perception of reality. It involves attributing exaggerated positive qualities to oneself or others as if they were perfect or far more admirable than they genuinely are. Idealization allows an individual to temporarily escape negative or painful emotions by creating an idealized image that is easier to manage (APA, 1994; Perry, 1990, as cited in Leduc-Cummings et al., 2020, p. 2129).

2.5 Conclusion: The Professional Choice of Women Teachers: A Socio-Psychic Knot

Life histories can be understood as a socio-psychic phenomenon, integrating social and psychological factors (Gaulejac, 2020). The social factors influencing professional choices are socially predetermined and closely linked to social class (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), where economic capital plays a central role in determining access to goods and networks. These social networks understood as social capital, serve as support and socialization systems within different primary and secondary socialization contexts. For instance, the type of culture one has access to and the quality of education received significantly influence professional opportunities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Moreover, social class does not function in isolation but interacts with gender (Kergoat, 2009). While men may have greater access to certain resources and opportunities, women face specific restrictions, leading to an unequal distribution of social capital. Gender constructs differentiated roles: Women are often assigned responsibilities related to caregiving and emotional resilience, internalizing these expectations from childhood. In contrast, men are socialized with a stronger orientation toward the public and social spheres, often resulting in diminished presence in private and family life (Valdés, 2009). These dynamics illustrate how personal experiences, shaped by social structures, influence career decisions.

All these factors interact in a process called interaction de *rappports sociaux*, which can be understood as a co-substantial interaction (Kergoat, 2009); each factor adds layers of determination to an individual's subjectivity within the social domain. These social influences crystallize within individuals and their family groups of origin, shaping their beliefs about the family and its role in society. This process constructs an identity narrative passed down from generation to generation. In this framework, parents educate their children based on family and personal narratives, projecting expectations and aspirations that align with what Gaulejac et al. (2006) describe as the "parental project." This project is deeply connected to social mobility and the reproduction and conservation of the family unit, which is perceived as a supportive environment shaped by affection and beliefs based on norms, behaviors, emotional bonds, and values (Bernales, 2015).

As a result, individuals experience a constant tension between fulfilling family expectations and pursuing their desires and internal motivations. This dichotomy generates a psychological conflict that manifests in the struggle between identification and differentiation, potentially leading to neurosis. Dejours (2001/1980, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016) states that to manage this tension, individuals rely on their personal and psychological resources, adapting to and reinterpreting social norms through various mechanisms of defense and adherence.

These stories show, consequently, how various elements tied to the social and psychological dimensions, such as family, social context, and individual goals, influence career choices, which can be regarded as a social knot.

Salomone and Grasselli (2016) argue that the job you hold, the studies you "choose," the person you marry, the place where you live, the way of life that characterizes you, the ideologies you defend, etc., are the product of your biographical experience that is inscribed within the "succession." This means that choosing a career is not as easy as meeting the

demands of the job market or relying exclusively on one's skills. It is a personal process that includes each person's life and experiences. This aligns with the psychodynamics of work theory, in the sense that the subject identity is the result of collective work or the need to belong to a community (Vézina, 2020, as cited in Alderson, 2004, p. 253), which is consistent with the idea that the work organization not only influences individuals, but it also entails redefining the meanings and effects to conform to the needs and aspirations (Carpentier-Roy, 1995c, as cited in Alderson, 2004, p. 245).

In conclusion, Cornejo et al. (2008) propose that the biographical approach allows us to understand the mutual relation between an individual's perspective and its registration in the objectivity of a story. With this concept, career choice has different meanings and is not restricted to finding a job. When analyzing an individual's life, it is observed that many choose their professions to give meaning to their trajectory, linking their past with what they aspire to achieve in the future.

2.6 Previous Studies on Life Stories and Professional Choices of Women Teachers

2.6.1 Previous studies on life stories in Latin America and Chile.

The life story studies have shown essential developments in social science research by offering a methodology that allows an understanding of subject meanings and social experiences over time. One of these developments is the construction of individual and collective identities. As stated by Cornejo et al. (2008), identity is a dynamic and constantly evolving phenomenon since it is a process of self-construction that can be transformed through social interactions and historical context. Additionally, Aceves Lozano (2001) states that biographies help visualize life trajectories, offering a framework for analyzing decisions and social belonging. Therefore, life stories allow individuals to reflect on their experiences,

enabling them to reconstruct and reinterpret their experiences to modify their perceptions of their identities and future achievements.

In the Chilean and Latin American context, numerous studies have employed the biographical method to address key historical events and their impact on people's identities. Cornejo et al. (2008) mention two studies that exemplify the value of this methodology in Chile. The first focuses on the experience of Chilean exile during the military dictatorship, investigating how this experience affected the construction of the exiles' identity and exploring how displacement and forced separation from their homeland influenced their lives. The second study examines the reception of testimonies in contexts of experiences of repression and torture lived during the dictatorship and how life histories can help to reconstruct and understand these episodes from a deeper perspective by revealing the impact of listening to personal and collective trauma endured by the victims. Both studies conclude that life stories are powerful tools to document personal histories and offer insights into more significant perspectives, such as emotional, biographical, and institutional. What is observed in both studies allows a deeper understanding of the effects of violence on the individual and collective identities of Chilean citizens.

2.6.2 Previous studies on the professional choice of Chilean women.

Gendered expectations are unwaveringly tied to women's self-perceptions regarding abilities in the workplace. Correll (2004) proposes that gender status beliefs are key to understanding how men and women assess their competency in career tasks. Specifically, cultural representations and stereotypes of gender influence the perception of men being more competent than women in specific fields. This makes women more self-critical and have lower aspirations in male-dominated fields. Revising this idea with experimental evidence, Correll (Ibid.) concludes that despite being given identical performance feedback, men tend

to describe their abilities higher, even inflating their self-assessment, and are more likely to aspire to fields that require higher competencies. At the same time, women are prone to opt out of said fields, helping the perpetuation of a cycle of underrepresentation and segregation of women in higher positions despite equivalent abilities.

In Chile, the cultural role of gender influences women's career choices. Salinas and Romani (2017) elaborate on gender-based barriers to professional choice, using the mining industry as an example of a male-dominated field restricting women's career growth. In this context, women struggle to reconcile family responsibilities with mining work (mainly due to the demanding schedules and remote locations). Another hardship for them is being part of cultural stereotypes that lead to a perceived lack of abilities and capacities. The predominance of masculine culture in universities and professional institutes ostracizes women, perpetuating stereotypes, unequal student-teacher relationships, limited access to practicum experiences, and a low number of female teachers.

2.6.3 Studies on psychic elaboration mechanisms applied to professional choice.

The studies about psychic elaboration mechanisms applied to professional choice highlight the importance of life experiences in constructing a significant professional identity, specifically in teaching. Following this idea, Vicentini et al. (2021) examine how adverse environments on the personal journey of three Brazilian teachers significantly influence their pedagogical practices and commitment to education. Those experiences not only allow them to consolidate a shared ethic that prioritizes innovation and improvement in their students' learning. The author also illustrates a process of psychic elaboration in which accumulated experiences are integrated to strengthen their identities and adaptive capacity, allowing them to face challenges with a new approach.

Similarly, Bliez-Sullerot (1999) emphasizes that using life stories in teacher training allows educators to organize their significant experiences and recognize the “lines of force” in their choices that influence their pedagogical decisions and approaches. This process promotes a solid professional identity based on accumulated knowledge and personal values. Hence, both authors agree that teaching identity is not a static product but a dynamic construction based on considering the past and driving changes and commitments toward the educational future. In this sense, teaching, more than a simple profession, is a continuous journey of self-exploration and development in which lived experiences play a fundamental role in forming committed and resilient educators.

2.7 Literature Gap: The Need to Explore the Socio-Psychic Dimensions of Professional Choices of Chilean Women Teachers

Despite the considerable information on women’s work in education, significant gaps remain in understanding Chilean women teachers’ career trajectories, life histories, and psychic elaboration processes. The symbolic construction of teachers’ identities has been explored in broader gender studies, yet the specific impact on women English teachers remains largely unexamined. Addressing this gap is relevant to uncovering their unique challenges and how personal experiences and family and social conditions shape their professional development.

The feminization of teaching has had contradictory effects on women. While, on the one hand, it has provided employment opportunities and a relevant educational position, it has also imposed symbolic and material limitations, such as less favorable working conditions as compared to men (Fiorucci et al., 2022). The lack of research on teachers’ career paths and psychological well-being affects women educators and the profession. La Tercera (online, as cited in Ávalos, 2014) notes that between 2012 and 2013, there was an

11% decrease in teaching scholarship recipients and a general decline in enrollment in teaching programs. This decline may be related to salary problems and balancing teaching and non-teaching work responsibilities, suggesting the urgent need to improve teachers' working conditions to attract and retain skilled educators.

Although multiple studies have explored teaching conditions in Chile, only a few have adopted a clinical approach. As Gaulejac (1999) argues, clinical sociology provides a perspective that facilitates a detailed analysis of the complexity of the processes that connect the psychological with the social dimensions. Research written by Cornejo (2009) examines the connection between working conditions and teacher well-being or discomfort in Santiago, Chile, revealing concerns over job insecurity, precarious employment, excessive workloads, and unsatisfactory well-being. However, these analyses often rely on quantitative data and fail to incorporate a socio-psychological approach considering how individuals navigate their subjectivity within particular social contexts.

A socio-clinical approach is essential for comprehensively examining the social process of professional career choice and development from the protagonists' perspective of their own stories. As Ferrarotti (1983, as cited in Gaulejac, 1999, p. 1) asserts, biography mediates individual and social history, suppressing the gap that divides the psychological field from the social one.

Given these gaps, this study must provide a deeper understanding of Chilean women teachers' professional choices and trajectories. By examining the intersections of social class, gender, family, and individual trajectory, this research sheds light on the socio-psychic factors that might impact their professional choices. The findings of such an inquiry offer valuable insights that can contribute to developing more gender-aware and context-sensitive educational policies, ensuring that the training of teachers addresses challenges that might be specifically associated with gender and social class rapports. Ultimately, this study represents

a sensitive window into the experience of middle-class Chilean women who chose to become teachers in the Chile of late capitalism.

2.8 Research Problem

While it may initially appear to be a personal choice, multiple social, familial, and subjective factors influence and frame the decision to become a teacher; for middle-class Chilean women, choosing to teach is not only the result of personal preference but also the product of navigating a social environment that pre-determines their possibilities and, thus, their aspirations. In this context, understanding the *rapport sociaux* between social class and gender helps us appreciate their family and life trajectories and the coping mechanisms linked to their choice of professional activity.

Danièle Kergoat's (2003) concept of the co-substantiality of *rapports sociaux* is key to exploring this question. She argues that individuals are not free agents in making decisions but that their actions are deeply intertwined with the social structures they inhabit. In the case of these women, their choices are not made in isolation. Their agency is intricately connected to the familial, social, and professional structures they navigate. On a similar line, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) propose that professional decisions are influenced not only by individual skills but also by inherited social and cultural capital. For many of these women, the teaching profession may not be their first choice but emerges as a limited set of options shaped by family expectations, socioeconomic status, and the predominant gender roles in their society. Consequently, these social relations inform the structure of their lives and careers, where teaching is perceived as a legitimate and accessible career for women of their class.

Beyond structural determinants, the "family novel" concept by Gaulejac et al. (2006) provides insight into how personal choices are embedded in larger socio-familial narratives. Parents' projected expectations, educational backgrounds and values, and significant life

experiences influence their daughter's professional aspirations, sometimes leading to tensions between their individuality and the inherited family mandate. The decision to become a teacher becomes part of a life narrative influenced by the family's value system, which may prioritize education or view teaching as an appropriate role for women. Moreover, the psychic defense mechanisms described by Dejours (2001/1980, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016) are key to understanding how these women navigate their professional lives. For female teachers, these mechanisms manifest as an idealization of teaching, where the challenges of their work are minimized, and the intrinsic value of their role as educators is emphasized. Such mechanisms enable them to reconcile their aspirations with the harsh realities of the profession, including job insecurity, low salaries, and professional burnout. These strategies allow them to persist in the field despite the difficulties, reinforcing the notion that, although imperfect, the profession remains a meaningful and socially valuable choice.

The tension between social determinants and personal agency is further explored through Archer's (2003) theory of internal conversation. Archer (Ibid.) argues that social structures may influence individual decisions, but individuals are not passive recipients of these structures. Instead, they engage in an internal dialogue to mediate between external constraints and personal desires. In the case of these young Chilean women, the decision to enter the teaching profession is not driven solely by external factors but by an internal conversation that incorporates their reflections, ambitions, and the socio-cultural context they are part of. As Archer (Ibid.) suggests, although their decisions are shaped by structural factors such as family expectations and social class, they are not entirely deterministic. These women actively navigate their circumstances, making sense of their decisions through introspection and personal reflection.

Furthermore, Dubet's (2010) perspective on social experience is crucial for understanding how individuals can shape their reality even within restrictive social contexts. Dubet (Ibid.) argues that individuals are not only influenced by the conditioning factors of their environment but also possess the capacity to create their reality. For many of these women, the decision to become teachers represents a way of navigating these social constraints, seeking a space for their aspirations within the limits imposed by their social environment. Dubet's (Ibid.) proposal underscores the importance of agency in the professional decision-making process, showing that, although external factors shape these women's choices, they remain active agents in determining their futures.

However, once these women experience the role of the teacher, they are confronted with difficulties related to the social status of teaching in Chile. While many of these women enter the profession hoping to fulfill a vocation and make a difference, the reality of teaching in Chile is fraught with challenges. According to Bellei and Valenzuela (2010), the precariousness of teaching is reflected in unstable contracts, low salaries, and administrative overload. These factors contribute to professional burnout and dissatisfaction. In practice, what is often idealized as a stable and rewarding profession is marked by instability, frustration, and disillusionment. This gap between expectations and the reality of the profession creates a deep tension that directly impacts the professional identity of female teachers. They are frequently forced to confront the structural limitations of their work environment and the emotional costs of continuing in a field that does not offer the rewards they had initially anticipated. The lack of job stability, professional respect, and adequate salaries leads many female teachers to question their role and ability to create meaningful change. For many of these women, teaching becomes a form of survival rather than a rewarding vocation. The emotional toll of this profession, marked by burnout, stress, and

dissatisfaction, creates a profound disconnect between their desires and the reality of their professional lives.

Given all the previous, the choice of teaching as a profession can be understood as a place of intersection between social determinants of class and gender, the inherited expectations of their families, and their aspirations. In this context, the choice of teaching is full of tensions and contradictions between the social determinants, socio-familial expectations, the social status of teaching and its difficulties, and the subjective factors that shape their aspirations and professional identity.

Considering the context and tensions outlined above, exploring these socio-psychic dynamics becomes relevant to obtain insights into their motivations to become teachers. This study consequently proposes the following research question to guide this study:

How do social class and gender relations, as well as life trajectories, influence the professional choice of a group of five Chilean pre-service women teachers?

To answer this question, the following research objectives have been set forth:

2.9 Objectives of the Study

2.9.1 General objective.

To analyze the influence of the social rapports of class and gender and life trajectory in the professional choice of a group of five Chilean pre-service women teachers.

2.9.2 Specific objectives.

1. To analyze the interactions of social determinants that influence the professional choice of a group of five Chilean women pre-service teachers, as present in their life stories,
2. To explore the socio-familial and individual trajectory of the participants, focusing on the influence of significant experiences linked to their professional choice,
3. To explore the participants' psychic defense and adherence mechanisms involved in coping with and subjectivizing socio-psychic tensions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Exploring Career Choices from a Socio-Psychic Perspective: Clinical Sociology as an Epistemological Approach

Clinical sociology (Guerrero & Gaulejac, 2018) is an epistemology that integrates the psychic and social dimensions to explore sociological phenomena. It is rooted in the postulates of comprehensive sociology (Weber, 1905), critical sociology (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2002; *inter alia*), psychoanalysis (Freud, 1930; Lacan, 2009), and the French school of ergology (Schwartz et al., 2011). Clinical sociology aims to enhance our understanding of individual and collective experiences within specific social contexts. Jan Marie Fritz (n.d., as cited in Bermúdez, 2013, p. 170) further emphasizes the humanistic nature of the clinical approach to social research, highlighting its interdisciplinary focus on addressing social problems through critical analysis and intervention.

Given its affinity with comprehensive and micro-social approaches to sociology, clinical sociology is exceptionally compatible with the qualitative methodological approach, as it seeks to inquire into social phenomena by paying close attention to their subjective dimensions. As Ketokivi and Choi (2014) and Leavy (2017) note, the qualitative approach allows for exploring meanings and interpretations within specific contexts, providing a comprehensive understanding of subjective and group phenomena. In this regard, this approach is particularly suitable for the objectives of this study, as it enables us to enquire into and understand how individuals' experiences and social contexts influence their career choices, particularly in the teaching field.

Professional choices are not made in isolation but are profoundly shaped by social and familial factors. Salomone and Grasselli (2016) argue that an individual's social position

presents an existential challenge that influences their professional and ideological decisions, highlighting how the social environment shapes their opportunities and paths.

On the other hand, Gaulejac (1999) introduces the “family novel” concept, which indicates how individuals internalize social norms through their family history. This process of transmission and reinterpretation affects how each person perceives their professional options and constructs their identity.

Thus, while Salomone and Grasselli (2016) emphasize the impact of the broader social context on professional choices, Gaulejac (1999) demonstrates how this influence is internalized personally through the family. These perspectives offer a more comprehensive understanding of career decisions, showing that they are not solely individual but reflect a tension between social determinants and how each person reinterprets them in their narrative.

3.2 Analyzing Career Choices Through Collective and Biographical Lenses: The Case Study in the Context of an Implication-Research Group

According to Robert Stake (1995), a single case study is a research design that explores cases of particular research interest, emphasizing the importance of understanding the case as a unified system. This research object facilitates the understanding of its functioning within relevant social contexts. The case study research design aligns with clinical sociology (Gaulejac, 1999) as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the participants' career choices from a socio-psychic perspective. It sheds light on how their life experiences and the meanings they attribute to them have influenced their decision to pursue teaching.

Clinical sociology favors research-intervention methodologies and techniques, as it understands the research process as an implicated and transformative activity. In this context, the clinical approach benefits from a research-intervention device called the *Group d'Implication et Recherche* [GIR] (Gaulejac, 2019a) or group of implication and research. A

GIR is a group device that facilitates the investigation of social processes using the collective analysis and co-construction of clinical hypotheses. This device promotes subjective and collective engagement and reflection, which foster the analysis of socio-psychic knots (Gaulejac, 1996, as cited in Viana Braz & Hashimoto, 2020). A socio-psychic knot (Gaulejac, 2020) is the tensions and conflicts arising from the interaction between social and psychological dimensions.

In this study, the GIR discussed career choice as a socio-psychic knot, paying attention to the social and subjective factors involved in professional decisions and identity. To do so, the participants reflected and shared their life trajectories and experiences related to their professional choices within trust and intimacy. The GIR environment enabled them to connect with and feel reflected in one another's experiences, allowing the participants to work together to generate ideas and insights.

3.2.1. Researching with and about one's own and others' biographies.

The GIR is a research-intervention device where participants share their intimate experiences and perspectives on particular social practices. In this device, the participants are also the researchers, who engage in collective and auto-biographical analysis of socio-psychic knots. The group dynamic fosters a space of trust and reflection, where the personal narratives of each participant and researcher become the research information that is then analyzed to understand how individual experiences are affected by the broader social context (observed in the planning of life stories sessions in Appendix B and the planning of analysis session as presented in Appendix C.). The socio-clinical hypotheses that emerge in the analysis process are understood as a co-construction of the knowledge process.

The study participants are co-researchers who actively analyze their own stories and others, giving the GIR an autoethnographic character. Researchers critically reflect on their

lives and experiences, linking them to broader socio-political and cultural phenomena (Adams et al., 2017).

Consequently, the GIR as a research-intervention device fosters collective analysis and co-construction of knowledge of socio-psychic knots. This device has an autoethnographic character as it allows for the study of biographical narratives of the participants - researchers. It is beneficial for exploring how social factors shape personal trajectories.

3.2.2 Participant-researchers: a group of young adult women seeking to understand themselves through their professional choices.

The participants in this study are also its authors, introducing an autoethnographic dimension that allows for in-depth exploration of personal experiences in the context of a GIR (Adams et al., 2017; Gaulejac, 2019a). The group participants consist of five women pre-service EFL teachers, aged 23 to 26, who have been classmates since 2020 in the TEFL program at UMCE. The close friendship and shared experiences create a collective space of trust, a crucial element for the GIR methodology (Gaulejac, 1996, as cited in Viana Braz & Hashimoto, 2020). All participants live in diverse neighborhoods across Santiago and have diverse backgrounds, socio-familial conformations, and trajectories.

Since the GIR methodology relies on spaces of trust and mutual understanding, we took advantage of the already established friendship bond and conformed the GIR with only the five of us. We already had a strong comprehension of one another's backgrounds and experiences, and our existing friendship fostered an environment where we could share openly. This intimate group dynamic enriched our study by enabling us to delve deeper into specific details that might have been overlooked in a less intimate group setting.

3.3 Strategy of Co-Production of Clinical Discourse

Within the GIR, *Recits de vie* (Vargas, 2019), life stories or biographical narratives are the primary tools for generating clinical discourse, constituting the research material analyzed using the socio-clinical approach. Clinical discourse encompasses the personal stories, emotional expressions, and shared experiences that emerge during a GIR session. In its interplay between subjectivity and group structures, this discourse allows for identifying social determinants, *rappports sociaux*, interactions, and the subjective and collective defense mechanisms at play in socio-psychic knots (Gaulejac, 2020).

3.3.1 Life Stories as a methodology for social research.

Recit de vie (Life Stories), as Vargas (2019) states, is a fundamental resource in social science research, enabling the exploration of personal experiences within their social context. According to Bolívar and Domingo (2006), this method allows researchers to delve into individual narratives and understand how people transform their experiences through social interactions. The authors also note that, beyond the superficial analysis of data, this approach focuses on capturing the depth and emotionality of each story, facilitating a meaningful understanding of individual motivations, feelings, and aspirations, critical elements for studying identity construction.

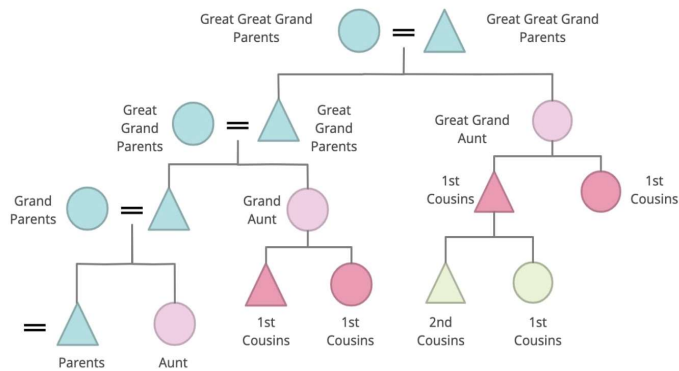
As a method of social investigation, life stories are analytical tools with varied qualities. In the context of autobiographical exercise, they underscore the personal challenges researchers face due to the identity tensions and emotional struggles encountered during the process of assembling their stories (Boilloud, 2009, as cited in Fugier, 2019, p. 310). Moreover, social norms and values shape individuals' stories, as people often adapt their narratives to meet group expectations. This social tension can lead to internalized shame when individuals' experiences do not align with what is socially recognized. Family,

education, and social class influence the content and tone of these stories, impacting how individuals understand and communicate their lives.

At the same time, sharing life experiences is therapeutic, allowing individuals to reinterpret and re-signify their experiences. In this regard, Boilloud (2009, as cited in Fugier, 2019, p. 310) argues that life stories contribute to individual understanding and reveal collective and cultural aspects that shape personal and community identity.

Similarly, life stories are a powerful method to link an individual's past and present experiences, facilitating the visualization of future possibilities (Viana Braz & Hashimoto, 2020). According to Gaulejac (1999, as cited in Viana Braz & Hashimoto, 2020), the analysis of life stories occurs at two levels: first, through the narration of personal experiences, and second, through analyzing the content of these stories, reflecting on them, and generating hypotheses based on the narratives.

In this study, the participants began by sharing their life stories, often accompanied by a drawing of our family tree that included personal details and each gender plotted with a circle if male and a triangle if female, as can be seen in Figure 2. This tree depicted our relevant family members and key information, such as age, neighborhood of residence and birth, and educational and career background. We also included aspects of social issues, like economic status and family class. We examined how these factors were connected to historical and societal events (see participant's family tree in Appendix D). In sharing these stories, we reflected on how our familial backgrounds influenced our feelings and how these experiences led us to choose pedagogy, specifically English pedagogy.

Figure 2:*Example of a family tree diagram*

Following the story-sharing phase, we moved into a resonance analysis stage. During this part, we discussed which elements of the stories resonated with our experiences, such as similar upbringings, educational backgrounds, or economic conditions. This process allowed us to identify shared patterns and influences across our journeys.

We then transitioned into the sharing of socio-clinical hypotheses stage, where we postulated possible sociological and psychological theories or postulates that might describe or explain the socio-psychic factors and tensions influencing our decision to pursue pedagogy. As a closure activity, participants reflected on the session's discussion, sharing key takeaways, reflections, and learnings from the group work. All these life stories and socio-clinical hypotheses were recorded by a participant.

Finally, a couple of hours after each session, participants wrote individual reflections on the contents of the life story session to conduct a more perspective-driven analysis of the resonances, emotions, and insights developed during the group work session. These reflections allowed us to critically engage with our narratives, as Ana Massa (2019) suggests, making connections and forming new hypotheses about the themes and factors influencing our lives and professional choices.

The language used in the life story narration was Spanish, a methodological choice because the first language (L1) holds significant emotional weight tied to personal experiences. As Saralegui and Mavrou (2018) propose, this emotional connection is linked to the context in which a language is acquired and used, the events that shape our life experiences, and the opportunities for interaction in specific languages.

3.4 Strategy of Clinical Discourse Processing and Analysis

All session recordings, totaling 8 hours, 11 minutes, and 7 seconds, were transcribed using Whisper®, a voice recognition and transcription tool by OpenAI®. The transcripts, totaling 21 documents, were anonymized and then manually checked and corrected using Microsoft Word® to minimize the occurrence of language errors linked to the dialectal particularities of Chilean Spanish.

The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Clarke (2016). This method involved a three-stage coding process: open, axial, and selective coding. This method allowed us to identify patterns and themes within the data by generating codes that captured significant information. In the open coding stage, we examined the stories phrase by phrase to identify initial themes. Then, in the axial coding stage, we grouped similar thematic codes and grouped them according to their thematic similarity. Finally, in the selective coding stage, we identified the core themes that integrate and connect the structural patterns found in the data, translating the analysis into a consistent and coherent narrative.

The analysis revealed how sharing our life stories fostered a deep emotional connection among the participants. Telling our stories allowed us to express deeply personal memories, often stirring up complex emotions. The GIR became an empowering space for respectful expression where everyone felt heard, understood, and valued. Listening to each other's narratives allowed us to recognize shared and divergent experiences, fostering a

collective sense of empathy and connection. This facilitated a deeper understanding of how personal, family, and societal narratives intersect with our professional paths, highlighting the importance of addressing social and psychological dimensions in our educator roles.

In this regard, Cornejo et al. (2008) note that biographical approaches help mediate between individual and social history, particularly relevant for the socio-psychological interphase in which this research is immersed. This agrees with (Boilloud, 2009, as cited in Fugier, 2019, p. 310), who proposes that life stories are particularly useful in enhancing individual and collective awareness to help identify the functioning of social processes.

3.5 Scientific Rigor

Considering this case study's qualitative and clinical nature, scientific rigor is essential (Guerrero & Gaulejac, 2018), and it was ensured through various validity and reliability measures. First, the triangulation of clinical discourse, methods, and theories was employed to provide methodological coherence and validate the findings (Leavy, 2017). Second, theoretical saturation in the analysis of narratives and the co-construction of clinical hypotheses was used as research rigor to ensure that the interpretation of clinical discourse is grounded in the participants' discourse (Clarke, 2016). Third, transparency in research procedures and external validation by a thesis supervisor were also considered mechanisms to enhance reliability and validity.

Finally, research reflexivity is critical in clinical research, especially when implementing research devices such as the GIR, which incorporates a significant autoethnographic component. Acknowledging the researcher's subjective position and involvement ensures transparency and reliability. This study applied implication analysis to maintain objectivity in interpreting results (Massa, 2019). This analysis involves writing a personal reflection a few hours after each GIR session, capturing personal resonances and

analytical insights related to the topics discussed. Subsequently, during the clinical discourse analysis process, this reflection is reviewed by the author and another group member, who identifies psychological projections and transferences present in the discourse. This process aims to objectify these psychic elements and integrate them into the analysis and interpretation of clinical discourse. Implication analysis is essential for scientific rigor within clinical sociology (Massa, 2019). It enables researchers to establish the necessary analytical distance through individual and group reflection on their engagement with the object of study, thus ensuring valid and reliable descriptions.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This study explores how socio-psychic factors related to social class and gender influence the professional choices of five Chilean women training to become English teachers. EFL teachers. Using a qualitative socio-clinical approach and a GIR (Viana Braz & Hashimoto, 2020) as a research-intervention device, the participant researchers collectively shared and socio-clinically reflected on their biographical narratives and professional choices. This information was then transcribed and analyzed thematically (Clarke, 2016). This chapter presents and discusses the key findings concerning the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. The chapter is structured to first address the results tied to the general objective of this study:

- To analyze the influence of the social rapports of class and gender and life trajectory in the professional choice of a group of five Chilean pre-service women teachers.

Then, we present the results and discussion tied to the specific objectives listed below:

1. To analyze the interactions of social determinants that influence the professional choice of a group of five Chilean women pre-service teachers, as present in their life stories,
2. To explore the socio-familial and individual trajectory of the participants, focusing on the influence of significant experiences linked to their professional choice,
3. To explore the participants' psychic defense and adherence mechanisms involved in coping with and subjectivizing socio-psychic tensions.

Finally, the chapter concludes by synthesizing the key findings and discussion presented in the sections below.

4.1 Results for the General Objective: Pedagogy as a Response to the Interplay of Socio-Psychic Factors

The interaction between social class, gender, and family trajectory influences the decision to become a teacher. Our families, determined by class position (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and gender (Kergoat, 2003), transmit to us an identity, a place in society, and a family project with the expectation of social mobility through education (Gaulejac et al., 2006). We seek to meet these expectations without giving up our life project. However, our choices are limited by our social class and gender, which determine which professions are accessible and socially acceptable to us.

Within this context, pedagogy emerges as a viable option that balances these factors. As a feminized career associated with care, it responds to gender mandates (Joseph, 2019, p. 99). At the same time, its accessibility for the middle and lower-middle classes and their low remuneration reinforce continuity with their group of origin (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Therefore, being a teacher allows us to balance family expectations with our identity, to stay within the limits imposed by our class and gender, and to build a life project that is coherent with our history and resources.

Tú estás tratando de que todo esté en armonía. Y que de qué forma va a estar en armonía es Universidad, pedagógico, pedagogía. Pedagogía porque te gusta cuidar, porque lo vemos por el lado maternal pero también porque tu papá es mucho de intelectual, y también la pedagogía tiene intelecto, también tiene eso de las letras. Porque no es historia, no es matemática, es inglés. Entonces igual estás tratando de que haya una estabilidad en tus dos mundos, en tus dos culturas, en tus dos realidades.

(Darling, interview, 2024)

In this quote, Darling discusses how Nixie, through her professional choice, seeks to balance maternal and caregiving roles with the intellectual influence of the father. This aligns with Gaulejac et al. (2006) ideology on how the parents project their children's ideals and aspirations while the children either attempt to imitate or differentiate themselves from their parents. In Nixie's life, the maternal aspect demonstrates how a career in pedagogy, traditionally viewed as feminine, responds to the women's gender mandates of caregiving (Joseph, 2019). Likewise, pedagogy represents an option for Nixie that allows her to meet her father's expectation of pursuing a career that requires intellectual skills (attributes her father values highly). In this way, the professional choice becomes a means to articulate these influences, providing her with a sense of identity and economic stability within the constraints imposed by society and gender.

Consequently, the socio-psychic factors under analysis converge in a dynamic process where professional choices reflect the subjectivizing tension between group fusion and individual differentiation that characterizes individuals experiencing social mobility.

4.1.1 The tension between belonging and autonomy.

In this regard, the teaching profession, in particular, emerges as a means of navigating between loyalty to historical and familial roots and pursuing differentiation and self-fulfillment. Gaulejac et al. (2006) argue that this tension arises when individuals confront conflicting family expectations: Parents often encourage upward social mobility while expecting their children to remain faithful to their social origins. This contradiction generates a sense of guilt as success can create social distance from one's family, whereas failure may be perceived as a betrayal of the parental project.

Our findings align with Gaulejac's (2019b) concept of class neurosis (*Névrose de classe*), wherein individuals undergoing social mobility negotiate between identifying with

their family background and asserting their independence to achieve personal aspirations. On a broader scale, negotiation entails reinterpreting and adapting social norms (Schwartz et al., 2011) to reconcile the desire for self-realization with the persistent tensions between social belonging and autonomy. One participant expresses this tension as follows:

Siempre he sentido que la pedagogía la han mirado menos en casa (...) porque yo igual, pedagogía nunca lo he mirado menos, porque yo sé lo que es ser profe y como que sé que es importante, que estai tratando con niños, y la formación y todo, yo siempre he sido full consciente de eso. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

This statement exemplifies the internal subjective negotiation described by Gaulejac et al. (2006), in which the participant recognizes the devaluation of teaching within her family. Despite these familial expectations, she reinterprets these norms by attributing personal value and significance to the teaching profession. Her awareness of the importance of education and child development constitutes an act of differentiation, as she challenges the inherited narrative that teaching holds lesser prestige. Simultaneously, her acknowledgment of family perceptions highlights the tension between belonging and autonomy. In other words, her profession has become a site of negotiation, balancing loyalty to familial views with pursuing her aspirations. This dynamic reflects a broader socio-psychic tension between fulfilling internal desires and conforming to external expectations.

4.1.2 Becoming someone through the professional choice.

The findings, in particular, underscore the profound connection between professional choice and the socio-familial context into which an individual is born. The prevailing beliefs and expectations regarding family identity, individual roles, and the responsibilities assigned to each member play a crucial role in shaping one's self-perception and perceived freedom to choose a professional path. In this context, the family is conceived as a space of bonded unity, where members are expected to remain close and support one another in a continuous

process of collective and individual advancement. Within this framework, the primary mandate (Gaulejac et al., 2006) is explicit: each generation is expected to surpass the achievements of the previous one, mainly through education. As one participant states:

Mi mamá me inculcó que eso no era como... como: “tú tienes que ir a la universidad, porque lo que yo no hice”, como que mi mamá desvalorizaba el tema de los institutos. Como que Inacap no estás estudiando en la universidad, como que a mí se me inculcó que ser la universidad. (Hachi, interview, 2024)

This quote illustrates how individual progress is intrinsically linked to higher education, which is conceptualized as the primary pathway to “becoming someone.” In this context, not pursuing higher education is equated with stagnation or a lack of advancement. Furthermore, the idea of “being someone in life” is deeply intertwined with the socio-cultural constraints of the labor market, where women’s educational and professional trajectories are shaped by and co-constructed with prevailing gender norms. As a result, professional choice emerges not only as a personal aspiration but also as a response to family expectations, positioning education as both a symbol of progress and a mechanism for social mobility.

4.1.3 The intersection of gender and social class.

Our findings suggest that the intersection of gender and social class can be understood as a socio-psychic knot (Gaulejac, 2020), a complex entanglement between social structures and individual psychological functioning, often marked by internal conflict. Within this intersection, learning the female gender role, primarily associated with caregiving responsibilities, significantly shaped our professional choices. From an early age, we were socialized into caregiving tasks, which influenced our perception of adulthood and guided us toward careers aligned with these expectations (Fiorucci et al., 2022). As one participant expressed: “Y también ahí cómo llegó la pedagogía, porque era una opción donde es más

amor, es más cariño, es más cuidar, proteger, como ayudar al otro, guiar al otro.” (Nixie, interview, 2024). Similarly, another participant stated:

Para mí siempre he visto el rol de un profe como una madre (...) La diferencia es que se enseñan distinto, los papás enseñan valores y el profe enseña la materia, pero enseñan. El hecho de que mediante fui creciendo vi el rol del profe como un apoyo, como un soporte para aquellos que no lo encontraban en su propia familia. (Darling, interview, 2024)

These quotes illustrate how the teaching profession is perceived as an extension of the caregiving role traditionally assigned to women. This perspective aligns with Fiorucci et al. (2022), who argue that the feminization of teaching in Latin America is deeply rooted in gendered social expectations, where teaching is regarded as a “natural” continuation of women’s roles within the private sphere. Furthermore, Kergoat (2009) states that the socialization processes and lived experiences associated with being a woman within the family and broader society provide key insights into internalizing societal roles and expectations.

4.1.4 The role of social class in professional choices.

From a social class perspective, social and economic capital availability shaped a context where education was highly valued for social mobility. Our identification with Chile’s middle class influenced, to some extent, our decision to pursue teaching as a career, enabling us to align with the societal emphasis on education as a pathway to progress while maintaining a sense of continuity with our family’s class background. As Kergoat (2009) highlights, the consubstantiality of *rappports sociaux*, this interconnection of social relations based on gender, class, and race, shapes individuals’ perceptions of their opportunities and constraints. These intersecting social dynamics determine access to resources and influence

aspirations and career choices within specific socio-cultural contexts. As one participant stated:

Y claro, a mí mi mamá me inculcó como, tú podías cambiar de clase. Mi mamá era de Peñalolén po, también de una pobla, por San Luis de Macul. Se balean al frente también, po, yo también crecí como que cuidado con los balazos (...) Y como que mi mamá era como, oye, yo me saqué la cresta y te traje a La Florida, que era un rango mejor, no extremo, pero otra cosa. Pero claro, como que mi mamá era como, yo escalé, y ahora somos de acá. (Hachi, interview, 2024)

This quote illustrates how family histories of social mobility profoundly influence professional decisions. For many of us, pursuing a teaching career represents fulfilling family aspirations for upward mobility while maintaining loyalty to our origins. This aligns with Núñez's (2007) identification of socio-historical determinants, where education is crucial for overcoming social and economic barriers. For us, the decision to pursue teaching emerges as a balanced response to family expectations of progress and personal desires for self-realization. Moreover, this choice reflects a re-signification of class identity, where professional success is seen as an individual achievement and a continuation of our families' collective journeys.

Furthermore, the intersection of individual career choices and family dynamics mirrors the ongoing process of individuation (Bliez-Sullerot, 1999; Gaulejac, 1999). While we may have felt a responsibility to fulfill family obligations or uphold familial values, our professional decisions often serve as a pathway for differentiation, allowing us to assert our autonomy and identity beyond the constraints of family expectations. This tension between loyalty to family and personal aspirations encapsulates the complexities we faced as we navigated societal pressures, familial influence, and the pursuit of personal fulfillment through our professional identities.

4.1.5 Psychological coping mechanisms and professional choice.

The results reveal that deciding to become a teacher represents a professional space where tensions arising from *rappport sociaux* are negotiated. These tensions emerge from the intersections of gender, social class, and family expectations. The findings also highlight how we draw upon our available psychological resources, understood as psychic defense mechanisms (Freud, 1954/1936; Klein 2009/1946, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016), to adapt to and protect ourselves from the demands of our environment. One prominent defense mechanism is rationalization, which logically justifies suffering to make challenging experiences more palatable. To illustrate this, during the life story session, one participant was asked why she tended to minimize or dismiss sensitive topics, to which she stated:

Si yo siempre hago eso en la vida, siempre justifico a todo el mundo y las niñas saben (...) Puede ser como que justifico cosas que a lo mejor no debería (...) No sé, siempre lo he hecho, o sea, como que yo, y de hecho yo sé que lo hago, hasta a las niñas les he dicho que lo hago, pero en situaciones súper nada que ver también, como que busco, como que creo historias y digo “no, es que a lo mejor esa persona tenía muchos problemas y tuvo que”, pero lo hago, no sé por qué lo hago. (Francesca, interview, 2024)

This statement illustrates the use of rationalization as a defense mechanism. The participant constructs expectations to justify the actions of others, thereby minimizing emotional discomfort and making complex or painful situations more manageable. By rationalizing suffering, she transforms potential sources of distress into acceptable narratives, framing challenges as understandable consequences of external factors. In the context of professional identity construction, this form of rationalization serves to justify the problematic teaching conditions, framing these challenges as necessary sacrifices tied to our work's inherent meaning and value.

In this process, social class profoundly shapes the decision to become a teacher. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), professional choice and identity are deeply intertwined with one's social background and familial experiences, creating tensions between familial expectations and personal aspirations. The authors argue that the family is essential in transmitting cultural capital, thereby shaping the *habitus* (the set of dispositions acquired through primary socialization within the family) that influences how individuals perceive their aspirations and possibilities. This habitus is not innate but cultivated through familial and educational processes. As a primary pedagogical agent, the family defines what aspirations are legitimate or attainable, thus influencing how individuals interpret opportunities within the social field. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) emphasize that one's social origin affects educational success, as individuals possessing cultural capital that aligns with the educational system's demands are more likely to succeed. This dynamic reflects a broader process of social reproduction, where individuals' aspirations are conditioned by the cultural capital inherited from their families, which may either expand or constrain their professional possibilities. Consequently, the decision to pursue a teaching career was a multifaceted process that responded to socio-historical variables and subjective experiences. In many cases, this process reflects a desire to replicate roles learned during childhood or to compensate for past experiences, often driven by a sense of obligation to social expectations or personal fulfillment.

4.1.6 General objective results: A brief conclusion.

Our professional choices are influenced by the intricate interaction of social factors (gender, class) and psychological coping mechanisms. These factors influence our career decisions and how we perceive ourselves as professionals. Our choices reflect a delicate balancing act between belonging and individuality needs as we navigate the space between social expectations and personal aspirations. As we explore the broader implications of these

findings, it becomes evident that choosing a profession is not a purely voluntary act but a deeply embedded process influenced by both external and internal forces.

The following section will explore the major themes underlying the interaction between social class, familial socio-cultural trajectories, psychological resources, and professional choice, emphasizing the complex balance between socialization and individual agency. These themes illuminate how social class and gender dynamics interact and shape our professional identities as women teachers, particularly within the Chilean context.

4.2 Results of Specific Objective 1: Professional Choice at the Intersection of the *Rapports Sociaux*

4.2.1 *Rapports sociaux* (Social relations).

Rapports Sociaux, or social relations, as defined by Danièle Kergoat (2003, 2011), consist of a co-substantial interaction among the determinants of social class, gender, and race. Our results underscore that the co-substantial intersection between social class and gender is crucial in understanding professional choices. This suggests that this choice is influenced by access to economic and social capital and the constraints imposed by gender role expectations. The following sections report the results related to the factors of gender and social class (understood as the interaction between economic and social capital) as they relate to the professional choice of the participants.

4.2.1.1 Gender.

In our families, the understanding of gender roles aligns with the findings of Valdés (2009), who proposes that in families with traditional gender roles, the mother may work outside the home but remain primarily responsible for household duties. In our life stories, this traditional role is evident in several ways. Firstly, women are perceived as the primary

caregivers, even though they participate in the labor market. Despite this, they are still expected to manage domestic chores and childcare. This creates an unequal workload that leads to stress and exhaustion. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Mi papá quiere que mi mamá, con nosotros, cuando llegue del trabajo lo reciban con la once hecha, toda la casa ordenada. Y es como... desvalora mucho lo que nosotros también hacemos, como estudiar, que mi mamá trabaje, porque mi mamá igual trabaja de lunes a viernes y llega cansada, como a las 7 de la tarde. Y mi papá también llega como a esa hora y como que..., ¿si mi mamá también está trabajando? (Olivia, Interview, 2024)

In this quote, Olivia states how, even though both her mother and father share the same work responsibilities outside the home, the burden of domestic tasks continues to fall primarily on her mother. She mentions that her father expects her mother and children to welcome him home with a clean house and dinner prepared, regardless of how tired her mother is from her workday. Olivia's family exemplifies the sexual division of labor described by Kergoat (2003), a division that promotes and perpetuates gender inequity to the detriment of women. This unequal distribution of labor is not simply an individual or family issue; it reflects a broader social structure that assigns productive work to men and reproductive work to women. In this context, Olivia's father is primarily concerned with generating income for the family, while her mother is responsible for managing the household and working outside the home. This corroborates Aviv et al.'s (2025) assertion that women are over-represented in domestic responsibilities. This demonstrates that, within the majority of our families, women are expected to take on household responsibilities even when they have the same work commitments as men, highlighting the inequity in the distribution of domestic labor. As illustrated below:

Ah, y cuando él pudo entrar a Codelco, dijo, ya, vámonos a Calama. Y mi mamá dijo, bueno. Y él le dijo, no vas a trabajar más. Y ella le dijo, bueno. Y ahí se hizo ama de casa y dejó de ser secretaria. (Francesca, Interview, 2024)

Here, Francesca describes how her father decided her mother no longer needed to be a secretary once he found a steady and well-paid job. As such, they decided she would stay home and concentrate on caring for the kids and handling housework. This choice fits Francesca's family history, as every woman has been a housewife. This reveals Chile's view of the female role since gender roles are passed on throughout generations. In Francesca's family, this supports the belief that women's responsibilities are more often those of caregivers than of financial providers. This demonstrates the perception of the female role in Chile, as gender norms are transmitted across generations. In Francesca's family, this reinforces the idea that women's roles are primarily those of caregivers, not economic providers. It also demonstrates how underappreciated domestic chores and care are in line with Kergoat's (2003) idea of the sexual division of labor, which contends that women perform major unpaid labor for others under the cover of love and motherhood.

Being a woman is closely associated with household responsibilities, caregiving, and the role of housewife, often seen as a hardworking pillar of sacrifice and dedication. On the other hand, men in our life stories are frequently viewed as the primary breadwinners and usually help mothers raise their children. Our perspective of what was expected of us as these conventional gender roles has influenced women in our households, impacting our career paths. We have chosen feminized vocations, including education, as a means of balancing our need for professional fulfillment with the conventional gender norms we grew up with. The following sections will delve deeper into the characteristics attributed to women and men and explore how gender factors are linked to and influence our professional decisions.

4.2.1.1.1 Hard-working and devoted: Women as sources of admiration.

When analyzing the life stories, it becomes evident that women in the participants' families were often admired as pillars and symbols of sacrifice and dedication. Whether as grandmothers, mothers, aunts, or sisters, they were seen as the ones who held everything together. In other words, they were typically depicted as responsible for the home, the family's emotional well-being, and, in many cases, even contributing financially. Their responsibilities were not limited to one dimension; they engaged in nearly every aspect of daily life, from running the house and seeing relatives to making personal sacrifices for the welfare of others. These positions suggest how women, frequently bearing several responsibilities without question, were considered the backbone of the participants' homes.

“Mi papá terminó cuarto medio... porque lo obligamos. Fue nocturno. Mi mamá iba a las clases por él. Él tenía que ir a dar las pruebas. Hasta yo iba a las clases con mi mamá.” (Darling, interview, 2024). This testimony discusses the societal expectation that women must fulfill many tasks within the family, often at the expense of their personal needs. It demonstrates how women's sacrifices go beyond household chores to support the achievement of others, in this case, her father. Her mother supported her father's schooling and attended his lessons, fulfilling her responsibilities. This meant that he could finish his studies. Darling joined in as well, attending classes with her mother. This supports the belief that by frequently bearing extra responsibilities, women are not only in charge of their destinies but also expected to help others succeed. Understanding this expectation requires one to consider Joseph's (2019) view on the meaning of caring. Women take on several roles and frequently give their own needs a second priority to help others. She indicates that caring is a sort of work and an emotion-driven compassion for others. This fits the participants' experiences, where women are actively involved in domestic and outside tasks, guaranteeing

the success of those around them. Women who assume several tasks present themselves as indispensable family members, frequently at the sacrifice of their ambitions.

This study clarifies how the idolizing of women as self-sacrificing models sustains gender expectations. Such assumptions define women's responsibilities inside the household and restrict their chances for both professional and personal progress. The acceptance of self-sacrifice as an intrinsically female quality supports conventional gender roles, so it is difficult to question these dynamics. As a result, our identities as women became closely tied to service and care.

In conclusion, this narrative demonstrates how women's tasks in the family system involve a complicated interaction of household, emotional, and educational responsibilities. Reflecting more general social expectations of female self-sacrifice and care, the evidence and theoretical viewpoints examined show how women's labor, emotional and practical, is vital to family stability and advancement.

4.2.1.1.2 Men as absent figures.

In our families, gender roles are understood as more traditional. Valdés (2009) suggests that in families where traditional gender roles are maintained, fathers often serve as the primary economic providers, placing great importance on work success and professional prestige. While these fathers view themselves as the transmitters of values and education to their children, they tend to be less present in their children's daily lives. Our life stories reveal several themes related to these traditional roles. Firstly, men are predominantly the economic providers within the family; secondly, there is an emotional distance or absence of men at home due to work obligations; and thirdly, issues such as abandonment or alcoholism affect family relationships. For instance, Francesca shares how her father was not very present in her life due to work:

Mi papá, su forma de dar cariño como no estaba tan presente, su trabajo era muy exigente, era con plata, nos daba regalo. Aunque no estuviera, esa era su forma, no es como la más óptima, pero trataba de ser papá presente a pesar de que no podía.

(Francesca, interview, 2024)

Francesca emphasizes how her father's work affected their father-child connection in this quotation. He would give gifts to his children to compensate for his absence, symbolizing his effort to earn money and express affection, even when physically absent. Valdés (2009) states that men responsible for providing for the family often play a supportive role in parenting for the mother, resulting in limited involvement in childcare and household tasks. This might cause the father to be emotionally detached or absent, influencing his child's growth and relationship. Estrada et al. (2014) noted that the absence of a father, physical or emotional, may hurt the development and welfare of his children and young ones. In Francesca's case, although her father tried to compensate for his absence with gifts, this could not replace the direct emotional bond that is essential for healthy child development. As a result, we perceive men, especially our fathers, as more distant figures in our lives, given that many of them had to work to improve the family's economic stability.

It is also important to note that male figures were absent due to many reasons, including work, abandonment, and alcoholism. These causes led to troubles in family connections, such as lack of emotional support, financial struggles from drinking, and abandonment. As proposed by Estrada et al. (2014), an absent father can have severe consequences for the child, causing emotional crises that leave children feeling vulnerable, insecure, and lonely, which can damage their relationship with male figures. Hachi, for example, reflects on the consequences of abandonment in her life: "Yo no sabía interactuar

con hombres porque era como, si mi papá me abandonó, como que... los hombres pueden hacer lo mismo.” (Hachi, interview, 2024)

This quotation demonstrates the psychological effects of Hachi’s father’s abandonment, which not only left her with emotional wounds but also altered her outlook on life and her interactions with other men, which had an impact on her social growth. As a result, Hachi, like the rest of us, viewed women as housewives and caregivers who frequently served as pillars of devotion and sacrifice when males were not there. This experience influenced our decision to choose pedagogy as a profession. We aspired to embody strong women who do not rely on men for stability in life. For some of us, this means becoming teachers with strong characters dedicated to supporting and guiding our students through their school lives and assisting them with any needs.

In conclusion, the roles of women and men in our families have been shaped by cultural tradition, social expectations, and historical factors, establishing clear roles throughout our family histories. The women in our families are associated with household responsibilities and are viewed as caregivers and housewives: responsible, resilient, hardworking, and pillars of sacrifice and dedication. In contrast, males are portrayed in our life stories as the primary breadwinners and parents who play a supporting role, which frequently leads to less participation in childcare and housework. While men were generally perceived as distant, we observed women as the more present caregivers during childhood. This dynamic has influenced our preference for a feminized career, such as education, which conforms to these established gender norms and allows us to balance our need for independence with the traditional responsibilities we learned as children. Reinforcing these gender norms, on the other hand, can occasionally result in young people taking on adult duties.

4.2.1.1.3 Adultification: When social class and gender constraints make childhood come to an end.

Adultification is a prominent phenomenon that we identify among all generations of women and men in our families. According to Stack and Burton (1993, as cited in Burton, 2007, p. 334), adultification refers to children's early assumption of specific responsibilities, pushing some children to take on adult roles at a young age. In our life stories, adultification is present in two main ways. Firstly, children take on caregiving responsibilities for younger siblings or family members to help the parents without one or both parents.

Cuando llegó mi hermana fue fantástico. Yo desde los 11 años le cambiaba los pañales, le daba la comida, o sea, yo hacía todo desde los 11 años. O sea, yo estaba ahí pendiente de ayudar a mi mamá en todo, en todo, en todo. (Nixie, interview, 2024)

Nixie's statement shows that from the age of eleven, she had many responsibilities to assist her mother, especially caring for her younger sister. This means that instead of focusing on her childhood, she took on adult responsibilities from a young age. This is a clear example of adultification, as Burton (2007) describes it. Due to family beliefs, norms, and expectations, children can be adultified when they assume a "quasi-parent" role for their siblings. Consistent with Burton's idea of the "quasi-parent," Nixie helped her mother and actively raised her sister.

Secondly, adultification is evident in our life stories, as children were required to help at a young age to assist with household chores or provide financial support. For these children, quitting their education and working to help their parents achieve economic stability was necessary.

Mi papá, chico, dejó de estudiar para trabajar y ayudar a mi tata con los demás. Los demás que son los mellizos. Ellos son los que mi papá ayudó a criar y hasta el día de hoy lo consideran como un papá. (Darling, interview, 2024)

For example, this quote indicates that Darling's dad became an adult because of financial problems. According to Burton (2007), a child can be adultified when they take on a part-time or full-time job to help support the family financially. In this case, Darling's father had to leave his education behind to support his family. To prevent his daughter from facing a similar situation, he did everything he could to ensure she had access to the education he lacked. However, while Darling was not adultified due to economic reasons or her parent's actions, she still took on adult responsibilities at a young age due to the irresponsibility of other family members. This shows that adultification can occur indirectly, even when efforts are made to avoid repeating it in future generations.

This highlights the disrupted childhood experiences of Darling's father, as he had to work instead of focusing on his personal development from a young age. This also aligns with Boo (2001), who found that these scenarios are generally reflected in economically pressured families. While we do not come from entirely disadvantaged backgrounds, we are part of the middle social class and, in some instances, reside in neighborhoods with noticeably low incomes, such as La Granja. Additionally, Darling shares that her father also took on a caregiving role for his siblings. This reflects how caregiving responsibilities can force a child or young person to grow up quickly and assume adult roles within the family.

Furthermore, adultification can be more closely associated with the female gender. Burton (2007) states that girls, even if they are the second sibling or the youngest of several brothers, are more likely to assume adult responsibilities, such as managing household chores. This is evident in our families, where most of those who experienced adultification

were women. For example, Olivia states: “Es algo que igual lo he hablado con ella, porque a mi hermana igual le delegan estas responsabilidades, pero mi hermano nunca.” (Olivia, interview, 2024)

In this quote, Olivia explains that she and her sister are responsible for home chores, while her brother is not expected to contribute. This emphasizes how gender shapes adultification, validating Burton’s (2007) theory that the female gender is more typically connected with this process.

In conclusion, men and women in our homes took on adult responsibilities early due to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Women were mainly responsible for providing care, handling household duties, and occasionally making financial contributions. In the meantime, men were supposed to support their families financially from a young age, putting employment before school. Their childhoods were changed by this adultification, which made them assume adult responsibilities before they were ready. This situation was later replicated with us women, who had to learn to take on caregiving tasks at an early age due to the work responsibilities of our parents and caregivers. In this way, adultification is a by-product of social class constraints on access to resources that force adults to work longer to earn enough income to support the family, resulting in children being left to take responsibility for chores, especially girls.

This adultification impacted our professional choices, which we experienced and naturalized. This led us to pursue a vocation that offers support, care, and safety, similar to how our mothers and grandmothers used to look after and assist us. Moreover, reflecting on the adult responsibilities we adopted during infancy and adolescence, we developed our maternal instincts through caring for our brothers or relatives. As educators, we strive to impart this identical sense of compassion to our students.

4.2.1.2 Social class.

By examining how our social class has affected our lives, we can observe that we strongly identify with the Chilean middle class. This has had a significant impact on the social and economic lives of our families. The neighborhoods mentioned in our stories (La Florida, Recoleta, Ñuñoa, Algarrobo, Peñalolén, La Pintana, La Granja, and Conchalí) are generally associated with the middle and lower social classes in Chile. Our families' education, ideologies, and socioeconomic experiences have been shaped by these neighborhoods, which have, in turn, influenced their expectations of middle-class life. However, these neighborhoods vary significantly regarding economic situations, access to opportunities, and quality of life, each representing a different part of the Middle Class. La Pintana and La Granja confront more significant economic hardships and limited resources than Ñuñoa, which has a more established middle-class profile.

The education, ideologies, and socioeconomic experiences passed down within families are shaped by the neighborhood and its conditions. Depending on the neighborhood, our professional choices may emerge as a mechanism of social mobility or a response to the educational inequalities we experienced in childhood. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) believe that academic achievement correlates with an individual's social background, as the benefits or drawbacks of one's social surroundings manifest inside the educational system. As demonstrated in the subsequent quote, Darling utilizes her cultural capital to challenge the expectations of her social environment and provide her students with the resources necessary to alter their futures. This approach demonstrates the significance attributed to education as a means of social mobility in Darling's family:

Yo le ayudo. ¿Por qué? Porque yo soy de población. Y aprendí acá con mi mamá, con mis papás que no porque uno sea de población, va a quedar en la población o va a tener que ser uno más del montón. Que uno puede salir. (Darling, interview, 2024)

Darling explains in this quotation how her neighborhood-shaped identity and socioeconomic background enable her to relate to her students. She supports the notion that expectations and goals are influenced by social background. Children in these neighborhoods frequently replicate what they see on the streets, occasionally resulting in dangerous behaviors. As a teacher, Darling uses her understanding of the neighborhood to inspire her students, encouraging them to believe they can achieve more than what their surroundings might suggest. These neighborhoods provided a social dynamic that allowed our families to adapt and foster a sense of belonging within the middle class for subsequent generations. For us, living in these neighborhoods meant experiencing their ideologies, dangers, opportunities, cultural perspectives, and methods of education, all of which have helped shape our identities. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1964, 1990) suggest, individual identity is influenced by social background and family experiences, sometimes leading to conflicts between family expectations and personal aspirations. The neighborhoods we grew up in have shaped our identity and professional choices. Living in these areas from a young age has created a sense of loyalty that can influence or limit our professional options. In this context, pedagogy emerges as a field where we can remain faithful to our family mandate and social class. It allows us to grow professionally, but not enough to transcend the social class into which we were born.

4.2.1.3 Economic capital.

From an economic and work perspective, economic capital is related to job stability, income levels, and asset access. The connection frequently encourages us to seek schooling

to land steady employment. Because this class finds a compromise between aiming for a better life than our parents and also attaining financial stability, there is a desire to stay in the same social class as our families. Families of the middle class are kept together and bonded by this dynamic. This is reflected in our life experiences, where our families are viewed as belonging to the middle class in Chile. According to Barozet et al. (2021), the middle class in Chile is a varied group marked by several paths and lifestyles. Aspires to social mobility through education, mainly depends on labor income, and usually has access to assets. Most middle-class spending, however, is funded by debt, which causes them to be financially exposed to changes in the jobs market and possible unemployment. Within our families, there are noticeable variations in stability among middle-class members, with some achieving greater economic security than others. Despite these differences, all families face common challenges, including the frustration of hard work and effort to maintain economic stability and the limitations imposed by financial constraints.

Pero yo igual lo comprendo porque trabaja y no tiene descanso, la planta ni siquiera le alcanza para comprarse algo para él porque todos se van deuda. Entonces como que no... nunca ha podido vivir la vida que él quiso. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

Olivia discusses her father in this quotation, demonstrating the obstacles and constraints to reaching financial security that the middle class in Chile faces. While many middle-class people attempt to meet their fundamental necessities, they occasionally fall short of achieving comfortable financial security. This is the case with Olivia's father. This is consistent with Espinoza and Barozet (2009), who argue that economic stability can differ depending on the middle class, categorizing families based on education levels, income, and job/occupation types. In Olivia's father's case, despite having a job, he cannot access a level of stability that would allow him to improve his quality of life significantly. Nevertheless, our

families attain a certain degree of economic stability that will enable them to cope with challenges, such as access to education or non-severe health issues. In some cases, when income and stability increase, families have invested in long-term assets like houses or cars.

Additionally, in our life stories, work is perceived as structured under an employer, where most jobs require little formal education, except for a few that demand a degree. Work is also associated with a strong division of labor based on gender, with men typically performing physically demanding jobs, women occupying feminized jobs, and most of these jobs requiring little formal education, except for a few that require a degree. This is evident in the following quote: “Mi mamá es, ahora está como en un área administrativa, por así decirlo. Ordenando documentos de la empresa donde trabaja mi papá. Mi papá es supervisor de obra.” (Darling, interview, 2024)

This quote indicates the disparity in work roles attributed to gender. Darling’s father engages in a physically demanding, field-based occupation, whereas her mother holds an administrative position focusing on document management. This points out the historical division of labor in various work environments, where men typically occupy operational roles, and women are often in administrative positions. In line with Kergoat (2009), this gender-based job segmentation persists despite progress toward inclusion, with men receiving higher wages and better positions. This highlights the gender and structural inequalities that continue to affect women’s access to better opportunities, making it more challenging to balance work responsibilities with parenting tasks.

This argument is further supported by Darling’s comment, which shows how her father's profession, which requires more technical responsibility and leadership, pays more than her mother’s feminized position. Darling’s decisions are influenced by the division of labor duties in her family, reinforcing these categories. Women typically select occupations

restricted to formative, care, and administrative tasks. As a result, Darling chose pedagogy, a career that allows her to meet the expectations placed upon her as a woman in the workforce.

Furthermore, our life stories also discuss the hard work of our fathers and grandfathers, who engaged in manual, technical, or administrative middle-level jobs such as mining, journalism, transportation, and construction. Despite their physical demands, these jobs were frequently reliable sources of income, particularly for males. On the other hand, women chose to work in feminized occupations like sewing, office work, household, and informal business. Even though these occupations provided a certain amount of financial autonomy, they frequently came with low pay, precarious working conditions, and no social recognition.

In conclusion, our perspective on economic possibilities and work is shaped by gender segregation and limited job opportunities in our families due to the lack of formal education. As a result, work in our families requires excellent effort and education to overcome economic challenges. These experiences have helped us understand that belonging to the middle class allows for a comfortable life without significant assets. Therefore, through education, we aspire to achieve more economic stability than our families. In light of this, pedagogy becomes a field that allows us to reach a level of financial status in which we, as women, can earn a socially acceptable income. However, this income level creates a tension that Gaulejac et al. (2006) propose as a conflict between continuing with the family history and the need to differentiate oneself and build one's own identity, which, in this case, refers to our social class.

4.2.1.4 Social capital.

Social capital comprises access to education, culture, and other forms of cultural capital that shape individuals' opportunities for success in society (Bourdieu & Passeron,

1964). In the same book, these authors also stipulate that the educational system functions as a mechanism of social stratification, where individuals from more privileged social backgrounds are more likely to succeed due to their cultural capital. For this study, social capital is understood as access to different levels of education. In our families, education has evolved over generations. While most of our grandparents had limited access to education, our parents attained secondary education, and we, as a new generation, have entered higher education. According to Barozet et al. (2021), the middle class in Chile is a diverse group characterized by various trajectories and lifestyles. This group largely depends on labor income and aspires to social mobility through education.

Various historical, social, and economic factors have shaped this shift. Rodríguez (2019) indicates that increased accessibility to education for younger generations has led to higher educational mobility rates, which has improved the likelihood of individuals attaining higher levels of education compared to their parents. The socio-economic challenges that influenced our academic experiences, the disparities in educational access between generations, and the role of education as a critical tool for attaining more excellent socio-economic stability are all detailed in our life stories. The evolution of education is evident in numerous of our narratives. For instance, Hachi thinks about how proud her family is that she chose to study pedagogy: “Bueno, mi familia igual está súper orgullosa, como que igual, ninguno tuvo acceso a la universidad como tal, es como wow.” (Hachi, interview, 2024)

According to Rodríguez (2019), there is a growing trend of educational mobility between generations. Hachi exemplifies this phenomenon, as her university education access signifies a tremendous advancement above her family’s chances. She expresses that no one in her family had the opportunity to pursue higher education, and this achievement is regarded as something remarkable and previously considered out of reach. Lambrecht Plaza (2011)

states that in prior generations, education was primarily reserved for the wealthiest populations, resulting in low educational levels for those who could not afford it. As education has become more accessible to younger generations, seeing a family member reach higher education is considered an outstanding achievement.

In addition to the historical exclusion of the lower class from education, a significant barrier to accessing higher education in previous generations was the economic instability faced by the middle class. This instability forced many families to prioritize work over education. In many cases, children and adolescents were “adultified” and had to enter the labor market early to contribute to the family economy, limiting their ability to continue their studies. As Lahire (2013) proposed, the professional choices of our family members were shaped by the demands of labor, which led them to lose childhood aspirations. These barriers were particularly evident for our grandparents and, in some cases, even our parents. We can see this in Nixie’s family, where she mentions that her mother and uncles had to work from a young age: “Todos mis tíos trabajaban desde muy chicos, mi mamá yo creo que lleva desde como los 10 años trabajando. Desde muy pequeños trabajando porque necesitaban ayudar a la casa.” (Nixie, interview, 2024).

This comment illustrates how Nixie’s adultified family members were compelled to prioritize employment above school, limiting their personal growth and academic progress due to the family's economic hardships. Paz (2010) indicates that students engaged in work typically have reduced time for studying or leisure, potentially negatively impacting their academic performance and learning experiences due to frequent absences from school. In certain instances, this may result in the complete abandonment of education. The prioritization of work over education has consistently served as a barrier in past generations, obstructing educational mobility and perpetuating socio-economic inequalities.

In general, the development of education within our families has been essential to our personal and professional development. Unlike most of our relatives, we have been allowed to pursue higher education, which we regard not only as an individual objective but also as a means of enhancing or maintaining our families' social and economic status. However, this perspective on education can put us under much tension because we frequently feel obligated to meet our families' educational expectations. Most of us attended public schools, reflecting the economic realities of middle-class living, in which private education is sometimes prohibitively expensive for many families. Growing up and attending neighborhood schools structured our education around local values and community ideals. We are now more conscious of educational disparities and the significance of teachers as pivotal players in our lives due to this experience. Furthermore, after seeing the shortcomings of the educational system, we feel obligated to participate as change agents in our communities to guarantee better possibilities for future generations. In this way, our decision to become teachers is a contribution to social change as well as a professional one.

Moreover, our narratives demonstrate how socioeconomic class has affected our beliefs, ideas, and educational progress, heavily influencing our professional choices. In line with Giust-Desprairies' (2003) ideas, we adapted our expectations to those of the collective we belong to and chose to pursue pedagogy, reflecting our connection to our social class and personal identity. By choosing to study pedagogy, we navigate the balance between honoring our family heritage and seeking professional independence.

4.3 Results for the Specific Objective 2: Socio-Familial Heritage and Professional Choice

4.3.1 Transgenerational heritage: the family novel.

As a primary socialization site, the family plays a central role in its members' identities and life choices. This aligns with Gaulejac et al. (2006), who argue that an individual's biographical experiences influence their development and identity, integrating psychological, social, and historical dimensions. Therefore, in this section, we examine how the concept of family, the parental project, its mandates, and the historical and social contexts have impacted our personal and professional trajectories. The investigation of beliefs concerning family unity, the imperative of self-improvement, and education as a mechanism for social mobility illustrates the transmission of values, expectations, and roles within families that have influenced our decisions, especially in the context of pursuing a teaching career. This research demonstrates how family structures and transgenerational inheritances collide with individual desires, producing a conflict and negotiation between belonging and autonomy.

4.3.1.1 Families belong together: the value of family union.

The results indicate that the value of unity is central to the identity and stability of a family. Specifically, in our narratives, the notion of family is depicted as a group of individuals who place significant importance on unity, affection, care, and role differentiation. This supports the idea put forth by Bernales (2015) that families are structured according to power dynamics, attachment, and shared values that provide them with a unique identity. Through these components, families create beliefs, emotional ties, and standards that direct their behavior. Physical assistance and presence are essential in this situation to foster stronger bonds.

The organization of our families is defined by a close-knit relationship, with members residing close to each other or within more prominent groups in the same household. Harraka (2002) points out that social capital is enhanced when individuals are united and connected through robust relationships and mutual support. As a result, the family connection is strengthened by the frequency of encounters among members, fostering a sense of love and togetherness based on intimacy. As an example, one participant said: “Yo vivo aquí, mi abuela al frente, la Katalina a tres casas, vivimos todos juntos.” (Darling, interview, 2024)

This sentence indicates that Darling’s family members usually live close to each other, which helps them get along and help each other out. It shows that everyone in this family lives just a few meters away from each other and lives together every day. This creates a notion of family unity, where family members continue to seek geographic proximity to one another even after becoming independent and pursuing lives outside the home in which they were raised.

4.3.1.2 The mandate to outperform one’s parents.

The structure and organization of our families, from the emphasis on the family unit to the distribution of roles and responsibilities among family members, have shaped a dynamic in which parents project an improved version of themselves onto their children. Gaulejac et al. (2006) define the “parental project” as parents’ expectations and objectives for their children. In addition to serving as a source of guidance for them, these expectations frequently serve as an implicit transmission of their aspirations. Consequently, children are constrained to fulfill their parents’ expectations, attempting to surpass them and the generations preceding them.

We are expected to do better than previous generations, but this has to be done during significant historical, social, and economic changes affecting our families’ possibilities and

limits. Sociohistorical events in Chile, like the Agrarian Reform of the 1960s and 1970s, tried to make life better for people. Nevertheless, socioeconomic inequality did not significantly change structurally due to the reform. Economic inequality was prevalent throughout this time, with most people working for meager pay and a handful earning more (Lambrecht Plaza, 2011). Unstable finances, low educational attainment, and hard physical labor marked this period of extreme adversity for our family.

Chile faced even more significant difficulties in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly due to the military dictatorship and its support for neoliberal policies. Inequality was worse than in previous years as wages and the minimum wage fell. The country went through a crisis and recovery phase following the dictatorship, during which attempts were made to bring economic stability. However, as a result of these efforts, less money was spent on social programs, which meant fewer state benefits, higher unemployment, lower wages, and less output, which made inequality even worse (Lambrecht Plaza, 2011). This time was full of political unrest, fear, and insecurity for our families, but it also gave us hope to get through hard times and make life better for future generations.

By the end of the '90s and into the early 2000s, as Chile emerged from the aftermath of the dictatorship, the country entered a new phase of economic transformation driven by globalization. During this period, governments sought to promote economic growth to increase equality. This supports Piketty's (2014) claim that economic expansion generates new employment opportunities and demands that every generation learn new skills to keep up with changing demands on the economy. The Asian financial crisis, however, changed the situation and caused unemployment to increase towards the end of the decade (Lambrecht Plaza, 2011). Our families slowly stabilized during these times of upheaval, concentrating on giving the following generation more access to education and career prospects.

In this Chilean historical context, families agree to an ideology of striving to exceed the achievements of the preceding generation. Given the historical, social, and economic challenges that hindered their ability to live comfortably, there has been a clear expectation for each new generation to achieve more. This includes acquiring a better education and economic well-being, which promises a higher quality of life. As Piketty (2014) argues, when new generations acquire new skills, they are better positioned to access opportunities and jobs that improve their economic circumstances. Regarding outperforming past generations, one participant stated:

No fue un tema de que estaba pensando solamente en mí. También yo estaba pensando en el futuro con mis papás. Con mi familia. Que si yo estaba en el extranjero no era solamente porque... por un gusto. Estaba trabajando, estaba estudiando ¿Para qué? Para que el futuro fuera mejor. (Darling, interview, 2024)

Darling's quote summarizes the main idea of the "parental project" (Gaulejac et al., 2006), which says that children take on board their families' goals and dreams. Her choice to study abroad was not just for her happiness; it was also deeply connected to her duty to protect her family's future. Piketty (2014) proposes that economic growth necessitates each generation acquiring new skills to access improved opportunities. Darling's perspective reflects this notion, as she regarded her educational advancements as a strategy for achieving a more stable and prosperous future for her family, an opinion influenced by their past struggles. Her experience exemplifies the idea that the expectation to exceed the accomplishments of prior generations is a collective endeavor, wherein individual achievements and the welfare of the family unit serve as metrics for success.

4.3.1.3. Education: The key to social mobility.

In the past, Chileans could not afford higher education without substantial financial resources, as it was closely associated with higher income. The poverty levels of the 1960s

were reflected in the fact that 68% of the Chilean population had either no education or had only completed primary education (Lambrecht Plaza, 2011). This is evident from our family's perspective, as most of their predecessors only received a basic education, the maximum they could afford. As the laws and society evolved in Chile, our parents attained higher educational levels than the previous generation, with some even reaching higher education. Consequently, education became an essential part of personal development, as our families consistently emphasized the importance of studying and achieving more than they had. This focus on education is exemplified in Olivia's comments, where she describes her mother's desire for her children to pursue their studies more than she could.

Mi mamá siempre dice que le hubiera gustado estudiar. Y no pudo hacerlo porque mi abuela no se lo permitió. Entonces, como que también le importa mucho que nosotros saquemos nuestro estudio. Porque siempre dice eso, como de dar lo mismo título que sea, pero estudien algo. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

Olivia explains how her mother sees education as a chance she was never given and a vital tool for the future. Her mother's belief that education is crucial for her children's futures reflects this. Due to limitations placed on her by her own family, Olivia's mother could not pursue her education. As a result, she now wishes for her children to enjoy the same educational chances that she was not given, projecting her unmet dreams onto them. Due to shifting socioeconomic circumstances that have increased access to higher education and expanded prospects for earning a university degree, this projection is now possible. Since more people can have diplomas, their social significance has reduced as an instrument for social mobility. Olivia's mother believes her children's higher education is necessary to meet a profoundly personal and civic obligation.

Given the importance of education, our families' dynamics, values, and ideologies have encouraged them to support our choice to pursue pedagogy studies. Since this

employment choice enables us to pursue a professional job, something many family members cannot do, it aligns with family norms. In the following excerpt, Hachi describes how her family embraced the decision and never had an unfavorable opinion of pedagogy because they thought teaching was a noble and worthwhile career.

Entonces como que siempre fue como un orgullo así como, ah, está estudiando y como que, bueno, era el tema, como al principio era como pero no pagan tanto, pero era como, ya, da lo mismo como que un trabajo bonito, como que nunca fue como nunca fue mal visto. (Hachi, interview, 2024)

This quote expresses how Hachi's family was proud of her for pursuing higher education, which they had not been able to attain themselves. As a result, they expected the following generation to carry on this legacy. Rather than focus on the financial aspects of her job, they emphasized the educational and employment options it offered. Hachi's decision to study pedagogy is consistent with her family's expectations, highlighting the value of education and the professional prospects it provides.

This indicates how the familial narrative, affected by historical, social, and economic contexts, established structures, dynamics, and ideologies inside families that shaped each member's actions and identity development. Individuals pursued the affection and approval of preceding generations within these familial rules. Education facilitates individual and societal advancement by offering the means to enhance one's life and overcome the constraints encountered by preceding generations. This advancement is intricately associated with the division of labor and gender-based opportunities, as women frequently do not engage in the same fields of education or career paths as males.

Finally, the transgenerational dimension is critical to understanding the participants' subjectivity because it demonstrates how family relationships, historical settings, and inherited expectations influence our professional decisions. This viewpoint helps us to see the

family as a linking group, with social interactions interwoven and imparting values, goals, and implicit mandates that shape our identity. This is consistent with Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) paradigm of how social structures and interactions in our setting influence our identity and daily decisions, changing how we see ourselves, our duties, and family expectations. These circumstances greatly affected our decision to become teachers, a profession that allows us to balance personal goals with inherited family tales.

4.3.2 Family heritage and professional choice: Some conclusions.

The findings indicate the significant impact of socio-familial heritage on career choices, especially in the teaching profession. Our narratives indicated that familial expectations, frequently associated with pursuing social mobility via education, significantly influenced our career trajectories. For many individuals, the decision to become a teacher was not solely a personal goal but was influenced considerably by familial aspirations and values (Gaulejac, 1999). The expectations were based on the belief that education could facilitate social advancement and enhance life circumstances, a perspective that was profoundly internalized during our upbringing.

The concept of family unity and self-improvement was a central value in the households we grew up in, shaping both our worldview and career choices. As a result, becoming a teacher was not only seen as a noble pursuit but also as a way to meet the collective aspirations of the family, thereby furthering its goals and enhancing its status. This set of beliefs gave us a sense of purpose and belonging, pushing us to ensure that our career paths met the needs of our families (Gaulejac et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, these socio-familial expectations resulted in a multifaceted conflict, where anything less than excellence is regarded as a failure (Dujarier, 2005, as cited in

Guerrero et al., 2019, p. 242). On the one hand, there was a desire to fulfill the family mandate by pursuing a career consistent with social mobility, respect, and stability. Yet, these external expectations did not consistently correspond with personal ambitions. We navigated this tension by balancing the necessity of adhering to inherited roles with the desire to establish a sense of autonomy in our professional identities. The recurring pattern of the tension between fulfilling familial obligations and pursuing personal fulfillment frequently necessitated us to reconcile conflicting desires, both individual and societal.

This dynamic exemplifies that autonomy and tradition were negotiated. Our professional decisions were not wholly our own but were affected by emotional desire and pressure from others. Our stories reveal how these negotiations were affected by more significant sociocultural issues, like gender and social class. For instance, many participants thought about how gender roles in the family could make people feel specific ways, especially women who work in education, which affected how they saw their working selves. This is related to what Barreto and Álvarez (2013) argue about how, in pedagogy, women can fulfill what is socially expected of them, which is being mothers.

The findings indicate that career decisions were not merely personal accomplishments but were significantly influenced by socio-familial contexts. They reveal the interplay between individual agency and the societal frameworks that shaped us (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Ultimately, the results of this study emphasize the complexity of how family, social class, and gender intersect to shape professional identities, illustrating that our professional choices were as much a product of familial influence as they were of personal choice.

4.4 Results for Specific Objective 3: Tensions and Coping Mechanisms

Career choices arise from the intricate interaction of social, cultural, economic, gender, and psychological factors, creating a socio-psychic knot (Gaulejac, 2020)

characterized by a tension between societal expectations regarding an individual's role and the internal desire for self-fulfillment. The subject is considered not merely a passive recipient of imposed social determinants but an active participant who engages with these factors in a creative process of reinterpretation, aiming to transform their meaning and personal significance. This approach is consistent with Vézina (2020, as cited in Alderson, 2004, p. 253) notion, in which the psychodynamics of work theory is connected to the subject identity by highlighting that it is the result of a collective work or the need for belonging to a community. This non-linear process involves ongoing negotiation among resistance, adherence, and defense as individuals engage with the social structures that influence their identities and opportunities.

This concept relates to the idea that the work organization does not merely influence individuals; they also engage with it, striving to reshape its significance and effects to better suit their needs and aspirations (Carpentier-Roy, 1995c, p. 14, as cited in Alderson, 2004). In this way, people can question the limits they were born with while still incorporating parts of their past that are important to their sense of self. At the heart of this change is the attempt to ease the psychological and social tension that comes from personal goals and the expectations of others.

This section explores the socio-psychic tensions emerging from individual interactions and social factors. We also examine the psychological mechanisms used to confront the tensions presented by the social context. Finally, we investigate the pedagogical choice as a subjective space where socio-psychic knots converge within the intersection of individual desire and social structure.

4.4.1 Family expectations versus individual self-determination.

According to Bernales (2015), the family unit concept was initially seen as a

supportive space based on relationships of affection and shared beliefs, conditioned by behaviors through norms, emotional bonds, and values. However, this concept has evolved, giving rise to a new notion of family. This shift can be attributed to the rise of neoliberalism in our country, which established a framework of competition and individualism, where collective connections began to be viewed as weaknesses (Ramos, 2009; Soto, 2008; Todaro & Yañez, 2004, as cited in Araujo, 2013), diminishing bonds of unity both within families and at work. This point of view is substantiated by the findings of Gañán (2020, as cited in Gañán et al., 2022), in which it was stated that progression of work structuring techniques has contributed to a rise in work-related psychopathologies. This phenomenon exerts productive pressure on individuals, diminishing social connections and promoting individualism, disloyalty, and isolation. In other words, in the long term, neoliberalism and its system of competition and productivity under pressure have weakened and diminished the unity of bonds, both in families and workplaces, all in the name of production.

Our research reveals how tensions emerge in life stories, as individuals are caught between family pressure to remain united with family members and the desire for individual success, which may involve distancing themselves from the family unit to achieve personal growth. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Mi problema con esto es literalmente eso, que yo doy todo por mis hermanos y más. Y no debería ser así. Porque yo igual tengo una vida, yo igual tengo que pensar en mí, pero no lo hago porque pienso en ellos, yo quiero ir a estudiar afuera, pero no quiero hacerlo porque me voy a perder una vida con ellos. Y fue mucho más difícil después cuando llegó mi hermano chico, porque yo digo, chuta, ahora tengo que empezar de cero otra vez. Porque mi hermana ya tiene 12 y yo digo, ya me falta poco para que salga al colegio ya, me falta menos, pero ahora tengo que empezar de cero de nuevo o sea, tengo que estar ya 15 años más metida en mi casa. (Nixie, interview, 2024)

This phrase reflects the conflict between the desire for personal development and familial responsibilities. Nixie shares her internal chaos, believing that she is sacrificing too much for her family at the expense of her goals. This internal conflict causes tension within her since she wants to study abroad and pursue her dreams, which contradicts the commitments and connections she feels to her family. In a neoliberal society that values individualism, she must choose between the customary obligation to stay at home and the position of caregiver for her siblings, which heightens her sense of duty to be present for them. This scenario supports Joseph's (2019) finding that women are frequently asked to fulfill numerous roles, putting the needs of others before their own. Concerned that leaving her family would weaken their bond and unity, Nixie is caught between the neoliberal drive to achieve personal success and the familial duty to look after her siblings (Gañán, 2020, as cited in Gañán, et al., 2022). Nixie's dilemma demonstrates how gender norms and family expectations within a neoliberal framework obstruct individual freedom and advancement.

In contrast, Francesca's situation reveals a reality that diverges from Nixie's. It also highlights the impact of the neoliberal system on her life and her family dynamics. Growing up in a household that valued education as an essential element of success, Francesca and her siblings felt the need to leave their hometown for professional and personal development. This decision undoubtedly influenced the family dynamics. In the next quote, Francesca shares her reflections on the nature of this experience:

La Ale salió a la u, dejó de vivir con nosotros, después yo fui a la u, dejé de vivir con mi familia, después pasó la pandemia y nos vinimos todos algarrobo. Estuvimos todos como online y ahí volvimos a vivir juntos, fue extraño, fue super extraño volver a mi casa, porque yo salí, igual que todos mis hermanos (...) Todos salimos a los 18 de la casa y para afuera, te cambias de ciudad, chao. Entonces como que volver a la casa y volver como que te cocinen, igual fue súper raro. Y ahora volvimos a salir de la casa.

(Francesca, interview, 2024)

This comment indicates how the neoliberal system shaped Francesca's family dynamics. She tells how her siblings left home to further their education, motivated by the desire for personal and professional development. Francesca, a Calama resident, had to leave her home and city due to a lack of prospects for advancement. Her feeling of unfamiliarity when the family returned to the house can be understood in this context. Leaving home at a young age in search of better and new opportunities transformed her perception of the family over time, causing emotional imbalance as she attempted to reintegrate herself into the family dynamic while building a personal life through her independence journey. This evidenced the emergence of tensions as her return implied returning to a physical space, reconciling two realities, adjusting expectations, and dealing with the mixed emotions of belonging without losing the identity forged while living away from home.

In this context, the situation reflects how neoliberalism, with its emphasis on competition and individualism (Ramos, 2009; Soto, 2008; Todaro & Yañez, 2004, as cited in Araujo, 2013), prompted Francesca to leave her hometown in search of opportunities, leading to a weakening of her social ties and a process of individualization (Gañán, 2020, as cited in Gañán, et al., 2022). This pattern is consistent with and reflects a broader movement in the conception of the family unit, which is increasingly perceived as individualistic in today's neoliberal setting. This logic drives the desire to leave home for personal development, revealing how neoliberalism has altered expectations about the individual and their role within the family.

However, even though Francesca left home to seek independence, she unconsciously chose a career that, in some ways, mirrored the family experience she had left behind. Rather than opting for a calm and tranquil environment, she sought a space brimming with energy and dynamism. Through constant activity and contact, pedagogy, particularly in the

classroom setting, gave her a sense of intimacy and belonging. She was re-creating the familial dynamic from which she had separated. The classroom became a place she missed, as Francesca describes in the quote that follows, enabling her to re-establish a feeling of familial connection:

El ambiente, es chistoso, como que me gusta que haya harta risa, me gusta el ruido. Me gusta como ahora lo que me falta hasta en la casa, a pesar de que tengo roomies y todo. Es que en mi casa siempre hubo ruido, siempre había alguien, siempre estaba pasando algo, Entonces es como que eso me gusta. Ya no lo tengo, es como lo que más extraño de que estemos todos juntos como el ruido de familia... Porque somos hartos, siempre va a pasar algo. Entonces eso me gusta de la sala clase, que siempre pasa algo, siempre hay un chiste, siempre hay algo. Aunque sea algo malo, pero siempre pasa algo. (Francesca, interview, 2024)

As this quote clarifies, Francesca chose to study teaching for professional and emotional reasons. The continual bustle of her familial environment, which offered comfort and a sense of belonging, was no longer there when she moved away from her hometown in pursuit of better prospects. The lack of that loudness left a gap that Francesca, possibly unwittingly, attempts to fill with her career decision. She was able to share with her students the warmth of home and the intimacy of familial ties by finding a place in pedagogy that lets her reconnect with what she left behind. This supports Dujarier's (2021, as cited in Vaessen, 2022) argument that we seek employment that aligns with our values and gives us identity, meaning, and coherence. For Francesca, teaching is only one aspect of pedagogy; another is living in a noisy, lively, and ever-moving environment, re-creating the mood of her early years, which she now aims to recreate via her teaching.

The narratives of Nixie and Francesca exemplify how neoliberalism strains familial bonds and influences career ambitions. Nixie attempts to reconcile family caring with her

aspirations, while Francesca seeks to restore a sense of belonging through education. In both instances, the pressure exerted by gender restrictions also affects redefining their objectives.

4.4.2 Gender role expectations versus freedom of choice.

During the '60s and '90s, Chilean families lived in a historical context shaped by socio-historical conditions that led to particular understandings of the world, which were inherited and assumed to be true. Social, economic, and political changes have influenced how these families perceive schooling, gender roles, and other issues. Valdés (2009) offered a traditional family model in which women were primarily focused on domestic chores, caring for their husbands and children, and occasionally doing a paying job while managing household responsibilities. During this period, women were placed in total material dependence on the men in their families. These family dynamics persist to this day, perpetuating gender inequality in which men are favored and justified in various aspects of everyday life. This reflects the naturalization of women assuming roles centered around care and nurturing. That dynamic is exemplified in Olivia's experience, who states:

A veces siento que solo me ven así como de, para hacer cosas en la casa, como que ya hay que hacer almuerzo, la Olivia, hay que ordenar, la Olivia, hay que lavar la ropa, la Olivia. Me acuerdo que cuando terminé la práctica, así como el mismo día en la noche, mi mamá me dijo, como que me felicitó y todo, pero después de eso me dijo ya ahora que voy a estar en la casa, hay que hacer esto y esto (...) pero mi hermano nunca...porque mi hermano es como full estudio. Y si lo molestai' se enoja, se enoja mal. Entonces... era como...porque después de este primer semestre él terminó todo. Y estaba en la casa, y como que nunca le delegaron tanta responsabilidad como me lo hicieron a mí, y yo llegaba de la práctica a veces y tenía que hacer cosas, y era como, y él, que no está haciendo nada. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

This indicates how traditional gender roles still affect family systems, even when women like Olivia try to become more independent. This supports Burton's (2007) comment that women are often given motherly and caring roles. This idea is further supported by Valdés (2009), who argues that these behaviors stem from a traditional family structure, where the woman is responsible for household chores, while the man is free to focus on his professional development without concern for domestic duties. Olivia perceives an unusual difference in responsibilities compared to her brother, who can concentrate entirely on his studies, whereas Olivia must manage household chores alongside her educational commitments. She experienced physical and emotional exhaustion, feeling that her academic accomplishments were overlooked and undervalued, as she was only acknowledged when it came to household responsibilities.

Furthermore, when considering professional choices, Olivia's case illustrates how many of us, even when we do not necessarily conform to the socially standardized role of women, often end up fitting into it unconsciously, especially in fields like pedagogy, due to its feminized association. Olivia expresses this internal conflict:

Eso, que se le vea como a la mujer sola como eso. Como que yo no quiero ser solo eso. Entonces por eso me conflictúa un poco. Que ser profe ... socialmente esté tan como ligado a ser mujer y a cuidar niños cuando no es solo eso. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

Olivia's quote reflects a fundamental conflict between her desire for personal autonomy and the symbolic stress associated with caregiving, particularly in historically feminized professions like teaching (Fiorucci et al., 2022). While declaring her ambition to become a teacher, she opposes the notion that her professional identity should be constrained to gender stereotypes, which associate women and education with care and service. However,

despite her desire to disassociate from these stereotypes, she still internalizes them, as evidenced by her statement that pedagogy “is not only that” (referring to the caregiving aspect of teaching). In this sense, Olivia is caught in tension regarding her pedagogical choice, as teaching, for her, goes beyond emotional commitment and the feminized connotations of the profession. This conflict highlights the socio-psychic knot created by the clash between her internal desires and the societal expectations of teachers (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967, as cited in Vorgy & Vincenot, 2019). Ultimately, Olivia’s tension reflects not just the question of whether or not to care but the feminized connotation that society has historically imposed on women, reducing and labeling their work as sole caregiving. This supports Núñez’s (2007) argument that individual interests and outside influences shape a professional path within a system filled with contradictions.

Olivia’s situation provides an example of how, despite women’s efforts to gain autonomy, gender stereotypes still impact and strain home and professional relationships. Olivia wants to be a teacher, but she has to deal with the feminization of education, the symbolic burden of caring for others, and an internal struggle between her professional identity and social norms. This contradiction, as seen in Olivia’s case, indicates how gender stereotypes and patriarchal systems still restrict women by enforcing caregiving and sacrifice roles that mold and define their lives and professions, hence sustaining gender disparity in a variety of fields.

4.4.3 Mandates of excellence versus the right to self-determination

This tension illustrates how the mandate to surpass the previous generation pushes individuals to outdo themselves and their parents to meet the expectations of excellence in their responsibilities. This is a consequence of hyper-performance in our neoliberal society, where anything less than excellence is regarded as a failure (Dujarier, 2005, as cited in

Guerrero et al., 2019, p. 242). This drive for hyper-performance has led to adopting a competitive logic and the notion of unlimited growth, which, in our case, reflects the emphasis on education that our families instilled in us from an early age. This is mainly due to the historical circumstances in which our relatives, constrained by socioeconomic factors, were forced to prioritize work over formal education. As a result, it has been instilled in us that we must pursue a professional career to achieve a better life, free from dependence on others, and to be successful, which is evident in the results of our research:

Mi mamá siempre me ha dicho, tú vas a ser más que yo, o sea a todos nosotros, mi papá igual, como que... no era obligación estudiar, pero sí hacer algo con nuestra vida. Si nosotros queríamos ir a la universidad, bueno, si queríamos ir a un instituto, bueno igual, pero sí o sí teníamos que entre comillas hacer algo de nuestra vida. (Francesca, interview, 2024)

Yo saliendo del colegio, no nunca supe qué estudiar, entonces como que dije ya... siempre me decían, no, pero si entrai a estudiar esto, o si entrai a estudiar esto otro, y como que lo que más se me repetía era psicología, y dije, ya (...) Nunca me gustó, no me gustó el ambiente, no me gustaba... la carrera, no me gustaba nada, y yo desde el primer semestre, sabía que no quería estar ahí (...) Y como que no sabía cómo salirme... deje de ir a clases, y después me salí de la U... No les dije a mis papás, y después me tocaba decirles, y no sabía qué hacer... como que siempre igual... nunca me lo dijeron, pero yo sabía que esperaban de mí... Y yo no supe qué hacer, se enojaron. Mi mamá se enojó harto, a mi papá le dio pena porque lo vivió. (Francesca, interview, 2024)

Francesca's case demonstrates her steps after graduating high school, including starting her first career but finally quitting it since she was unsure what she wanted to do with

her life. Her parents, however, put pressure on her to pursue a worthwhile goal. Her experience exemplifies how familial pressure and high standards may significantly impact personal and professional decisions. This is consistent with the idea of the family mandate as presented by Gaulejac et al. (2006), who contend that parents mold their children's lives by passing along their aspirations and setbacks. The first quotation's implied order to "hacer algo con nuestra vida" reflects this, suggesting that one's value is closely related to one's school or workplace achievement. This aligns with the influence exerted by the neoliberal system, where hyper-performance is equated with excellence (Dujarier, 2005, as cited in Guerrero et al., 2019, p. 242). Even though Francesca's parents only asked that she "do something" with her life, whether a professional or technical career, her decision to study was not explicitly required. However, the pressure to outperform her parents was always there, and this latent pressure led her to pursue careers linked to advancement or social standing. As a result, Francesca pursued psychology not out of genuine interest but to meet family expectations, which led to her detachment from her career and, ultimately, to dropping out.

In this sense, Dubet (2010) proposes an approach in which individuals can pursue their interests to build their reality, even in restrictive contexts. To accomplish this, people must first resolve the ongoing conflict between societal structures and the ability to make their own decisions. When Francesca chooses to leave her psychology program, this tension becomes clear. Despite the repercussions, including her parents' disgust and frustration, she made this choice alone. The choice to leave the program ultimately evolved into a dread of disappointing her parents, as Francesca explains in the second statement. This demonstrates how the need to live up to family expectations impacts career decisions and the emotional experience of failure and transitions.

4.4.4 The value of education versus the precariousness of educators.

In this section, the tension surrounding education is understood as both a value and a symbol of social mobility, which is opposed to the precarious conditions of the teaching profession in Chile. This conflict manifests in two opposing perspectives: on the one hand, the enduring belief that education is a mechanism for progress, and on the other, the current reality in which teaching is devalued as a career. This contradiction creates a socio-psychic knot (Gaulejac, 2020) in which individuals must reconcile internalized family expectations about education as a means of social mobility with taking on the grief of having chosen a career characterized by harsh working conditions and diminished professional recognition (Dubet, 2006).

This socio-psychic knot extends beyond a simple contradiction in this study, as it involves the expectation that education leads to social advancement while simultaneously requiring individuals to pursue a socially validated career. Pedagogy, however, does not fulfill both conditions. Instead, for us, this career choice enhances our cultural capital by providing a university degree, but it does not necessarily guarantee significant economic mobility, as the teaching profession is not particularly lucrative. Gaulejac (1999) and Gaulejac et al. (2006) suggest that the capital gained through education is closely related to social expectations and the values inherent in an individual's familial and social context. Consequently, we manage the conflict between education as a means of self-actualization and its restricted economic benefits, influencing our career decisions by balancing individual ambitions, family expectations, and societal acknowledgment. Teaching is regarded as a profession of symbolic and emotional importance, where the satisfaction derived from imparting knowledge and values offsets the absence of substantial financial compensation. The choice to pursue a teaching career involves not only vocational considerations but also a complex interplay of social mobility, cultural capital, and personal identity.

According to Dubet (2006), teaching is frequently underappreciated and seen as a low-status vocation with no professional respect. This devaluation is further supported by its historical relationship with femininity, as pedagogy expands the care and service tasks that have historically been assigned to women (MacDonald, 1980, as cited in Acker, 1995, p. 117). The findings of this study highlight how we find ourselves caught between these two conflicting perceptions: on the one hand, teaching is viewed as a fundamental social good essential for progress and development; on the other, it is a socially undermined career. As a result of this disparity, we find it difficult to justify and advocate for the benefits of pursuing a career in education. By choosing pedagogy, we place ourselves at the center of social ideals of education as empowerment and structural realities that fail to represent its value, transforming our professional decision into a moment of negotiation and affirmation. Regarding the meaning of this career choice to her parents, one participant stated:

Un sueño que ella no cumplió, pero un miedo. Por el hecho de que al profe no se le esté respetando en los colegios, que si al profe, hubo un tiempo en el que salían tantas noticias de que le pegaban a los profes, que los profes aquí, que el alumno le pegó, que el alumno le amenazó, la misma profe que se suicidó (...) Y ella me dice: ‘yo no quiero que te pase eso’. Y el hecho también de que se ve el tema del contexto económico del profe, y es como que ‘yo no quiero que sufras económicamente. Pero claro, es lo que te gusta, pero, pucha, espero que no pases por lo que pasamos nosotros (...) Yo pensé que me iban a retar o algo, pero ‘si es lo que tú quieres, yo lo acepto, te apoyamos’ y siempre han sido así, pero ahora claro, tienen ese miedo de que me pasen a llevar, de que me pase algo. (Darling, interview, 2024)

Pero, claro, mi papá es como... su niña es profe po, y no es cualquier profe, es profe de inglés. Su niña fue al extranjero, estudió allá, está sacando una carrera, le va bien, no le va mal, y va a hacer algo que, claro, pues a lo mejor es sencillo, no,(...) él

ha aprendido... preguntándome cómo me va en el día, que no es llegar y ser profe(...)
 No es llegar y ser profe. Y claro, él lo ha entendido, y cuando le han preguntado por su hija y lo que hace, es como: 'es profe, pero no es fácil, pero es profe. No eligió una carrera fácil'. (Darling, interview, 2024)

The quotes indicate the socio-psychic complexities of education, aligning with Dubet's (2006) assertion that teaching is viewed as a devalued profession characterized by job instability, financial difficulties, and reduced social recognition. The participant's mother stated concerns regarding unstable working conditions, emphasizing the disparity between higher education as an emblem of advancement and the actual circumstances within the teaching profession. Over time, her father recognized the complexity and prestige of the career, especially in terms of foreign language teaching and international experience. Her testimony reveals that despite its low financial rewards, choosing pedagogy as a job becomes a form of self-affirmation, allowing us to negotiate between familial expectations, societal perceptions, and personal aspirations.

4.4.5 English language teaching: A way out of the tensions.

Overall, the selection of English as a pedagogical discipline reveals that this topic is esteemed for its extensive options and potential, mainly attributable to the adaptability of acquiring a second language, particularly in an increasingly globalized context. This can be seen in the following quotations:

Yo estaban en el instituto y me dijeron, Darling, ¿por qué no soy profe? Se te da bien el explicar. Le estoy explicando a una persona que es de otro país, porque los chiquillos eran chinos, eran de Malasia. Les estoy explicando una materia en inglés, que no es tu idioma. Los chiquillos te entienden. ¿Por qué no soy profe? Fueron tres profes, los esenciales. (...) Me dijeron, después te podías venir acá con otro curso y te

venís a trabajar acá con nosotros. Y ahí fue cuando yo dije ah, no es solamente ser profe de inglés en el país. Me puedo ir. Y ahí también yo dije, ya, sí. (Darling, interview, 2024)

English is regarded as a discipline that provides significant economic, educational, and employment advantages. This point of view is consistent with Glas (2011), who argues that English, a modern language in academic settings, is vital for Chileans and Latin Americans to obtain information, engage in higher education, and achieve improved salary prospects. This illustrates that English pedagogy is a vocation and a means for personal and economic advancement. English transcends its role as a mere subject in the school curriculum, serving as a mechanism for social mobility. Darling's proposal to work abroad exemplifies how teaching English facilitates opportunities in Chile and broadens access to the global labor market. Thus, learning and teaching English serves as an educational instrument and a means for personal transformation and improving living conditions (Glas, 2011).

Matear (2008) pointed out that learning English in Chile primarily focuses on regions with more significant economic resources. This situation exacerbates the disparity among various social groups and perpetuates inequality, as individuals with access to quality English education are afforded superior academic and professional opportunities. The decision to pursue pedagogy in English holds considerable significance in this context. This reflects both a personal interest and a chance to transcend socioeconomic barriers, thereby fulfilling aspirations for individual and familial advancement, and underscores the role of education as a catalyst for change. The following quotations show how knowledge of the English language significantly impacted the teaching career choice. Initially, this impact was more influenced by external factors, such as the social status associated with English proficiency and the diverse academic and work opportunities this language offers, rather than by a personal interest in teaching.

Y me dijo así, yo te veo igual como profe, como que te haría bien. Sabes el inglés, bla, bla, bla qué sé yo. Y lo hablé con mi papá y les pareció super bien la idea, porque como dije, no querían que estudie teatro. (Nixie, interview, 2024)

pero como que mi mamá siempre lo ha visto como muy inglés, por el inglés. No por la pedagogía, como que hasta el día de hoy me dice, como, ¿te gusta tu carrera? O como, ya, pero no es necesario que solo seas profe, como que podría ser más cosas. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

The decision to study English Language Teaching becomes a strategy for navigating the tensions between personal desire and family expectations. Choosing a university degree was also influenced by perceived value and prestige. English, a language of prestige and social mobility, balances individual aspirations for growth and family pressures to follow a more “secure” or socially validated path. This is evident in Nixie’s case, where her proficiency in English is validated by the family as a legitimate choice, in contrast to the rejection of studying theater, which is viewed as an unprofitable field. Furthermore, while pedagogy is often seen as a care profession, historically feminized and undervalued economically, the inclusion of English transforms this perception, granting it global opportunity status. This is reflected in Olivia’s case, where her mother values the career only for the language, not the pedagogical aspect. This situation creates a sense of tension, as, on the one hand, there is relief in feeling that the family accepts the decision, but on the other hand, frustration arises from the minimization of the pedagogical vocation, which is seen merely as a means to a material end.

Additionally, Francesca’s decision to pursue English pedagogy reflects the diverse opportunities the study of English provides. The difference in her case is that she always wanted to become a teacher due to her affinity for working with children, but she was unsure

whether to study primary, kindergarten, or English education. She stated her final decision as follows:

O sea claro, como que el inglés abre puertas. Pero también como que es a lo que caiga, pues si te toca media, si te toca básica, como que no me cerré a ser solo básica, ser solo párvulo, como que no te cierra tanto, me gusta más como tener un abanico de oportunidades, y ahí que la vida me guíe. (Francesca, interview, 2024)

Most of us chose English Pedagogy at the beginning of our careers because of the language's various opportunities and paths. As Matear (2008) argues, the role of English in Chile is significant, as it is considered a global language that influences national economic performance. This idea aligns with Glas' (2011) statements, highlighting how English is crucial for accessing information and securing well-paying jobs, thus improving future employment prospects. Nevertheless, we realized we had a stronger connection to pedagogy than to the English language. While English is considered a valuable tool that opens doors, we, along with Francesca, discovered that pedagogy offered personal fulfillment beyond just the language. Opting for pedagogy in English opened a broader range of job opportunities, allowing us to avoid being limited to a specific educational setting. This was not the case for Francesca, who had opted for primary or kindergarten education. Pedagogy in English serves as a space that enhances our teaching practices by exploring and applying various educational techniques and methodologies. It extends beyond merely teaching a language; it embraces the essence of teaching itself.

The choice of English pedagogy emerges as an intersection between teaching vocation, social mobility, and family expectations. While English is highly valued for its economic, educational, and employment opportunities in a globalized world (Glas, 2011), its teaching remains concentrated in sectors with more significant resources, reinforcing social inequalities (Matear, 2008). For many, pursuing this career was driven more by the security

and prestige associated with language proficiency than by a passion for teaching itself, creating tensions between personal desire and social validation. Testimonials like those of Darling and Nixie illustrate how English is perceived as a strategic tool for advancement, while cases such as Olivia's reflect the frustration of pedagogy being undervalued compared to the language itself. Throughout their degree programs, most students discovered a deeper connection to teaching beyond English, finding in pedagogy a source of personal fulfillment. However, this choice also involved navigating the contradictions between the symbolic recognition of education and the job insecurity associated with the teaching profession. Thus, English pedagogy becomes a space of negotiation between vocation, economic stability, and social expectations, consolidating itself not only as a professional career but also as a means of transcending barriers and redefining one's teaching identity.

4.4.6 Socio-psychic tensions: Some conclusions.

The results reveal how complex socio-psychic knots shape professional choices (Gaulejac, 2020), which emerge from the interaction between participants and the broader social, cultural, and economic context. These knots give rise to internal conflicts between societal expectations and individual desires for self-realization, exacerbated by the neoliberal emphasis on competition and excellence (Dujarier, 2005, as cited in Guerrero et al., 2019, p. 242). The narratives of Nixie, Francesca, and Olivia provide vivid examples of how these dynamics influence their career trajectories. For instance, Nixie's story illustrates the tension between her role as a caregiver within the family and her professional aspirations as she struggles to reconcile personal goals with familial duties. Francesca's account highlights the psychological pressure to meet external expectations, even when her desires may conflict with the prescribed path. Olivia's experience reveals the challenges of navigating the feminized teaching role and confronting gender mandates within the profession.

These stories emphasize that individual interests or ambitions do not solely drive career choices. Instead, they reflect a complex interplay of social, cultural, and emotional factors that shape each person's subjectivity. The participants' decisions are influenced by the roles they are expected to play within their families and society, the pressures to conform to cultural ideals of success, and the emotional weight of negotiating personal desires with external expectations. As a result, professional choices are deeply embedded in the socio-psychic context of each individual, where the pursuit of a career becomes interwoven with broader societal narratives of gender, family, and success. In this sense, career trajectories are as much a product of external social forces as they are of personal agency, revealing how individuals navigate their sense of identity and self-fulfillment within a larger socio-cultural framework.

4.4.7 Mechanisms of adherence and defense: The subject facing the tensions.

These mechanisms appear in our life stories as unconscious strategies that help alleviate the tensions associated with emotional distress. Defense mechanisms also impact fundamental aspects of our identity, such as our vocational choices, which, in our case, led us to pedagogy. Teaching has become a space that provides meaning to our personal experiences, especially those marked by school or family. It serves to heal emotional wounds, offering students what they once needed or replicating the care and teachings we experienced. Moreover, these mechanisms are connected to family and societal mandates, such as gender roles, the caregiving responsibilities assigned to women, and a hypervaluation of the teaching profession, often romanticized. These adherence mechanisms and strategies of defense and resistance will be explored in greater detail in the following subsections.

4.4.7.1 Adherence mechanisms.

To begin, adherence mechanisms can be understood as forming a shared worldview within a collective (Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 52). This construction aims to foster unity and facilitate coexistence while denying what might threaten psychic cohesion (Dejours, 2013/2009, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 54). In this context, the family and the social environment serve as channels that transmit values, ideals, and expectations about what it means to be “somebody” in society. In this sense, a decision that may appear individual, such as choosing a career, may be influenced by family or social values promoting unity within a group. In the following sections, we will explore the most prevalent themes related to adherence mechanisms within the discourses of our life stories.

4.4.7.1.1 Adhering to the gender norm.

While sharing and analyzing our life stories, we observed how many women in our families, including ourselves, exhibited adherence related to early adulthood. In the absence of financial resources, we were compelled to adopt more mature roles in caring for the family and household, assisting our mothers from a young age (Boo, 2001). For example, some of us expressed a sense of being mothers to our younger siblings or cousins, as the actual paternal figures often lacked the responsibility or time to fulfill this role. This phenomenon is illustrated by Nixie’s experience, who expressed the following:

Así como, me llevo estos dos niños y yo soy su mamá y nos vamos a vivir en una casa, fantástico. Pero yo no tengo ese trabajo, entonces como que yo amo mucho a mis hermanos mucho, mucho, mucho, mucho. Pero como que me sobrecargo demasiado con ellos porque intento protegerlos hasta de sus propios papás. Porque hay cosas que no quiero que pasen pero que sé que van a pasar sí o sí porque son sus papás, y yo viví eso. (Nixie, interview, 2024)

As seen here, Nixie, as the older sister of her two siblings, assumes a motherly and protective role towards them, which aligns with Burton's (2007) theory suggesting that women who are the eldest daughter, the first female child, or the only female sibling often adopt a maternal role within the family. This is reflected in Nixie's words, describing how she overburdens herself trying to protect her siblings from their parents. Her deep love for her siblings leads her to idealize a life where the three live together, and she becomes their mother. This not only illustrates Nixie's self-imposed sense of responsibility, where she takes on a caretaking role toward her siblings, becoming what Burton (2007) describes as a "quasi-parent," but also highlights how her assumption of responsibility reflects a premature adulthood, as she embraces duties that go beyond her roles as daughter and sister from a young age.

In other cases, we observe a similar reflection of adulthood when one of us, as the child in the family, was assigned most of the household chores and forced to balance her studies with domestic responsibilities:

Cuando nació mi hermana, fue un tiempo así que yo con mi abuelo la cuidaba, porque igual como ahí como que ya asumí ese rol de empezar a hacer cosas en la casa, como que yo la pieza que tenía la ordenaba antes de que llegara mi mamá del trabajo, a la Aline le cambiaba los pañales, jugaba con ella. Ahí tenía como 7 años, no sé, y hacía todo eso. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

These two quotes illustrate how, over the years, patterns continue to be reproduced in which girls, from an early age, take on household chores and assume adult responsibilities associated with their gender (Burton, 2007). This evidences an assumption of responsibility for siblings or household tasks and provides insight into how this adultification and the continuation of generational patterns influenced our professional decisions. The following quotes further demonstrate this: "Sí, a mí en general... también como cuidar, me gusta

cuidar, acompañar, guiar dentro de lo que se pueda, esas cosas como del rol de profe como estereotípico” (Francesca, interview, 2024).

Para mí siempre he visto el rol de un profe como una madre, como padre dependiendo de cómo se identifique. Es el que está para enseñar, igual como enseñan los papás. La diferencia es que se enseñan distinto, los papás enseñan valores y el profe enseña la materia, pero enseñan. El hecho de que mediante fui creciendo vi el rol del profe como un apoyo, como un soporte para aquellos que no lo encontraban en su propia familia. Entonces ahí entra mi personalidad. El hecho de que yo tenga alumnos que siento que están perdidos y los quiero ayudar guiándolos, que para mí eso también hace el profe, guiar a los alumnos. El profe para mí es una madre, padre, psicólogo, amigo, enemigo a veces, como de todo. (Darling, interview, 2024)

These quotes reflect an affection for nurturing and guidance, helping us understand how pedagogy has become a feminized profession. By adhering to these standards of care, we follow our instincts to protect and nurture our students. This supports what Barreto and Álvarez (2013) argue: in pedagogy, women can fulfill the maternal role that society expects of them. Since the role of mothers within the family is central to children’s development, providing both physical and psychological care in pedagogy, we were able to find a balance between motherhood and professional practice. We assumed training responsibilities and often developed nurturing relationships with our students, becoming what Acker (1995, p. 117) describes as “substitute mothers.” As both Darling and Francesca mentioned, the role of a teacher is akin to that of a mother or father, someone who is there to guide and support, particularly those who do not receive such support within their own families. Francesca further describes the comfort she finds in the stereotypical role of a teacher as a caregiver and companion. This underscores the shared elements that connect many of us, revealing how we unconsciously pursued careers that allowed us to provide assistance and protection, reflecting

the nurturing role played by our mothers and grandmothers and aligning with societal expectations of women. Furthermore, this adherence is mirrored in the adult-like roles we assumed during childhood and adolescence, where we expressed our maternal instincts by caring for siblings or cousins. For instance, both Nixie and Olivia adopted caregiving roles early in their lives, and through the maternal aspects of pedagogy, they found a way to continue these caregiving patterns.

4.4.7.1.2 Adhering to the family expectations and project.

Before finally choosing to study in the field of education, our decision was heavily influenced by the ongoing pressure we experienced throughout our lives, not only from family members but also from society. This pressure can be attributed to the neoliberal system, where performance becomes a requirement that impacts subjectivity by demanding perfection and constant optimization (Dujarier, 2005, as cited in Guerrero et al., 2019, p. 242). This meant that we had to adhere to certain expectations regarding education to meet external demands and avoid being perceived as falling short. Additionally, it is essential to consider our family context. All of us come from a middle-class background, where, for our relatives, education was often seen as incomplete due to limited financial resources. Many abandon their studies to find work or stay home to support their families. With our generation having the opportunity to attend university, this achievement created expectations and pressure to attain a higher academic level. When reflecting on our family narratives, it becomes evident how these expectations fueled the desire to meet the projections our parents and society had for us. As it is the case of Olivia, who stated: “Siempre he sentido como que hago las cosas como para no decepcionar a mis papás más que por mí. Cuando entré a la U fue por eso, cuando entré al Liceo fue por eso” (Olivia, interview, 2024).

This quote illustrates Olivia's belief that her achievements, such as entering university, were driven more by her desire to meet her family's expectations than her aspirations. For Olivia, pursuing a degree became a personal success, a step toward personal growth, and honoring her parents' sacrifices and aspirations. Her parents, constrained by socioeconomic conditions, could not fulfill their professional dreams. As Gaulejac et al. (2006) suggest, parents also impart their desires and disappointments while guiding their children's paths. This explains why the expectation of obtaining a university degree represents a response to adhering to the family mandate regarding the value of education and inherited aspirations. In this context, obtaining a degree would make Olivia feel that she had not disappointed her parents by fulfilling the family's expectations.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, education has been a central theme in our families' narratives since our youth due to their limited opportunities. We have internalized the belief that education equates to success in life. For this reason, at the beginning of our careers, most of us saw pedagogy as a way to meet others' expectations rather than our own. Darling's sense of responsibility as the only family member with higher education reflects this: "Son los más chicos de la familia. Siento una responsabilidad hacia los chiquillos porque soy la única que tiene los estudios. La que les puede ayudar" (Darling, interview, 2024).

Salomone and Grasselli (2016) state that career choices result from the biographical process, a personal journey shaped by one's life experiences. As Gaulejac et al. (2006) argue, families provide a history and legacy that influences children's futures. The quotes shared here reflect how these family dynamics have shaped our lives, as we felt the pressure to succeed and make our families proud, especially since they did not have the same opportunities to improve their living conditions. In Darling's case, this is evident in her being the only one with higher education in her family, making her the sole person capable of providing assistance and support.

Furthermore, as Dubet (2006) argues, pedagogy, aside from being a feminized career, is also a devalued one, particularly for female teachers. Women are in constant competition for recognition against men in the pedagogical field. Teaching, in addition to being a career with low pay that does not reflect the amount of time and dedication required (Bellei & Valenzuela, 2010), does not elevate women to a higher or even equal status compared to men, due to discrimination in terms of both pay and treatment (Dubet, 2006). As a result, pedagogy has become an appropriate career for women, allowing them to emerge but not to the same degree as men. This is directly linked to our personal stories, as we all come from middle-class families. Pedagogy becomes a space of adherence, in which we acquire more capital to improve our lives (as instilled by our parents) while remaining within the same social class.

Mi mamá el otro día me dijo, yo sabía que ibai a ser profe (...) porque de chica siempre estuviste ahí enseñándole a tus compañeros, les ayudabai. Después estuviste en karate, fuiste monitora. (...) Pero yo no lo vi nunca. ¿Por qué? Porque en mi cabeza estaba la plata. De que medicina por la plata, que ingeniería por la plata, que esto por la plata, que nada, hasta que me di cuenta en mi viaje que yo prefería estudiar pedagogía. (Darling, interview, 2024)

Entonces como que siempre fue como un orgullo así como, ah, está estudiando y como que, bueno, era el tema, como al principio era como pero no pagan tanto, pero era como, ya, da lo mismo, como que un trabajo bonito, como que nunca fue mal visto. (Hachi, interview, 2024)

One significant issue when discussing pedagogy is women's low income. As Kergoat (2009) suggests, jobs typically performed by women or individuals of diverse ethnicities and classes continue to be undervalued and underpaid, with white men being the primary beneficiaries. In this context, pedagogy offers a path to achieving an economically acceptable status, though the financial aspect becomes secondary once we enter the world of education.

This is reflected in the experiences of both Hachi and Darling, the latter of whom initially did not consider teaching because the salary did not align with her life expectations despite exhibiting traits of a natural teacher. This aligns with Bellei and Valenzuela's (2010) findings on the precariousness and instability of teachers' contracts and salaries, which can undermine motivation. Nonetheless, while the low salaries initially shaped our professional decision, the support of our parents and their perception of the career as meaningful and valuable also played a key role in solidifying pedagogy as our choice. This support made us feel encouraged, as in Hachi's case, where she was met with pride for pursuing her studies. Gaulejac et al. (2006) state that parental expectations are a powerful stimulus, influencing long-term decisions and guiding children's future paths. For Hachi, choosing pedagogy was a way of adhering to the family mandate, pursuing higher education, and becoming a professional with the potential to provide a stable future that would make her family proud. Similarly, Francesca's case shows the pedagogical choice as a familiar path, in line with what she knows: "Como que, independientemente de que mi carrera, entre comillas, sea menos que la que hizo mi papá, igual voy a estar como a un nivel, entre comillas, parecido a lo que estoy acostumbrada" (Francesca, interview, 2025).

This quote reflects adherence mechanisms, as Francesca's choice of pedagogy fits the lifestyle she has known throughout her life. It maintains her family's social status and reinforces her sense of belonging to the family system. By stating, "igual voy a estar como a un nivel, entre comillas, parecido a lo que estoy acostumbrada", Francesca accepts that a teacher's salary may not be high. Nevertheless, she is still reaching a standard that her family, especially her father, finds acceptable or satisfactory.

In this regard, adhesion mechanisms shape a shared vision that influences identity and professional decisions, transmitted through the family and community (Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 52). This adhesion influences each individual's roles, particularly in the case of women,

who internalize caregiving mandates from childhood. In this context, pedagogy emerges as a career that allows women to channel these mandates, offering a space to balance their vocation with caregiving expectations. Thus, rather than solely reflecting personal interests, professional choices also respond to the pressure to honor family sacrifices and fulfill the expectation of generational self-improvement (Gaulejac et al., 2006; Salomone & Grasselli, 2016).

4.4.7.2 Defense mechanisms.

Considering that defense mechanisms serve as techniques to dismiss factors of tension or anxiety (Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47) and function as unconscious strategies to protect individuals from distress or internal conflict, it is possible to analyze how they may influence key decisions about the future, such as choosing a professional career. This is because there is an unconscious drive to pursue a path that preserves emotional stability and avoids potential feelings or situations of stress or anxiety. From this perspective, we began to develop defense mechanisms as strategies to cope with situations that placed us in states of distress, which can be reflected in our life stories, showing how they influenced our choice of pedagogy. In the following sections, each mechanism will be analyzed in greater depth.

4.4.7.2.1 Denial (démenti)

Denial, defined as the refusal to acknowledge disturbing aspects of both external and psychological reality, can be exemplified by the fear of abandonment, which may lead an individual to refuse and remain in harmful relationships, even when these cause suffering (Freud, 1924/1961, 1925/1961, as cited in Costa, 2020, p. 1045). For instance, when comparing our histories, all of us who faced abandonment-related issues due to a significant

relative now exhibit aspects of denial as a defense mechanism to avoid harm. One example of this dynamic can be seen in the following quote:

O sea, me carga el abandono, yo me quedo con la persona hasta que me haga daño, me quedo hasta el final, porque para mí que alguien me deje es como terrible y que me deje alguien que nunca me haya hecho daño, peor aún. (Nixie, interview, 2024)

This testimony illustrates how denial functions as a defense mechanism, where Nixie protects herself from the pain associated with the potential loss of essential attachments. In this way, Nixie denies the possibility of abandonment by maintaining relationships, even when they become harmful, thus avoiding any confrontation that might make her experience abandonment. This behavior signifies the sacrifice of her well-being. Nixie's case also suggests a position of resistance, where, paradoxically, she continues to suffer while retaining control over the situation by choosing to remain in the relationship, thus preventing abandonment and avoiding emotional damage. According to Freud (1924/1961, 1925/1961, as cited in Costa, 2020, p. 1045), Nixie represses her feelings of pain to achieve emotional stability, which impacts not only her external reality (the relationship itself) but also her psychological reality, minimizing mistreatment and justifying harmful behaviors.

When linking this defense mechanism to professional choices, particularly in pedagogy, we can understand how this career could serve as a symbolic space to channel the internal conflict related to abandonment. According to MacDonald (1980, as cited in Acker, 1995, p. 117), pedagogy involves guiding, care, and permanence. These values are consistent with the desire to maintain bonds and be present in people's lives. In this context, the work of a teacher necessitates emotional availability and stability for students, providing an example in which Nixie might avoid abandoning her students. This dynamic is not unilateral; it can also be understood from the student's perspective. In an interview, Nixie, like the rest of us, described pedagogy as a caring role where the teacher guides and accompanies students

through their learning process. This strategy supports the previously mentioned notion that education necessitates a teacher's unwavering presence, forcing them to always be physically and emotionally available. In this context, pedagogy allows Nixie to express her need for stability and connection while assuming a motherly position without dealing with the hurt of rejection or loss. This is due to the limited nature of her relationship with the students, which allows her to engage emotionally while ensuring that such involvement will not threaten her emotional stability, as the relationship is regulated through school cycles. When theorizing this idea with Nixie, she stated: “Claro, no son míos. Igual eso me gusta... Porque no es como, no sé, mi hermano que son más cercanos. Entonces como que los tengo un rato, los cuido, y después los puedo devolver” (Nixie, interview, 2025).

In this scenario, the classroom transforms into a safe environment where Nixie can take on the role of caregiver and mentor for her students, granting her a feeling of authority and community that fosters an emotional bond with them. However, this statement shows how Nixie enters into what Gaulejac (1987, as cited in Gaulejac, 2019b, p. 430) calls class neurosis. This is explained by Nixie's ability to offer her students support, reassurance, and guidance within defined boundaries, which helps her protect herself from the emotional risk of abandonment. As part of an educational context in which she interacts with them for a limited period, the students help Nixie recognize that they are not indeed “hers,” so any closeness or bonds formed do not threaten her emotional well-being, thus alleviating her abandonment anxiety.

4.4.7.2.2 Rationalization.

Individuals hide conflicting thoughts, emotions, or behaviors as truths by seeking logical or socially acceptable explanations through rationalization (Perry, 1990, as cited in Knoll et al., 2020, p. 4302). This defense mechanism is seen in our life stories, as illustrated

by the following quotations: “Si yo siempre hago eso en la vida, siempre justifico a todo el mundo y las niñas saben (...) Puede ser como que justifico cosas que a lo mejor no debería” (Francesca, interview, 2024).

No sé, igual lo justifico harto, porque si hablan mal, así como de cualquiera, yo digo, no, pero es que esto es... como de lo mismo que yo me quejo, es como, no, pero es que hay que entenderlo, porque esto, esto, esto. (Olivia, interview, 2024)

These examples show that rationalization is a defense mechanism we often use to manage our fears and anxieties (Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47). This was evident in the situations of Olivia and Francesca, who could defend people’s behavior despite knowing it went against their values or desires. In Francesca’s case, even though she acknowledges this defense mechanism by stating: “Puede ser como que justifico cosas que a lo mejor no debería,” she continues to use rationalization to cope with such situations. By generating arguments that help her make sense of others’ actions, she minimizes distress, as confronting them from an emotional standpoint might lead to suffering. On the other hand, Olivia’s case illustrates how she downplays and justifies harmful behaviors by seeking an explanation that softens the impact of situations that, when faced directly, could evoke more painful emotions, such as disappointment.

Understanding rationalization as a way of logically justifying behaviors enables us to see how this defense mechanism appears in our personal lives and influences how we develop our pedagogical practices. The following quote from Nixie illustrates this manifestation:

O sea, como que siento que me gusta cuidar, proteger, guiar para que los niños también aprendan que a veces las cosas que uno aprende en la casa, quizás no son las correctas, como darles ese otro lado. Así como, si tu papá te dice que si te sacas un 4 está mal, ya, pero igual velo también de esta forma: ¿Por qué te sacaste un 4? No estudié mucho, ¿ya? ¿Por qué? ¿Quién lo entiende? Y así como también hacerlos

entender que ellos tampoco son el problema, eso siempre he intentado hacer con mis alumnos. Y soy muy paciente, si no entienden, ya, pero porque no entendieron. Les explico como 500.000 veces, pero lo hago. No tengo ningún problema en volver, si me atraso de la clase no importa, me doy el tiempo de intentar que todos lo entiendan. (Nixie, interview, 2024)

In this quotation, Nixie explains her educational position, providing an alternative viewpoint on education, mainly when people are frustrated or seeking perfection. One way to interpret Nixie's method is instruction from a position of protection, care, and guidance (Fiorucci et al., 2022, pp. 85–133). In this context, pedagogy studies and comprehends children's behavior. One could argue that Nixie's experiences are projected onto her teaching style. When questioned about her school years during the interview, she characterized them as painful, filled with events that caused her to lose interest in her studies and feel rejected. Thus, this projection is rationalized through her pedagogical discourse, where Nixie justifies her and her students' actions by offering them another opportunity to improve their understanding of each other. This transforms her story of school suffering into a deep pedagogical commitment where every child feels heard and valued. This relates to Perry's (1990, as cited in Knoll et al., 2020, p. 4302) analysis of rationalization, which enables opposing ideas, feelings, or actions to be supported by reasonable and acceptable justifications. This is why Nixie finds that rationalization is so essential since it allows her to establish a strong connection with her students by giving them an alternative perspective on actions that others might find unacceptable, like getting a low grade.

4.4.7.2.3 Defensive Cynicism.

Defensive cynicism is characterized by an individual's sarcastic attitude towards their environment. Humor serves as a primary defense mechanism in managing circumstances that

induce feelings of vulnerability. This is demonstrated by Hachi's statement of employing humor as a coping mechanism in uncomfortable situations: "...Claro porque es como las típicas bromas, así como ah no tienes papá, yo tampoco, wuaja... es que yo soy muy de chistes crueles" (Hachi, interview, 2024).

Claro, a mi mamá yo le hago chistes cuando está trabajando. ¿Para qué? Para hacérselo llevadero. Y me hace feliz, la estoy como ayudando a que sea menos tenso todo el tema... porque yo dije que era como la payasa, me gusta ser mucho la payasa. Entonces cuando a veces mi mamá está trabajando y yo la hago como payasada al lado de ella, para hacerla reír, para distender el ambiente. (Hachi, interview, 2024)

Hachi's use of humor, specifically cruel or sarcastic jokes, to alleviate emotional tension in a potentially stressful setting, such as her mother's workplace, demonstrates defensive cynicism. Instead of addressing the discomfort that may occur, Hachi employs humor and actions to alleviate the emotional burden and diminish the tension. Jokes regarding her father's absence exhibit a tone of disdain or mockery, enabling her to circumvent the vulnerability associated with expressing her genuine emotions. Defensive cynicism alleviates the mood and renders the situation more tolerable, circumventing direct engagement with the underlying discomfort. This supports Martin's (2006, as cited in Balmores-Paulino, 2020, p. 2085) statements that humor functions as a mechanism for emotional release, facilitating a relaxed atmosphere and alleviating tension.

Adding to the notion of humor's significance, instructional decisions can also be connected to this mechanism. Teachers can handle their or students' emotional distress by being humorous or light-hearted. Francesca's description of the school environment in the following quote reflects this idea:

Para mí el colegio era como entrete, y yo lo asocio a algo divertido, que puede ser divertido... siempre estamos como en alguna actividad entre uno y el otro. Porque

para mí igual las clases, si bien hay que aprender y hay que hacer cosas, igual hay actividades entre medio, como más interactivas. (Francesca, interview, 2024)

This concept of humor can be seen as a way to transform the unpleasant into something enjoyable. By applying the mechanism of defensive cynicism, teachers may use humor or levity to reduce emotional stress in the classroom or their personal lives. For Francesca, making students laugh is a way to lighten the classroom atmosphere and confront the tensions that may arise. While it is essential in an educational context to teach content and guide students, Francesca incorporates interactive activities that not only enrich the learning process but also provide a distraction, preventing the class from succumbing to academic pressure. In this way, defensive cynicism and humor function as mechanisms to soften the pressure of teaching, making difficult moments more manageable and less noticeable (Martin, 2006, as cited in Balmores-Paulino, 2020, p. 2085). As Francesca notes, in between lessons, interactive classroom activities can be carried out, turning pedagogy into a space where one can escape from the tensions inherent in the more challenging aspects of the educational process.

4.4.7.2.4 Hypervaluation of Labor.

The hypervaluation of work is a defense mechanism that idealizes a job, assuming that the discomforts experienced in these spaces are part of the process while minimizing the personal and emotional needs of those performing the work. The following quote illustrates this:

Y tampoco me gusta cobrar. Yo por mí lo haría gratis. Como que de verdad, así como en la práctica de ahora, estaría así como, ah, bien, súper. Como que nunca me ha gustado eso de cobrar porque siento que es algo que se debería dar naturalmente.

Como que, ¿por qué estoy cobrando por ayudar, enseñarle a alguien? Como que siempre lo veo como muy así. (Hachi, interview, 2024)

This comment exemplifies Hachi's overvaluation of pedagogy, expressing an idealized image of the teaching profession in which teaching is viewed as an altruistic act rather than a paid employment. Through this statement, Hachi states that she does not like being paid for teaching, suggesting that she perceives pedagogy more as a vocational calling than a profession with financial compensation. This demonstrates a romanticized and idealized perception of the profession. This aligns with the concept of idealization as a defense mechanism, wherein Hachi attributes positive qualities to teaching, creating an idealized image of her work and distancing herself from reality (APA, 1994; Perry, 1990, as cited in Leduc-Cummings et al., 2020, p. 2129). Hachi places a high value on teaching due to its influence on others, especially her students, whom she is prepared to instruct without charge. This perspective may result in devaluing the teaching profession by neglecting the significance of pedagogy and failing to acknowledge educators' material and emotional needs. Dubet (2006) observes that teaching is frequently regarded as a subordinate profession without adequate professional acknowledgment. Romanticizing the teacher's role may lead to perceiving teaching as a vocational obligation, fostering the belief that the position does not warrant sufficient financial compensation. In this view, the original value of education is understood as the social and emotional impact it has on students, which fails to acknowledge the need for fair compensation for the effort and dedication that teaching requires.

Defense mechanisms serve as unconscious strategies to alleviate psychological distress and maintain emotional stability (Freud, 1954/1936; Klein 2009/1946, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016). Among these mechanisms, denial allows individuals to reject painful realities (Freud, 1924/1961, 1925/1961, as cited in Costa, 2020, p. 1045), while rationalization helps justify actions that might otherwise cause discomfort (Pla Caballero,

2016). Defensive cynicism, expressed through humor, is a coping strategy to relieve tension (Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47). The hypervaluation of labor idealizes work, causing individuals to accept exploitative conditions, especially in teaching, where sacrifice is frequently seen as intrinsic (Dubet, 2006). These mechanisms assist individuals in managing internal conflicts, influencing their perceptions of work, effort, and self-worth.

In this sense, adherence and defense mechanisms play a fundamental role in the professional choice of being a teacher and in how we attach ourselves to our work as educators. Adherence mechanisms reflect how the need for belonging and acceptance directly influences our professional decisions as they are understood as a shared worldview within a collective (Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 52). In this regard, one of the mechanisms of adherence most present in us is related to gender issues, where women are often socially assigned to care and attention roles, which links pedagogy with a care and protection role (MacDonald, 1980, as cited in Acker, 1995, p. 117) becoming a natural choice to meet those expectations. In this regard, we are caught between complying with social and family mandates that require us to play specific roles, such as one of the female caregivers, and at the same time, seeking personal satisfaction by wanting to be recognized in society. On the other hand, defense mechanisms, being more personal and internal, allow us to deal with the emotional tensions and stressful moments that arise in our lives, protecting us from anxiety or discomfort (Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47). A clear example is *démenti*, which can manifest itself when we deny or minimize experiences of emotional abandonment, especially if it has been lived in contexts where support was not present. This is why pedagogy becomes a space where emotional satisfaction is combined with personal and professional growth, creating a space where teaching becomes both a source of emotional satisfaction and a means to manage individual and professional challenges.

This pursuit of understanding and self-determination created us towards pedagogy as a method of personal resolution and a mechanism for empowerment, enabling critical engagement with the structures that have influenced our experiences. This clarifies why pedagogy, for us, evolves into a professional career that transforms into a domain where we pursue meaning, identity, and coherence in alignment with our values. Consequently, career choices are no longer made solely based on economic status; individuals also consider their desired lifestyle and the legacy they aim to establish, addressing the need to contribute to a cause of greater significance or value (Dujarier, 2021, as cited in Vaessen, 2022).

4.5 Synthesis of the Results

The results show that choosing teaching as a profession is not merely an individual decision but rather the outcome of a complex interaction between socio-familial trajectories, social relationships, and personal resources (Gaulejac et al., 2006). Family is pivotal in transmitting values, expectations, and mandates influencing our career choices (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Moreover, for many of us, the feminization of teaching reinforced gendered career expectations, as societal norms continue to associate education with caregiving and maternal roles (Fiorucci et al., 2022; Kergoat, 2009). In addition, psychic adherence and defense mechanisms, such as rationalization and the hyper-valuation of labor, help us cope with the tensions between family expectations and our desire for autonomy (Dubet, 2010; Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47). Teaching is a site for negotiating imposed expectations and personal aspirations, where individuals seek to align their ambitions with inherited mandates while addressing structural constraints (Gaulejac, 1999). The findings indicate that the choice to pursue a career in teaching is influenced not only by personal interests but also by the process of subjectivization shaped by social and psychological factors.

The following chapter discusses the study's conclusions, summarizing the key findings and their implications. It also reflects on the study's contributions, limitations, and potential directions for future research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter synthesizes the study's key findings and addresses the research question and objectives set forth at the beginning of this research report. The conclusions are presented sequentially concerning the general and specific objectives and then alongside our perspective on how social class, gender, and life trajectories influence the professional choice of 5 Chilean women who decided to become EFL teachers.

To achieve this, we conducted a qualitative socio-clinical case study (Gaulejac, 1984, as cited in Correa, 1999), drawing on the theoretical and methodological framework of clinical sociology (Gaulejac, 1999) and psychosociology (Gaulejac et al., 2006). Methodologically, we implemented a research-intervention device called GIR, which facilitates sharing clinical analyses and co-construction of hypotheses related to socio-psychic phenomena. We carried out five life story sessions, during which participants narrated their life experiences. These sessions were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized for analysis. Following Clarke's (2016) definitions, thematic analysis was applied to identify recurrent patterns and themes, which were later categorized and interpreted in light of the existing literature.

This chapter also examines the findings' theoretical and methodological implications, addresses the study's limitations, and provides recommendations for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes with personal reflections on the research process and its significance within the broader educational and sociological research context.

The results respond to the objectives of this study in the following way.

5.1 Response to General Objective:

The main findings reveal that factors like social class and gender significantly impacted the professional decisions of the participants. The individuals considered teaching a

practical career choice, consistent with the belief in choosing a profession that harmonizes familial expectations with their societal roles (Gaulejac et al., 2006). Additionally, the perception of teaching as a feminized profession in Chile played a key role, as most participants viewed pedagogy as a career that fulfilled the expected female role in society (Barreto & Álvarez, 2013).

The participants' socio-familial and individual trajectories reveal how much their families influenced their professional decisions. Many participants reported that family support and the educational models within their homes guided them toward teaching. However, family pressure was also a significant factor, as higher education was perceived as the only acceptable path. Consequently, the participants viewed pedagogy as meeting their families' expectations and reaffirming their identities within their family context.

Regarding the psychological mechanisms employed to manage tensions (Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47), rationalization was a common defense strategy used by participants to defend their decision to become teachers as a secure and respectable career. Furthermore, projection mechanisms were discovered, in which individuals projected their issues onto other variables, including the educational system. Adherence to social and familial expectations was another important strategy; many participants found acceptance and compliance in English pedagogy by adapting to the professional choices their families expected of them. These instruments helped them deal with psychosocial issues without questioning the limits they were placed on.

In Chile, becoming a teacher is complicated and influenced by psychological defense mechanisms, socio-familial trajectories, and social and familial expectations. As Matear (2008) and Glas (2011) pointed out, becoming a teacher is not just a professional choice but also a way to achieve social mobility and personal fulfillment. Teaching thus becomes a space for reaffirming identity within a social context marked by gender and class roles.

5.2 Response to Specific Objective 1:

According to the participants' life histories, social variables like gender, family history, and social class greatly impacted their professional decisions. These stories reveal how a combination of socioeconomic and cultural elements and personal and familial experiences influenced participants' interest in English teaching. Teaching has historically been viewed as a feminine occupation in Chilean society, underscoring the significant impact of gender roles in forming professional identities and goals. Many participants learned that instructing, educating, and directing others was a logical extension of their job as women from a young age. This belief was supported by their families and society's prevailing discourses.

The intergenerational transmission of female roles reinforced this attitude, prompting participants to regard education as a legitimate career path and an accepted, desirable option within their social context. Many were raised in environments where women held the predominant caregiving roles within the home or in fields associated with education and service. This reinforced the belief that teaching was inherently linked to feminine identity. This perspective aligns with the work of Barreto and Álvarez (2013), who argue that pedagogy provides women with the opportunity to engage in caregiving roles that are socially recognized and valued, though often undervalued in economic and professional terms.

In addition to gender expectations, economic circumstances, and social class significantly influenced the decision to pursue a career in pedagogy. Access to higher education serves as a means for numerous participants to achieve financial stability and enhance social mobility (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964). Nonetheless, given their economic and familial limitations, their choice was influenced by a genuine enthusiasm for teaching and the perception that pedagogy represented a socially acceptable path. Even though teaching in

Chile does not necessarily guarantee substantial economic advancement due to relatively low salaries and often precarious working conditions, it still represents an opportunity for professional stability and social mobility within the limitations imposed by their backgrounds.

Ultimately, these life histories demonstrate how social interactions and structural conditions were crucial in shaping the decision to pursue teaching (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964, 1990). Beyond personal vocation, the professional choices of these women were shaped by the reproduction of gender norms, family expectations, and economic circumstances that influenced their trajectories. In this sense, their decision to study English pedagogy reflects an individual interest. It underscores the necessity of adapting to a system that subtly or explicitly channels women into certain professions and societal roles.

5.3 Response to Specific Objective 2:

The results indicate that the family and individual trajectories of the participants play a significant role in shaping their career choices. The life histories reveal the presence of family mandates that guide these trajectories, shaping their aspirations and decisions. Gaulejac et al. (2006) point out that family experiences and the mandates passed down through generations influence identity construction, generating tensions and opportunities for personal growth. In this sense, family mandates can act as limitations by restricting the possibilities of choice, but they can also serve as development engines by providing a frame of reference that drives the search for better opportunities.

One of the most prominent mandates identified in this study is the expectation of surpassing the previous generation. Many participants come from families where economic and social difficulties prevented their parents or grandparents from achieving a more stable or

comfortable standard of living. As a result, a firm conviction develops in these environments that education is the key to social mobility, hoping that newer generations will achieve better living conditions than their predecessors. This mandate translates into the perception of education not only as a means of acquiring knowledge but as a path to stability, security, and personal and family progress. The desire to “do better” than previous generations becomes the main reason for choosing a career path, reinforcing that education and career growth are closely linked to success.

This viewpoint is consistent with Piketty’s (2014) argument that economic expansion creates new chances for every generation to acquire new skills and access better living conditions than the one before it. However, in situations when there is economic disparity, this expectation can also lead to a great deal of anxiety because the obligation to meet family goals takes away from personal autonomy. Participants frequently internalize the idea that pursuing a career is not just a personal choice but also a duty to their families, who see education as an investment in the well of the whole.

Ultimately, these dynamics are manifested in the manner in which participants engage with pedagogy. Their personal and familial trajectories, characterized by a combination of support, expectations, and challenges, were essential in comprehending their perceptions of teaching. For them, education offers a professional option and a mechanism for integration and reaffirmation within their social and familial context. They aim to realize their objectives and meet the mandates and expectations influencing their growth through instruction. Thus, pedagogy is perceived as a vocation and a domain for acknowledgment, stability, and social integration.

5.4 Response to Specific Objective 3:

Psychological defense mechanisms were central to understanding how participants managed the tensions between their career desires and the social expectations imposed on them. As the study progressed, it became clear that participants' career choices were influenced by an internal, frequently unconscious process mediated by defense mechanisms rather than just logical thought. These mechanisms allowed participants to cope with the contradictions between their personal aspirations and external demands (Bleger, 2006/1973, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016, p. 47).

Research results indicate that participants managed their social interactions by balancing familial aspirations, social tensions, and individual objectives using various strategies. The decision to pursue teaching did not arise from a single motivation but from a negotiation process between external pressures and internal desires (Giust-Desprairies, 2003). In this context, participants assumed adaptive postures, wherein acceptance and adherence to social and familial norms coexisted with pursuing their professional identities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This adaptive process is essential for comprehending how individuals formulate their identity within established social structures while retaining their agency.

This balance between adherence to social norms and the search for individual identity can be understood through the defense mechanisms described as unconscious processes that protect the individual from anxiety and internal conflict (Freud, 1954/1936 and Klein, 2009/1946, as cited in Pla Caballero, 2016). These techniques enabled the participants to adhere to social standards while preserving their objectives. Among the most significant techniques were rationalization and projection. For example, several participants rationalized teaching as a profession corresponding to their competencies and principles while adhering to societal and familial expectations.

Furthermore, it was noted that a strong connection to family values and social norms was present, which allowed for managing tensions without thoroughly questioning the expectations placed upon them. This attachment to the familiar and the social functioned as a psychological protection strategy, enabling participants to maintain a sense of security and belonging (Gaulejac et al., (2006). Through this process, participants could adapt to their surroundings in a way that safeguarded their emotional and mental health and accepted the environment's expectations. The ability of people to adjust to enforced normative frameworks without totally losing their identity is reflected in this occurrence.

This adaptation process also illustrates that career choice is ultimately a process of subjectivization, in which participants integrate their family and social history with their aspirations. In other words, their decision to become teachers did not occur in isolation but was profoundly influenced by their previous family, social, and educational experiences (Gaulejac et al., 2006). This intertwining of the personal with the social serves as a mechanism through which participants reinterpret their academic experiences, giving them new meaning through their role as future teachers. In this context, pedagogy becomes a space in which participants reinterpret their educational experiences and, at the same time, create a new sense of belonging and purpose. The classroom serves as a space for symbolic preparation, allowing individuals to take on roles of guidance and support that may have been absent or highly valued during their own childhood experiences. Pedagogy offers a mechanism for educators to address the deficiencies in their educational experiences, enabling them to provide their students with what they lack or desire in their learning journeys.

Finally, through these psychological mechanisms, pedagogy emerges as the result of a negotiation between external determinations and internal aspirations, enabling participants to

respond to family and social mandates while maintaining autonomy (Gaulejac, 1999; Salomone & Grasselli, 2016). The decision to become teachers is not seen solely as conformity to what is expected of them but as a way of negotiating their place in the world, finding a space where they can remain true to themselves while responding to the demands of the environment.

Having built on an understanding of the research objectives, we can now address the research question more comprehensively and precisely.

5.5 Response to the Research Question:

In conclusion, the findings reveal a complex interaction between social class, gender relations, and life trajectories regarding how social class, gender relations, and life trajectories influence the professional choice of five Chilean pre-service teachers. These variables do not act in isolation; they interact dynamically, influencing the construction of individual and family identities. Through this interaction, a particular self-understanding is forged, which is closely linked to the social context and, in particular, to the social class to which they belong.

Gaulejac et al. (2006) state that individuals face tensions when adapting to their social environment while balancing group belonging with self-concept. This process is fundamental for fulfilling personal aspirations, which are reflected in the choice of a professional career. In this sense, the study's results show how the participants attempted to resolve these tensions through teaching, a career that allowed them to align with social and family expectations while providing a space to achieve their personal goals.

Regarding the influence of social class relations, it was evident that for middle-class participants, teaching represented a viable economic option aligned with their environment's

social norms. Without seriously challenging the existing social structures, this group perceived teaching as fulfilling the expectations of their community. Consequently, the professional decision accomplished a personal aspiration to impact society positively and enabled them to adhere to the normative framework embraced by their social class.

However, the individuals' career paths were also greatly influenced by gender relations. The participants had to deal with conventional expectations about women's roles, particularly those related to caregiving and teaching, as a logical progression of those roles (Barreto & Álvarez, 2013). Teaching had been considered an "appropriate" vocation for women because it was associated with caregiving and education, values closely related to feminism, and prevailing gender norms. These sociocultural expectations constrained their possibilities.

Regarding the participants' life trajectories, family and educational expectations were key in their orientation toward pedagogy. The influence of family models and specific social contexts led them to choose this professional option, where pedagogy was seen as a viable option within the family and social sphere. These expectations were decisive in their decision-making, as the participants responded to their desires and felt obligated to fulfill what their families and communities deemed appropriate, particularly within the educational tradition.

5.6 Implications

This study has theoretical, methodological, and social implications. Theoretically, results expand and enhance the comprehension of teacher training by surpassing traditional methods that concentrate exclusively on the technical and cognitive dimensions of teaching. This method facilitates the examination of how social determinants, including class, gender, and socio-familial trajectories, profoundly influence women's professional decisions in

teacher training in Chile. The study examines pedagogical competencies and the social dynamics that directly affect teaching practice, including interpersonal connections within educational environments, working conditions, and teachers' professional aspirations. Examining these factors within the theoretical framework elucidates how social interactions and working conditions influence the formation of teachers' professional identities. This method emphasizes that teaching relies on learning technical skills and information and negotiating various social and emotional aspects, providing a more thorough perspective on the teaching process. Furthermore, this study gives us a complete picture of the training process. It adds important insights into comprehending social processes and the dynamics of professional development by looking at teachers' individual experiences rather than just statistical data.

The study, including a socio-clinical point of view, reveals defense mechanisms and social constraints as essential determinants in professional decision-making. The argument also examines the emotional and social elements that influence the formation of teachers' professional identities, including the problems they encounter in their careers, such as excessive workload, external pressures, and emotional hardships. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of social *rappports* in individual experiences and their potential for social transformation. These processes are crucial to comprehending how educators develop resilience and adjust to the changing, occasionally unfavorable environments in which they work. As a result, the study offers a profound comprehension of workplace dynamics and the formation and maintenance of professional identities in English teacher education. The results can help guide the development of more effective and inclusive educational policies that better support teachers' work and contribute to academic study.

The GIR method and Life Stories were used as research instruments for this study because of their efficacy in examining subjectivity and the social factors influencing career

choices, offering a distinctive perspective. Teacher education studies have focused on quantitative or organized methodologies, overlooking educators' subjectivity and personal experiences. Utilizing Life Stories and GIR allows for gathering individual and contextual narratives that increase comprehension of the motives, obstacles, and significance associated with the choice to become an English teacher. This approach diverges from conventional methodologies by emphasizing qualitative analysis and interpretation of individual experiences, allowing the revelation of unknown factors, such as personal experiences, familial expectations, and social influences, that inform the decision to take on a teaching career. This methodology offers a comprehensive study and supports the examination of participants' subjectivity, critical to comprehending how emotions, perceptions, and personal experiences shape their professional identities.

The study's main finding is that the chosen socio-clinical strategy facilitated the co-construction of knowledge through group theorization and psychosocial comprehension. The socio-clinical approach provides essential insights into the connection between social and psychological characteristics, demonstrating how these factors impact individuals in ways frequently neglected by conventional studies. Life Stories allowed a deep examination of the shared experience, transcending the traditional research paradigm that separates the person from the research topic. This approach framed research as a process in which the researcher is always engaged with the subject matter, providing a deeper understanding of individual and collective experiences.

Finally, this study has significant social contributions, particularly regarding its implications for educational policies and teacher training. It proposes that teacher education programs consider academic training and socio-familial and psychological elements influencing women's professional choices. Teacher education programs should benefit from implementing critical techniques that examine social and familial influences, supporting

future educators in comprehending their decisions and the societal tensions they may encounter.

5.7 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

As with any piece of research, this study has some limitations. First, regarding theoretical limitations, this study considered only clinical sociology and psychosociology, mainly from the French school of ergological and psychoanalytic traditions, with elements of Danièle Kergoat's feminist theory. Therefore, future studies should incorporate other perspectives, such as critical theory or alternative approaches, to contribute to a broader and more multidimensional understanding of professional choice among English teachers.

Regarding methodological limitations, the study sample consisted of five pre-service female English teachers. Because of this, the findings are limited to a specific type of teacher and a particular gender. This restricts the generalizability of the results to other contexts or larger groups, limiting their representativeness. Future research should address this limitation by increasing the sample size. Furthermore, the results of this study could not apply to educational environments in other countries because it concentrated only on Chilean women. Although case studies provide a thorough examination, it is necessary to broaden the focus of future investigations by including a broader and heterogeneous sample. By doing this, a more detailed understanding of the experiences of English teachers would be possible, and it would be easier to discover if the results remain authentic in different educational and sociocultural contexts. Besides, since this was a qualitative study, no statistical or numerical data were employed, which might have reinforced the analysis or provided new insights.

Considering that life histories are subjective narratives presents another difficulty when working with them. Bias in data collection and interpretation may result from this subjectivity. Also, when researchers contribute their opinions to the analysis, there is a

chance that the results will represent their views rather than comprehensive knowledge. Multiple researchers could be involved in future studies to compare different points of view and improve objectivity to reduce this. Triangulating data using multiple sources or techniques would also improve reaching more trustworthy findings.

Life stories are created from personal memories processed and interpreted subjectively. Individuals progressively reinterpret and redefine their experiences over time. Consequently, these narratives explain how individuals interpret their history instead of pursuing an objective reconstruction of events. In this context, prioritizing examining how lived experiences influence individuals' self-perception and professional growth in teaching is more pertinent than concentrating on the accuracy of memories.

Regarding limitations in social transferability, this study focused exclusively on English teachers. As a result, the findings cannot be directly applied to teachers of other subjects, such as mathematics or science. This raises the question of whether the identified patterns are exclusive to English teaching or occur in other disciplines. Future research should include teachers from various subject areas and compare their experiences to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Comparative analyses would help identify factors unique to English teaching compared to those familiar within the broader educational field. Furthermore, expanding the sample to include a wider range of gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural contexts could provide a more detailed analysis.

Another challenge is the resistance to change within educational institutions. Although this study highlights female teachers' social and labor pressures, translating these findings into practice (whether in teaching methodologies or educational policies) is not straightforward. In general, educational systems are inflexible and frequently belong to a neoliberal paradigm that sees teachers as nothing more than information facilitators rather than unique people with important thoughts, feelings, and life experiences. For this reason, it

is essential to promote structural changes that challenge this perspective and foster the creation of schools that genuinely value educators, providing them with the space and autonomy needed to carry out their work humanely and meaningfully.

Future studies might incorporate a longitudinal approach to examine the progression of participants' professional choices throughout their teaching careers. Furthermore, examining how different educational methods and public policy strategies influence the career decisions of future teachers can offer essential results. Exploring the manifestation of defense mechanisms across various professional fields and cultural contexts is beneficial as it improves comprehension of the psychological and social factors that impact career choices.

5.8 Reflections on the Study

This clinical case study, which included a biographical methodological component, offered light on the complicated relationship of social, familial, and psychological factors that influence women's employment choices. The findings reveal the importance of considering these factors when researching investigations into career choice and teacher training. The interview process also allowed participants to reflect on gender dynamics in education and how family and social structures can limit or improve women's professional opportunities.

Furthermore, this study motivated participants to address complex areas of their lives and analyze the underlying issues that influence their professional pathways. They discovered how to handle vulnerability and realized their career choice is significantly influenced by external, often unconscious, social pressures. This method revealed the importance of social class and gender as restrictions, emphasizing the difficulties in recognizing and addressing these variables in their personal experiences.

Moreover, the research needed a collaborative dynamic wherein participants openly shared subjective elements of their life experiences. Despite their prior interpersonal

relationship, the procedure required the development of intersubjective trust, as it required the discussion of sensitive themes inside the group. This provided group reflection on individual vulnerabilities and emphasized the significance of mutual support within a typical structure. The analysis of their experiences led to significant insights into the complex nature of career decision-making, emphasizing the interaction of personal and social factors.

Finally, life stories provided a deeper comprehension of how familial and social expectations influence career decisions, especially concerning the feminization of education. Becoming an English teacher is not an isolated event but rather the outcome of a series of interconnected social, family, and personal influences shaping the participants' professional identities. As Gaulejac (1999, as cited in Meschiany & De grande, 2019, p. 499) suggests, the individual is the product of a history they simultaneously seek to take ownership of. This study reveals that while life stories condition individuals, they also offer the possibility of reclaiming agency and assigning new meaning to their experiences. Participants were challenged to explore the psychological processes behind their choices, as they had not fully grasped how much social pressures had influenced their professional paths.

Outside the classroom, teaching becomes an opportunity for transformation and self-affirmation, where we question our past and visualize our future. As a result, education transcends mere vocation, evolving into a means of reclaiming history and defining our destiny.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent sample.

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA ESTUDIANTES MAYORES DE EDAD
(Coproducción de discurso clínico - Cinco estudiantes de pedagogía en inglés de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación)

Mi nombre es Barbara Bruna Da Silva y mi trabajo consiste en investigar “Women’s Life stories about the decision to become teachers in Chile: a case study on socio-psychic factors influencing professional choice”, con el propósito de analizar la influencia de las relaciones sociales de clase y género, así como de la trayectoria vital, en la elección profesional de un grupo de cinco profesoras chilenas en formación.

Te invitamos a participar de esta investigación. Puedes elegir si participar o no. Si no deseas tomar parte en ella, no tienes que hacerlo, aún cuando tus padres lo hayan aceptado. Incluso, estando ya en la investigación, puedes retirarte en cualquier momento, sin dar ninguna explicación, y sin que esto signifique alguna consecuencia negativa para ti.

En esta investigación te pediremos participar en un grupo de implicación de discurso clínico. En el cual se te pedirá compartir tu historia de vida, acompañada de un dibujo de tu árbol genealógico incluyendo detalles personales y representando a los miembros relevantes de tu familia e informaciones claves, como la edad, el barrio de residencia y de nacimiento, y la formación académica y profesional de tus familiares.

Toda la información que nos entregues será confidencial (no será identificado tu nombre), usada únicamente para los fines de esta investigación, y estará protegida y resguardada en una carpeta de Google Drive. Solo los investigadores pueden acceder a ella, el custodio de la información Antonia Cabello Aros guardará los datos personales relacionados por 5 años una vez terminada la investigación, posterior se destruirá.

Independiente de la autorización del Director(a) del Establecimiento, la participación es libre y voluntaria y puede negarse a participar.

Si tienes alguna duda sobre la investigación o sobre tu participación, tanto el investigadora principal, como el Comité de Ética de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, estarán disponibles para aclarar tus consultas.

Para ello puedes contactar al investigadora principal Barbara Bruna Da Silva en el teléfono 912118208 y en el correo electrónico barbara.da_silva2020@umce.cl

Para cualquier duda que se presente o si se vulneran sus derechos puede contactarse con el Dr. Jairo Vanegas López, Presidente del Comité de Ética de la Universidad de Santiago de Chile, CEI-USACH, al teléfono 2-2-7180293 o al correo electrónico comitedeetica@usach.cl. También puede solicitar más información sobre la ética del proyecto con el Dr. Luis Barrera Salas, representante del Comité UMCE en el teléfono 22-322-9193 y en el correo electrónico evaluacion.etica@umce.cl

Si decides participar recibirás una copia de este documento.

Acepto participar en este estudio.

Nombre Investigador/a Responsable:

Firma

Fecha

Nombre Participante:

Firma

Fecha

Nombre Director/a Responsable del Establecimiento:

Firma

Fecha

Appendix B: Planification of the Life Story Session.

Planificación de sesión de historia de vida

Momento	Actividad de la sesión	Tiempo
inicio	Participantes comparten cómo están, con qué ánimo vienen a la sesión y qué cosas han ocurrido durante su semana.	15 min
Desarrollo	<p>Una de las participantes cuenta su historia de vida, utilizando la pizarra para hacer un esquema sobre su composición familiar. Las demás participantes/investigadoras deben tomar nota mientras el animador de grupo guía la conversación con preguntas cuando es necesario.</p> <p>Técnica: Historia de vida y elección profesional</p> <p>La instrucción es que las participantes/investigadoras deben hablar sobre historia de vida y trayectoria familiar desde la generación de sus abuelos, pasando por sus padres, hasta ellas y sus hermanos (si hay). La narración se va desarrollando en una línea de tiempo que marca las coincidencias entre la trayectoria familiar e individual con eventos marcantes de la historia de Chile. Durante el relato, hablan sobre cada uno de los miembros de su familia, haciendo las conexiones entre cada miembro familiar y dibujando a las mujeres como círculo y los hombres con un triángulo. Por cada integrante familiar, se debe mencionar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nombre ● Género ● Año de nacimiento ● Comuna en la que vive ● Nivel de educación ● Trabajo ● Que significa esta persona en la vida de la participante (recuerdos, anécdotas, emociones) <p>Durante la narración, se elaboran lazos entre el relato y su conexión con la elección de ser profesora de inglés.</p>	120 min
Resonancia	Luego del relato de vida, las participantes que están de oyentes comparten sus resonancias a nivel emocional, experiencial y comentan sus hipótesis clínicas sobre lo sucedido.	20 min
Cierre	Para finalizar, la participante narradora cuenta	10 min

	cómo se sintió durante y después de contar su historia de vida, además de sus insights.	
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Appendix C: Planification of the Analysis Session.

Planificación de sesión de análisis

	Actividad	Tiempo
inicio	<p>Al comenzar la sesión, el animador de grupo explica los puntos de hipótesis socio-clínicas a discutir/analizar en la sesión, los cuales se dividirán en:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Psíquicos → <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ emociones ○ creencias ○ nociones identitarias ○ contradicciones internas ● Social → relaciones de poder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Clase social (capital social y económico) → Nivel educacional → Acceso a cultura de prestigio 	10 min.
Análisis	<p>Con los apuntes de cada una de las participantes-investigadoras y del interviniente se comienzan a hacer hipótesis que den cuenta de elementos biográficos relevantes y de su vinculación con la elección profesional de las intervinientes.</p>	60 min
Cierre	<p>Cada participante y el animador comparte sus resonancias, análisis, e insights producto de la sesión.</p>	10 min.

Appendix D: One of the Participant's Family Tree Drawing

