Toy soldiers: The armed body of Chilean students. Military instruction and shooting lessons in schools (Ca. 1880-Ca.1930)

Soldados de juguete: el cuerpo armado de los estudiantes chilenos. Instrucción militar y lecciones de tiro en escuelas (C.1880-C.1930)

Soldats jouets: Le corp armé des étudiants chiliens. Formation militaire et leçons de tir dans les écoles (C.1880-C.1930)

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ABSTRACT

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, different actors involved in education promoted the introduction of shooting (“Tiro Escolar” or “school shooting lessons”) as a discipline to be taught in Chile’s educational system, which was established in 1928 but was not yet a large or regular operation. In analysing arguments of those who promoted this activity, this article shows shooting lessons in schools as a realm where it is possible to notice some dimensions of intentions to train Chilean children and youth through educating the body and emotions in the period under study.

Keywords: history of body and emotions, shooting lessons, Chilean education, nationalism.

RESUMEN

A fines del siglo XIX y primer tercio del XX diversos actores relacionados con la educación promovieron la introducción del Tiro Escolar como disciplina a ser enseñada en el sistema educativo en Chile, lo que se concretó en 1928 pero no tuvo un funcionamiento masivo y regular. A través del análisis de algunos argumentos de promotores de esta actividad, en este artículo se plantea al Tiro Escolar como un espacio mediante el cual es posible apreciar dimensiones de la educación del cuerpo y de las emociones con las que se pretendía formar a la infancia y juventud chilena de la época.

Palabras clave: historia del cuerpo y las emociones, lecciones de tiro, educación chilena, nacionalismo.

RESUME

À la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du vingtième différents acteurs impliqués dans l'éducation ils ont favorisé la mise en place de tir de l'école ("Tiro Escolar") en tant que discipline à enseigner dans le système d'éducation au Chili, qui a été achevée en 1928, mais n'a pas eu une opération massive et régulière. Grâce à l'analyse de certains arguments des promoteurs de cette activité, dans cet article l'école est considéré comme un espace à travers lequel on peut voir les dimensions de l'éducation du corps et les émotions qui ont été destinés à former les enfants et la jeunesse chilienne du temps.

Mots-clés: histoire du corps et des émotions, leçons de tir, éducation chilienne, nationalisme.

Introduction

In November 1952, death knocked on the doors of tiny and quiet San Fernando High School (Liceo). During a recreational trip, young Marcial Durán accidentally killed his classmate José Avila with a gun. The brief bit of information that the educational establishment gave merely stated that Durán was released free of any charge and that the Liceo would pay for José's memorial service (ALNSCH, 1950, p. 74). The community grieved the loss, while silence and sorrow remained. However, something was missing, according to a researcher reading that file more than a half century later: any clue regarding the role of weapons in school life. The concern had to do with the fact that such an accident appeared as inexplicable to José's teachers because it was totally out of bounds from what was expectable in a school context. However, some decades before the calamity, the Chilean state, groups of teachers, civilian associations, and military officers had vigorously promoted the implementation of shooting lessons in schools ("Tiro Escolar") as part of the formative process for Chilean students. Even more, in the 1930s, it was not surprising to find photographs in published magazines and school newsletters in which groups of students appeared practicing "Tiro Escolar" under the guidance of their teachers.

Figure 1: A day of shooting lessons at a polygon in Recoleta. Source: *Patria. Revista Mensual de la Dirección de Reclutamiento y Tiro Nacional*, nº8, August 1936: 28.

The above photograph shows students practicing target shooting in a military marksman position, lying on the ground. There are a large number of students witnessing the display of the young shooters' skills. In the first row, a group of judges is evaluating the aptitude of students, which means that this is a competition or a test. Although it is not indicated whether they are students of a private or state school, it is possible to imagine from their uniforms that these children belong to the middle class.

This paper aims to identify and analyze how military references in Chilean education were arranged. Two main interpretative keys are proposed to examine shooting lessons as an educational phenomenon in Chilean schools: bodies and emotions. Since education is an embodied practice, military instruction seeks to normalize and shape students' bodies and gestures and to instil some emotional patterns as well. During the *fin de siècle* epoch and in the first decades of the twentieth century, child and adolescent socialization was expected to occur in school, mainly to shape patriotic and masculine future citizens. To fulfill this duty, control over body and emotions was crucial to foster "obedience, reverence, self-control and discipline," as historian Stephanie Olsen (2014, p.

25) has shown quite accurately regarding the British context. We propose to unveil these patterns in the Chilean circumstance and to shed light on their emotional dimensions, to emphasize how emotions are embodied. Therefore, we will analyze how references to the dimensions of the body and emotions interacted within the framework of reflections and practices regarding shooting lessons in Chilean education. It must be remarked that the problem under study contains both restrictions and obvious bias: a field associated with military instruction (and, therefore, one reproducing gender regimes existing in the period) does not address any analysis of the female school population. Due to the nature of the sources used, neither does this paper tackle the most crucial and elusive dimension, in historiographical terms, of educational processes: acceptance and internalization both in the individual and the collective. It recognizes, thus, a mainly discursive emphasis, sharing precautions that must be taken concerning actual consequences of intended training programs as, for example, historian Barbara Keys (2009, 397–398) acknowledges regarding difficulties and speculative inferences about the impact of physical education and the body in nationalist totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century. This chasm between regulations and (Weberian rooted) active consensus is quite inextricable. Even so, research should not be inhibited in raising questions about how to decipher cultural and historic-based phenomena such as the interface between body and emotion.

In this vein, the key issue is that emotions and feelings occur both in mental/psychological and corporal-physical/social media. Beyond a biological-based view of emotions as automatic responses to stimuli, we would support what seems to be a more fruitful approach: to recognize the interdependence between space, body, and emotion, bearing in mind that they may be analytically separated, notwithstanding the intimate link between them. Following Margrit Pernau's insight, we concur that, "emotions thus are not only expressed but also learned through the body [which] is not the opposite of culture, but a site where culture is played out" (Pernau, 2014, p. 541).

Therefore, an adequate analysis requires, in theoretical terms, establishing certain initial definitions. The task of forming the body, in the educational realm, involves a double reference: first, to adult mentoring of the individual harmonic development process, and, second, to the control and management of a group. The body becomes, then, a continent of the individual and a territory of the collective. It must be noticed that, in both dimensions, the body is always a product and a producer of gender, race, social class, and age, since its historical environment (again, a product and a producer) influences it. Dialectical relationships between individual and collective must be taken into account in the historical analysis of emotions as well, as a myriad of scholars have emphasized.

Shooting lessons: a brief historical background

"Tiro Escolar" had an irregular presence in Chilean education during the first third of the twentieth century. As it involved nationalism and military skills, it might be understood as

a continuity of previous discourses and practices, which aimed to link the educational process with military training. What is relevant for our purpose is that those attempts were committed to instilling a set of behavioural practices regarding students' bodies and their emotions as well. Schematically, it is possible to recognize points in Chilean education in which relations between instruction and militarization became increasingly explicit. Indeed, the creation of the national educational system in 1813 was a suitable instance for this military approach, expressed in the interest in creating a school uniform for National Institute students (thereby continuing its religious tradition since colonial Convictorio Carolino). According to the official discourse regarding education, students should be trained in skills to defend the homeland: they should grow as *citizens in arms*, following the ideological legacy of American and French revolutionary processes. Corporal discipline, self-control, and obedience became juvenile virtues. Educational proposals adopted by the first national government reinforced military approaches regarding students' bodies. The impact of the monitorial system (also known as Lancasterian education) is an obvious example: describing this sort of teaching, a historian wrote that in schools "marches were rhythmic, and students obeyed voices of command indicated in the regulations with precision. The fact that these comings and goings were verified within a room has caused Lancaster schools to be compared to a warship" (Amunátegui, 1895, p. 18)¹. Bodies were thus adapted to upcoming Republican life, in which political participation was envisioned among equals, who should be the recipients and interpreters of a shared emotional disposition. During the first decades of Chilean political independence, words like heart, flame, bravery, duty, and others that semantically might be collected under the concept of "heaters of emotion" were frequently used regarding students in speaking of their path to becoming young citizens. By this we mean, following Jan Plamper's (2012, p. 132–133) references to anthropological social-constructivism, those emotions that invoke, eventually putting the body in motion against an antagonist (mainly the emotion of anger). Although Chilean education's training priorities were defined by two specific missions (primary schools were to civilize and moralize the people beginning with young children, and secondary schools were to enable a humanist and cosmopolitan curriculum for their students), the militaristic component did not disappear entirely by the mid-nineteenth century, although its presence became less frequent.

The Chilean educational system experienced related changes after the military triumph over Peru and Bolivia in the so-called "*Guerra Del Pacífico*" (Nitrate or Salt pepper War, 1879–1883). Regarding the infrastructural realm, there was an exceptional growth in public expenditure due to the subsequent economic boom. In addition, major educational reform (following the German model) took place. Given the national post-war triumphalism, military symbols and practices flourished in schools. An early glimpse of school militarism happened in August 1879, when the students of Liceo de San Fernando,

¹ All Spanish quotations have been translated by the author.

propelled by enthusiastic nationalism, escaped from their classes to perform “representations” of the war in progress against Peru and Bolivia (Toro, 2011, p. 33). In those days, in Talca, local students participated in preparatory activities for public holidays commemorating national independence, constituting a ready martial marching brigade.

Figure 2: School Battalion at Colegio Sagrados Corazones, Valparaíso, 1881. Photography Collection of National Historical Museum, Santiago.

Regardless of its hieratic style, the above image is interesting to the extent that it is a testimony to how widespread military and nationalist imagery became in the years during the war against Peru and Bolivia. Valparaíso's Sacred Hearts School was a religious and private educational institution. This image seems to reconcile, in the context of nationalism and the cult of the Fatherland, the temporal dimension (military allusions) and the religious dimension (the central figure of the priest). Likewise, it also conveys the idea that those of all ages within school (regarding the male gender) might be symbolic allies to the national military effort. There are little kids, teenagers, and young people in the image, the latter being shown as already able to display a quintessential symbol of transition to adulthood at that epoch: the moustache.

As Rojas Flores (2004) has shown, between the 1880s and the early years of the twentieth century, school battalions channelled a nationalism and patriotism partially sponsored by educational authorities. School instruction in the use of firearms was, therefore, part of the educational discussion that arose at the national pedagogical Congress of 1889. In the framework of the debates on physical education, discussions occurred around whether it was appropriate to teach children and young people the use of rifles. Some teachers enthusiastically supported the idea that students should have access to real weapons beginning in primary instruction, alluding to the attraction the activity held for children because using a rifle was a pleasant bodily and sensory experience. Thus, Raimundo Valenzuela, a Congress delegate, proclaimed his conviction that “military exercises and music will be the best attractions for children at the same time as the most effective means of education of the people” (Congreso Nacional Pedagógico, 1890, p. 65). Even still, after the official adoption of physical education (under German and Swedish influences) from 1889 onwards, school battalions eventually disappeared by 1910 when new forms of standardized programs that appealed to both children and young students, like Boy Scouts, emerged. Although, military echoes remained in schools for almost twenty years with the practice of “Tiro Escolar.”

At the dawn of the twentieth century, advocates of “Tiro Escolar” were still defending their ideas in the pedagogical discussion. In 1902, the General Congress of Public Education again discussed the pros and cons that could be involved in introducing the use of actual weapons in schools. Francisco Jenschke, a promoter in Chile of a physical education program following a German matrix, valued the need to differentiate between the means employed for military instruction in schools. Therefore, he argued that it was wrong to introduce teaching of firearms at the level of primary education:

In no way should the game with weapons enter in primary schools, because it is detrimental to education as it steals children from their daily concerns. Iron canes are already used to run several preparatory exercises to military service and to train students’ resistance in marches and let them overcome obstacles on the ground (Jenschke, 1902, p. 367).

Years after, in the context of the First World War, there was an active movement of teachers that tried to resume this discussion and insisted on setting up “Tiro Escolar” as a school subject. It is interesting to note that, in the first editions of the *Boletín de Educación Primaria (Journal of Elementary Education)*, a publication by organized groups of teachers established in 1915, there were numerous reports favourable to establishing shooting lessons in schools and testimonials on popular collections of money to buy rifles for use in schools. The leader of this initiative was Guillermo Martínez, Inspector of Physical Education. His approach corresponds to a stage in Chilean physical education in which militarism was still essential. It would not entirely change until 1925, when, in another

historical and educational context, a more scientific and pedagogical approach was formed (Rojas Flores, 2010, p. 367).

Figure 3: Students from the Normal School of Preceptors (1902). Photography Collection of Museum of the Education Gabriela Mistral, Santiago.

In the professional formation of young teaching students from the Normal School of Teachers, practices of a military format, including the basic handling of rifles, were also present on an occasional basis. It is interesting to note that, as the picture shows, there was a social class difference with the specific patriotic reference to a wartime already passed (as seen in Image 2). Regarding the future primary teachers, there was a representation of a collective nature, which could have been in direct relationship with the historical moment: the passage of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when discussions closely approached the military dimension to education. As it was a time when politicians and some educators expected to dominate the popular classes through encouraging military service, it is quite symptomatic that future popular primary teacher groups should have played the role of a quite disciplined regiment.

Hence, by 1915, “Tiro Escolar” appeared as an activity that would channel predispositions endorsed to children and male youth as part of their alleged nature. Authorities and official educators assumed there was an original attraction to guns and shooting and that lessons should be conducted educationally to strengthen patriotism. They thought as well that the practice of shooting would allow for strengthening altruistic feelings of love for the country while acting beneficially on the body of the student. Concerning the body, the promoters of “Tiro Escolar” insisted on how beneficial this activity was for the correct posture of the back, the development of motor coordination, and, above all, the eyesight. To this, they added an interesting factor, the interaction of body and spiritual disposition, which, they said, manifested itself in the concentration that each

young shooter must learn to develop to succeed when shooting at a target. The correlation of a spirit attentive to the task and a willing and regulated body was, according to the defenders of “Tiro Escolar”, a clear pedagogical achievement. And, if to this was added a nationalist aim that articulated that all shooting lessons be done in the schools, its relevance and need were rather clear. However, these physical and medical reasons were never fully validated by educational authorities. Thus, in 1915, a report of the Superior Hygiene Council ruled out the idea that the practice of shooting in schools was a significant contribution to the development of the eyesight of students, and, on the contrary, took notice of the dangers involved in the use of weapons by children. The report was an important endorsement, and thus the Ministry of Public Instruction decided not to allow the practice of target shooting in schools; it also ordered the weapons already available in some schools to be confiscated and the money returned to those who had contributed to buy rifles for students.

“Tiro Escolar” became then a somewhat hazy space, both regarding its inclusion as a systematic curricular discipline in school life and its actual prominence in education as well. In the first instance, there were more initiatives to integrate “Tiro Escolar” as part of physical education. In fact, official legislation established this in 1928, in a context in which militarism had a greater presence in culture, politics, and education in Chile. The first Government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, who was a nationalist military that led the country between 1927 and 1931 and tried to promote an accelerated authoritarian modernization, backed “Tiro Escolar” as a formative discipline. It is worth noting that the Ibáñez regime took place in a cycle in which admiring references to Italian fascism were expanding into wide national political parties and in groups of educators as well. That nationalist spirit is evident in the official decree that introduced “Tiro Escolar”:

The feeling of love of country, respect for constituted authority and faith in the destiny of the Republic must be awakened in the child (...) In this age of adolescence, there is keen interest in taking and handling a firearm. It is convenient then that teacher knows how to make use of this natural tendency and promote it by all means at its disposal (Ministerio, 1928, p. 6-7).

Despite the official recognition already indicated, the promoters of school shooting lessons (who were recommending its integration into the educational system since, at least, the early twentieth century) failed to create hegemonic conditions for its implementation. Therefore, shooting lessons (which we would understand as a moving point of reference rather than a clearly defined phenomenon) were neither long-lasting nor a regular practice in Chilean education. A living testimony to this reality, along with the fading of references to school shooting lesson in documents, discussions, and educational literature since the late 1930s, is the memory of an eyewitness of Chilean education at the time: historian Ivan Nuñez. In 2016, looking back on his childhood, specifically regarding the first half of the 1940s, Nuñez recalled:

My father was a primary school director in Puente Alto, between 1939 and 1947. Shortly before that date, he showed me something he had saved and inventoried: a 22 calibre rifle; He taught me to handle it, and I could even shoot the target in the schoolyard (on vacation, when there were no students or other people). He said it belonged to “Tiro Escolar”. However, I, six years student at that school, had never seen it or knew it had been used (Núñez, 2016).

From the above, we want to tackle two aspects: the first is that, in the early 1940s, few memories of the school shooting practice remained. It was, therefore, a vanished phenomenon. However (and this seems more suggestive as a cumulative product of educational administrative routine and school imaginary as well), there was a rifle that was an actual asset belonging to the school. Ramón Nuñez, Iván’s father, knew how to shoot properly, and he associated the weapon and his shooting dexterity with what we conceptualize as a point of reference: the school shooting lessons. Why, then, is it a mobile point of reference? We believe it is plausible to label it as such because, even though many actors pursued it, the phenomenon of “Tiro Escolar” lacks significant chronological and spatial details. After all, when did shooting lessons in schools take place? Moreover, a more complicated question: since the school was supposed to ban violence and danger, where did students use weapons?

Analytics dimensions on school shooting practices

Notwithstanding the fact that several issues cannot be answered accurately, due to the lack of permanence of “Tiro Escolar” (and, therefore, with only a few remaining documental sources), it is possible to identify some interesting analytical dimensions. Regarding the political aspect, in which the school shooting lesson was a permanent weapon with which to promote nationalism, the introduction of “Tiro Escolar” in schools is understandable in the context of a grave concern of the leading sectors facing the risk of disintegration of national unity. Social conflicts unsettled workers and popular sectors, involving a permanent menace of violence and disorder. The school appeared then as a resource to address the growing risks of the “social issue.” It is symptomatic that, about the integration of the popular sectors, in the early twentieth century, the political elites discussed at the same time the establishment of two compulsory laws: on military conscription (adopted in 1900) and primary education. The latter had to wait until 1920. In the context of those political concerns about control of weapons and their disciplined use both in the military and at school, Pedro Bannen (a progressive educator and leader on popular education at the dawn of the twentieth century) encouraged “Tiro Escolar” in his Escuelas de Proletarios, which were private primary schools devoted to low-income children (Serrano et al., 2012, p. 22).

It was not only in the formal school environment that there was a hope that “Tiro Escolar” would serve as an element of social cohesion. As a tradition that had dragged on

since the nineteenth century, target-shooting clubs also saw it as their task to contribute to the democratic system by reinforcing social order and stability. It was a common phenomenon in neighbouring countries like Argentina, where target-shooting clubs developed in “a social climate favourable to the idea of a courageous, strong citizenship” (Raiter, 2016, p. 34), and then spread as well. Therefore, the need to promote a version of male and bourgeois sociability that would serve as an antidote to what upper and middle classes labeled as prevailing social evils was rather evident. Consequently, there was interest by Target Shooting Clubs to attract school-aged youth to that particular framework of comradeship:

Our polygon is available to schools on Thursday of each week. When the interesting institution of Boy Scouts was founded, we gave them the same facilities. Children then used the Lebel reduced rifle; today they have risen to the dignity of handling the war rifle (...) not counting the training establishments with the means to prepare their students for the exercise of the shot, so necessary after making the course of gymnastics and learned military developments that they are taught, the Board believed to be beneficial providing facilities within our institution (...) until now there are not many educational establishments taking advantage of the franchises. Step by step, it begins (Memoria, 1911, p. 20-21).

Regarding the actual educational discussion, supporters of “Tiro Escolar” tried to emphasize that it was a crowning aspect of the whole learning cycle, since it unified the cognitive and moral domains (associated with patriotism) and the body (related to the physical skills needed to use the rifle). In 1928, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo’s regime highlighted these ideas when it enacted its mandatory implementation in schools, even though they had no efficient and systematic impact, as discussed above:

Target shooting will represent the last degree of educational progression, since it presupposes already prepared and developed in youth all other skills, physical and moral, indispensable to those who should handle a rifle war (...) The shooting in educational institutions pursues two purposes: a FORMAL, because it develops the civic and moral spirit of the child, strengthening his character and making it nobler and more useful to the family and the country, and a PRACTICAL purpose, because it familiarizes the future citizen in handling the war rifle, making him more virile and able to defend his Homeland, its honour, and its flag, if it is threatened (Ministerio, 1928, pp. 8-9).

Although it was primarily a male activity, “Tiro Escolar,” a practice involving the use of the body (and, therefore, involving attaching faculties and emotions to each gender), also had a speech about girls. It is interesting to note that, in 1936, several years after its establishment as a school discipline and its poor implementation, its supporters tried to highlight the benefits that the practice of target shooting could bring to women:

In women, rather than men, target shooting is a real spur of the nervous system, the mere fact of focus for a moment on the time of marksmanship, is an exercise of first order for the education of the will, which requires absolute isolation and the concurrence of multiple factors, intense attention, view, normal breathing, deep breath before firing, etc. (...); the person gets used to his attention, his sight and masters nervous and uncontrolled impulses, until achieving serenity of spirit and full control of the conscious will (Molina, 1936, p. 9).

The assumption about the so-called prevalent “nervous character” of women (according to the typological language of the epoch) involved a rhetorical construction about emotional self-control needs, which could be helped in Shooting School. Regarding language focused on the prevalent emotions attached to each gender, promoters of “Tiro Escolar” pointed out that it stimulated the development of patriotism and the proper channelling of aggressiveness in men and, on the other hand, compensated for those alleged deficiencies of character attributed to girls, in a gender order based on an evident asymmetry. In such an order, virility would be a key factor vis-à-vis civic socialization:

It would be necessary to give students of the upper course some explanations on handling the rifle and target shooting exercises with those who are sufficiently developed. It would be a step further towards the formation of target shootings societies and thus would fill one of the biggest needs in Chile: to make men spend their idling time sharing in virile shooting competitions while they accustom to estimate each other (Jenschke, 1902, p. 367).

Unequal gender roles regarding “Tiro Escolar,” summarized in a specific conjuncture through the words of Guillermo Martínez, Inspector of Physical Education, were a major factor in the Chilean educational bureaucracy. Martínez, who made an educational mission through several European countries and knew about school shooting lessons in Switzerland, is an example of the international circulation of images associated with a triad of knowledge (military), feeling (patriotic), and gender role (distinctive). In 1915, this official proposed to follow the Swiss example by establishing the National Rifle Festival, an event that would gather families, authorities, teachers and prominent people of each locality across the country. The community would witness the ceremony, the culminating moment of which would be the appearance on stage of:

One or more schoolgirls dressed in white with raw tricolour carrying the rifle in one hand. She would advance majestically toward the row of students with a national flag in one hand and proper posture expecting the delivery of the rifle. One of the girls at the time of extending the rifle would say: “Take, Chilean child; a Chilean girl gives you this rifle to learn to defend the honour of Chile” (Martínez 1915, p. 3).

Despite the enthusiasm with which Martínez described the ceremony (in which each genre occupied a hierarchical role and was called to show different emotions), the National Rifle Party failed to prosper and join the traditional ritual of the Chilean school system. His

call to introduce the learning of guns in schools became truncated, although strongly nationalist pedagogues, fearful of social crisis and loss of national cohesion, supported his crusade. Beyond the circumstantial prestige of a militaristic approach to education inspired by a model of Germanic roots at the dawn of the twentieth century, the hegemony of American educational ideas through a movement generically called the New School ended up driving, beginning in the 1920s, the discussion onto another path.

Final remarks

Photographs of children and young people dressed in military uniforms or practicing shooting at their school or elsewhere, under the guidance of their teachers, are not always unproblematic to de-codify, since, at first glance, they seem to be quite far away from quotidian school purposes. However, to the extent that these photographs are a visual testimony, researchers have the opportunity for a better understanding of less common dimensions of school culture. Thus, a phenomenon such as “Tiro Escolar,” which reached its peak in such a limited period, can be understood in several of its features. Similarly, the visible remains of its practice, and demonstrations of military skills in the educational realm as well, are opportunities to enrich reflection on the relationship between education, childhood, youth, body, and emotions as a whole.

Part of the meaning of the experiences of “Tiro Escolar” and its implementation during the period under study is visible through the photographs. No doubt some elements remain hidden, since, as in other visual records of schooling at times when they were scarce, the photos are usually a hieratic testimony, in which teachers and students pose for the camera, developing a performance that aims to summarize in just an instant the whole meaning of a more complex activity. This, for example, is visible through the motley utility that is seen in Image 2, which expresses the need to display anything that materially strengthens the patriotic message that was intended for this kind of photograph.

Photographs have become a visual testimony of “Tiro Escolar” as an instructional and very eventful space that somehow represented the prevailing concerns in education at a time of acute political and social change. Training Chilean students in the early twentieth century in the use of firearms involved an expectation to standardize and drive bodies and behaviours, reinforcing concepts and values associated with them. For example, the correct disposition of the body and concentration required for the use of the rifle would teach self-control, while demonstrating how love of the Motherland was transferred to students. In this sense, it is important to appreciate that, in the context of critical social challenges, emotional inductions through activities that reinforced a notion of masculinity were relevant from a political point of view. As Nicole Eustace (2014) noted, referring to the process of building American national sentiment, it is important to consider the interaction between emotions, political loyalties, and behaviour.

It is rather meaningful to reflect on the sense of self-control and discipline that involves the use of weapons in school, considering that their technological changes make their use much more complicated and their unwanted effects more lethal. As Dagmar Ellerbrock (2014) points out, referring to the German case in the path between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and using Pierre Bourdieu's category of *habitus*, the formation of masculinity in the juvenile stage involves the acquisition of identity through repeated actions. It includes the use of tolerated violence attributed to gender, performed through the body in fighting, sport, or aggressive play. It is possible to argue that the contradiction between the realm of the game (in emotional expressions of permitted aggressiveness) and the idea of building mechanisms of masculinity in schools (supported by technology with the greatest potential impact and damage like "Tiro Escolar") could be at the base of the inability of promoters to ensure school shooting lessons prevailed in schools. Damage, risk, and the potential impact of child and youth lack of control in the use of a deadly instrument could appear at any time, feared the opponents to "Tiro Escolar." The tiny and quiet community of Liceo de San Fernando met those consequences on a sad spring day in 1952.

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