

# Social Mobility in Argentina

## *An Inquiry to the Educational System*



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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate the role of the Argentinean Educational System and its relation with the degree of social mobility in the country. Considering on one side, that education is free for everyone in Argentina, but on the other side, that the levels of attainment of higher education are so low, this thesis aims to explore the role of education, and more specific the functioning of the Educational System in order to highlight its impact on the degree of social mobility. Furthermore, the thesis analyzes the consequences of the observed levels of poverty and inequality, as well as how the pedagogies implemented in the Educational System affect its outcome.

The thesis examines the socioeconomic and sociopolitical historical events that have influenced on the structure and the functioning of the Educational System, as well as the current situation of the country and the future perspectives. Moreover, the thesis analyzes the determinant factors that have influenced in the decision of a small number of people regarding higher education. Analyzing these aspects, the thesis highlights to which extent the Educational System is reproducing the same social structure or it is able to change that, avoiding the perpetuation of poverty and inequality.

The theoretical framework founded on Bourdieu's *theory of social reproduction*, and its main concepts of *habitus*, *field*, *capitals*, and *symbolic violence*, made possible to analyze both the structure and the functioning of the Educational System on one side, and the individuals' motivation toward higher education on the other side, providing a comprehensive picture of how the ES, the individuals' background, and the interaction between them determine the degree of social mobility.

The thesis arrives to the conclusion that the Educational System plays a very relevant role on the degree of social mobility, and that the socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts can conceal or exhibit the truth behind the common perception about that role.

**Key words:** Habitus, Different Capitals, Field, Symbolic Violence, Education, Educational System.

## Acknowledgments

This thesis represents the culmination of a stage in a very long journey that continues ahead into an unknown future. A journey longer than the two years this master program has taken. A journey, which does not have a clear start date, because when I think about it, I do not really know when it exactly began. I do not know if it was the day I was born, the day I started at school, the day I graduated from secondary school. I guess that the most appropriate answer will be the day I decided that I wanted to go to Denmark. But then, when was it exactly? Because as far as I remember, I was only a little boy when I told my mother that one day when I was grown, I would go to the town where my grandparents were from. Then, I guess again that the best possible answer I can give is the day I arrived to Denmark; September 24, 2003.

When I lived in Argentina in a small farm, and I graduated from secondary school in 1997, my parents could not afford to send me to a big city in order to study at the university. Therefore, I just remained back there and started to work in the farm with the purpose of saving money to travel to Denmark. That had been my dream since I was a little boy; go to Denmark to explore where my ancestors were from, learn the language, learn to know the country, the culture.

I indeed managed to achieve my purpose. The 24<sup>th</sup> of September of 2003 at the age of 23 years, I put my feet on the Danish soil. It was the first time in my life I was abroad, the first time I was so far away from my home, and to some extent, the first time I really was on my own. At that time, I could not speak other languages than my mother tongue, but I still managed to buy a ticket for the train from Kastrup Airport to Aalborg, where an uncle, I only had seen 4 times before during his visits to Argentina, was waiting for me at the train station; I still remember that night.

Since that day, my life has certainly not been the same as if I had chosen to remain in Argentina and never have followed my dream to satisfy my curiosity for knowing. I had to learn the Danish language in order to insert myself in the society and better understand the culture. How could you really get the essence of the meaning of the word “*hygge*” if you do not speak/understand Danish? You can translate the word, but not the meaning. From the beginning, I worked in whatever I could to provide for myself and studied other languages, economics, and other relevant subjects at the same time. I had to learn English in order to be admitted in a bachelor study. I got

the opportunity to travel, to visit and live in other countries around three continents. All of them have given me valuables and wonderful experiences, but it was my trip to Tanzania, during the last semester of my bachelor in International Trade & Marketing Management, the one that really changed my mind. I discovered that I was not a seller at all. I could not take advantage of the need that people had. I would rather offer a solution. That is how I ended doing this master degree in Development and International Relations, and for obvious reasons following the stream of Latin American Studies.

I experienced the misfortune of losing my mother just before Christmas last year. During my stay in my hometown under those circumstances, I talked with a man, who told me *“el aburrimiento se cura con la curiosidad, pero la curiosidad no tiene cura”*, which can be translated as following: *“boredom can be cured with curiosity, but curiosity has no cure”*.

We are the consequence of our choices together with the influence of external factors upon ourselves during determined circumstances. I could have chosen to stay in Argentina and today I probably would have been one more example of the many persons I met and interviewed one month ago, or maybe not. However, I chose another way, which led me to where I am today.

I am where I am today thanks to my tenacity to follow my dreams, my conviction that with effort everything is possible, and my need to satisfy my curiosity. All what I needed was an opportunity.

It is thanks to my curiosity, my wonder that this thesis has been written within the chosen topic.

Finally, regardless of when this long journey started, many people have taken part in it, in one or another way, or at least they have always been present in my mind. My family for example, my own family, because with the passage of the time I got married and I got two sons. My parents and my brothers back in Argentina, friends both here and there, professors, etc. For their patience, their support, and their comments and contributions, as well as the guidance of Óscar, my supervisor, each and every one of them deserve my candidly gratefulness.

Sincerely,

*M. Nicolas Jacobsen*

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## List of Abbreviations

**CBA** – Canasta Básica Alimentaria [Basic Food Basket]

**CBT** – Canasta Básica Total [Basic Total Basket]

**CIPPEC** - Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento  
[Center for the Implementation of Public Policies promoting Equity and Growth]

**ES** – Educational System

**GDP** – Gross Domestic Product

**HC** – Human Capital

**HCI** – Human Capital Index

**HDI** – Human Development Index

**INDEC** – Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos [National Statistics and Census Institute]

**ISI** – Import Substitution Industrialization

**LEF 2005**– Law of Educational Financing of 2005

**LFE 1993** – Law of Federal Education of 1993

**LHE 1995** – Law of Higher Education of 1995

**NLE 2006** – National Law of Education of 2006

**PISA** – Programme for International Student Assessment

**PPP** – Purchasing Power Parity

**UK** – United Kingdom

**UNESCO** – The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

**US** – United States



## 1. Section 1 – Introduction to the Thesis

This section of the thesis contains the main introduction to the topic and the issue at hand, followed by the hypothesis and research question presented in the problem formulation as well as a brief explanation of the purpose of the thesis.

### 1.1.Introduction

*“The most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings.”*

Alfred Marshall, *Principles of economics*.

According to studies about social mobility, it is claimed that there is a strong connection between the levels of inequality & poverty and the degree of social mobility. Furthermore, it is also claimed a close association between the degree of educational attainment as well as the level of education attained and the level of inequality & poverty. Finally, there is also claimed a correlation between education and the degree of social mobility. Considering that there is a close interrelation between these three elements, the Educational System (ES) of a given country becomes a significant component of its society, as a provider of education, due to its influence on the degree of social mobility and the level of inequality and poverty.

In 1884, the Argentinean Congress approved the Law of Common Education – Law 1420. This law represented a basal stone in the building process of the national ES, establishing its obligatory, state, lay, and free character. Therefore, since the Argentinean ES has been established for more than hundred years, it will be interesting to investigate its role in the society, considering the above mentioned, and the levels of inequality and poverty that the country presents.

Today, the Argentinean Constitution preserves the right to educate and learn to all the inhabitants in the country, ensures equal opportunities and possibilities without any discrimination, and guarantees the principles of free and equitable state public education. Nevertheless, these rights and principles, without having character of specific law like the Law 1420, began already in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to be embodied in the Argentinean Constitution promulgated in 1853. They reflected then the importance attributed to having a universal ES that could contribute to the

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progress of enlightenment of the newborn nation; enlightenment capable of providing the beneficial being for the prosperity of the country. Then, continuing on that line, it could be claimed that the role of the Argentinean ES as an entity envisioned to and capable of offering access to education despite the socioeconomic differences among the population has been, since the beginning, to encourage social mobility.

As mentioned in the beginning, besides education, poverty and inequality are also connected to the degree of social mobility. When looking at the index of inequality, GINI index, based on income distribution, Argentina had in 2011 a coefficient of 43.6 points being placed as number 45 as most unequal country out of 174 measured countries in the world ranking, and faraway of the most equal countries, like the Nordic countries with coefficients between 25 to 28 points. Additionally, Argentina presents high levels of poverty. According to some measures conducted by private agencies, the poverty rate by the end of 2014 was around 25%, and the indigence rate around 10% of the population.

Now, having in mind the mentioned above, and assuming that the ES can contribute to reduce poverty and inequality, the purpose of this thesis is to inquire into the role of the Argentinean ES, as an entity envisioned to and capable of encouraging social mobility, by examining its structure and functioning as well as individuals' own motivation in relation to achieving an education.

## 1.2.Problem Formulation

It is difficult to distinguish whether poverty engenders inequality, or it goes the other way around. However, both of them can exercise an indirect impact (through the ES) on social mobility, which on the contrary, can exercise a direct influence on the first ones. Thus, the degree of social mobility will depend on the outcome of the ES resulting in either mobility or stagnation and even perpetuation of individuals in the different social strata. Following this argument, the ES can (in theory) contribute to reduce inequality and poverty on a long-term perspective subjected to the fact that they also affect the input poured into the ES.

Then, based on the claim that the role of the Argentinean ES as an entity envisioned to and capable of offering free access to education for all the country's inhabitants, despite socioeconomic differences, in all the levels (initial, primary, secondary and tertiary) has been to encourage social mobility; and considering the levels of inequality and poverty observed in the country, it is relevant to pose the following research question:

**❖ *To which extent does the educational system encourage or hinder social mobility in Argentina?***

In order to answer the problem statement raised in this thesis, the following sub-research questions are considered:

- *Considering that education is free for everyone, that the completion of the primary level is very high, the completion of secondary level is moderately high, and that the enrolment rate at the tertiary level is also relatively high, why is its attainment so low?*
- *Which considerations do people take into account when considering whether they will continue studying or not, and which role plays their background in these considerations?*

These sub-research questions are linked together supporting the objective of the problem statement in revealing the influence of the ES upon social mobility.

In order to conduct this research, the theoretical framework is constituted by Bourdieu's *Theory of Social Reproduction* emphasizing on the concepts of *habitus*, *field*, and his different *capitals*.

### **1.3.Aim of the Thesis**

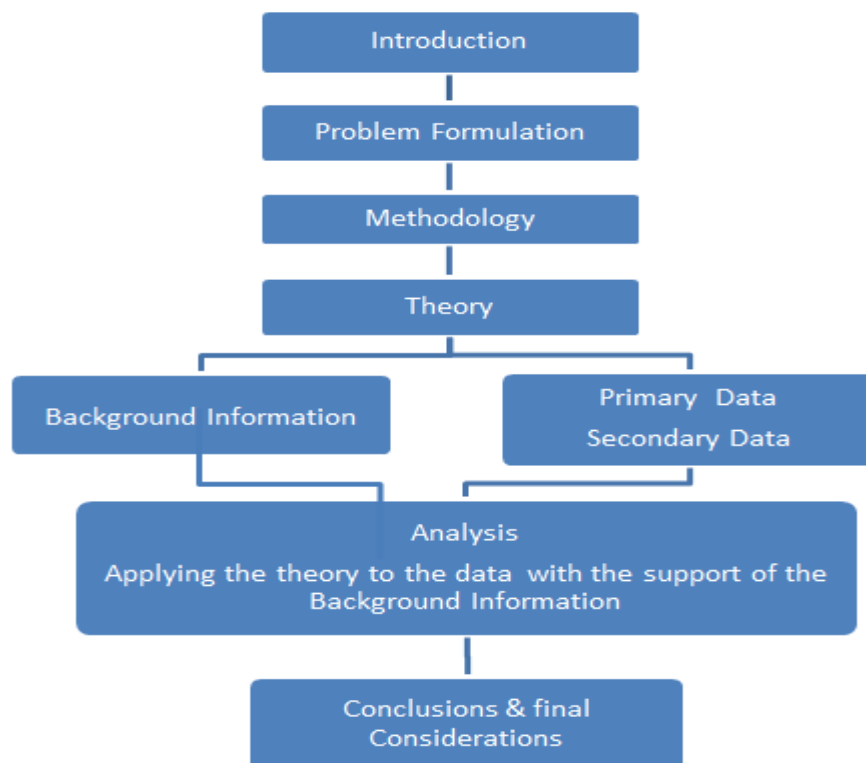
The aim of this thesis, as briefly mentioned in the introduction, is to make an inquiry into the role of the Argentinean ES, whose output founds the society, which at the same time fosters the input that nurtures the ES. Considering that education, as a means to facilitate social mobility, is hypothetically thought to contribute in reducing inequality and poverty, this thesis will try to reveal whether this is the case in Argentina, considering the high levels of inequality and poverty, by examining the structure and functioning of the ES as well as individuals' own opinion and motivation in relation to attending to an educational institution in order to attain a higher education.

## 2. Section 2- Methodological Approach

In this section, the reader will find all the methodological considerations I have concerned about. From the motives to choose this specific topic to the limitations I have faced along with the selection of a proper research design and methods in order to carry out the investigation effectively. Furthermore, the selection of a suitable theoretical framework and the explanation of key concepts in order to avoid misunderstandings, as well as perhaps the most critical one of picking the sources.

### 2.1. Structure of the Project

The project is structured in the following way: after the introduction and problem formulation with its hypothesis and research question already presented, the methodological approach and the theory section, where the different considerations and research methods as well as the applied theories will be presented and explained. Afterwards, background information will be provided in order to familiarize the reader with the context, followed by the analysis of the primary and secondary data. Finally, the reader will arrive to the conclusions and final considerations.



## 2.2.Choice of Topic

I will not deny that my personal background has had a great influence in choosing this topic. I have always been interested in topics like social inequality and poverty, and I have wondered about how can be possible that such issues have been a part of the Argentinean reality since I can remember, considering the richness of the country. But most of all, I have always been concerned about what can be done in order to solve these issues. By looking at some of the so-called developed countries, measured by economic performance, one thing that becomes peculiar to me is the fact that not all of the top-placed countries are endowed in the same way as Argentina does, at least in terms of natural features. However, most of them have one thing in common; they are also placed at the top of the Human Capital Index (HCI). Therefore, I must assume that the investment and development of human capital in these countries must be a crucial explanatory factor for their performance. That is why education as a means to improve social mobility with the purpose of reducing poverty and inequality became the topic of this thesis.

## 2.3.Research Design

As I already have mentioned in the previous chapter the topic of this thesis, is how social mobility can be improved through education and consequently contribute to reduce poverty and inequality. In order to select a proper research design for this investigation, the work of Alan Bryman (2012) has been used as guideline. The chosen design for this thesis is the *Case Study* design. The case in this occasion is a group of 11 persons in the age between 22 and 39 living in a small town called San Cayetano (8.000 inhabitants) in the middle of an agrarian region of the pampas in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Moreover, it is a case of people that in spite of having the possibility to continue studying at the tertiary level chose not to do that and ended working as unskilled workers in their environment of origin. The reason for choosing this town, besides of being my hometown, is because it is located relatively far away from university cities (See Appendix A), which implies, for those interested in continue studying, that they have to move from their family homes, as well as huge economic efforts. Furthermore, since the economic activity of the town turns around the agricultural activity, the university culture is not common, and the demand of very high-educated people is not significant, besides the basic demand of a small society as doctors, dentists, lawyers, etc.

I will analyze the reasons that have led them to make the decisions they have made regarding tertiary level education. This case study has a character of *critical* and *representative* case or as Bryman prefers to call it to avoid confusion, *exemplifying case* (Bryman 2012), since independently of confirming or rejecting the hypothesis, the result obtained could be an illustration of similar cases in the rest of the country as long as the social environment, the geographic, cultural and the socioeconomic circumstances among other factors are also comparable to the chosen one. Moreover, this thesis is characterized by *the exploratory*, *the descriptive*, and *the explanatory* research methods at different stages and degree of involvement. However, the two most visible in this paper are the descriptive and the explanatory, as the exploratory has mainly been part of previous research, in the beginning of the process, about the connection between social mobility and the ES.

The reason for looking at the topic from this angle is that the research done about social mobility in Argentina until now focuses on factors like income inequality, fertility rate (especially among poor people) investment in human capital (HC) and educational level. Notwithstanding, even though they touch issues like HC and education, the research done takes these factors as merely independent variables in relation to the degree of social mobility in society. However, no critical question is raised to whether the ES is encouraging or hindering social mobility. It seems to be taken for granted just because the ES provides education, and education is understood as a means to achieve social mobility. Therefore, those who do not attain an education are responsible for their own choice and consequently their fate. But then again, no critical query is raised to the role that the ES plays in encouraging or hindering social mobility.

## 2.4.Methods

In order to answer the problem formulation in an appropriate manner, this thesis includes both quantitative and qualitative data making the research strategy based on combined methods. While the quantitative data provides qualified information about socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors of the country and the ES like levels of inequality, poverty, number of students, etc. that can be used to compare with other countries or other periods, the qualitative data provides qualified information about the reasons and considerations behind the interviewees' decision toward tertiary education. The quantitative data is based on information and statistics that mainly

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builds up the chapters about the background of the country, history of education, as well as a part of the analysis in Section 4. The qualitative data is based on the data collected through the interviews conducted and is presented and analyzed also in the Section 4 of this thesis. The emphasis is placed on the qualitative data, since the information gathered through the interviews highlights personal aspects of the individuals' motivations, which are not revealed by statistics. Regarding the statistics included in this thesis, it is important to mention that in some cases the statistical figures about a specific subject may differ depending on the source. However, it is also essential that the reader remember that the different statistical figures have not been mixed and compared to each other but have been used separately to highlight different aspects of the matter at hand.

Furthermore, I have chosen to implement a deductive approach starting from Pierre Bourdieu's *Theory of Social Reproduction* and its concepts of *habitus*, *field*, and different kind of *capitals*, which applied to the analysis of the data provided by the interviewed persons, and the secondary data gathered through other sources, will confirm or reject the hypothesis raised in the problem formulation. Bourdieu's theory stresses on the relevance attributed to education and the ES in relation to social reproduction. Moreover, in order to be able to analyze both social structures, as it is the ES of Argentina on one side, and individuals' behavior toward education on the other side; I have chosen to apply a combination of two contrasting epistemological positions that each reflects the macro and micro characteristics of the topic. For the first mentioned, I have chosen *positivism*, which, connected to the quantitative data has an objective approach and is congruent with the deductive approach, since one of its principles is that "theory has the purpose to generate hypothesis that can be tested and allows thereby explanations of laws to be assessed" (Bryman 2012). For the second mentioned, I have chosen *interpretivism*, which, associated with the qualitative data has a subjective approach, and seems more suitable to analyze the data obtained from the people I have interviewed. This is further explained later when the theoretical choice (item 2.6) is presented and in the theory section (Section 3).

In order to collect data for this investigation I followed the work of Bryman (2012) as guideline. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews, giving then the interviewee the possibility to tell openly about its experience with the secondary school and the reasons for its decision; either the

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person chose to remain in town or chose to continue studying but abandoned later. As I already mentioned, by using semi-structured interviews I gave the participants the possibility to speak from the heart, instead of asking them close-ended questions. However, I had in my head a clear agenda about which information I wanted to obtain from them. Based on an interview guide I had prepared in advance, I started asking them to tell me about their life after finishing the secondary school. Then the conversation began. If they did not mention it by themselves, I led the conversation in a specific direction by asking questions about their dreams/expectations to the future; how was to go to school, if it made sense; what did their parents expect from them; parents' and grandparents' educational and working background; their opinion about whether education is an end or a means; the crucial factor that determined their decision regarding continuing studies or not, etc. I selected the participants after the following criteria:

- have finished the secondary school
- have not attained a tertiary level education
- belong to middle class

The reason for these criteria was that (despite secondary school has been mandatory in Argentina since 2006) it has existed an unwritten rule about the compulsory nature of the secondary level, which means that many young people (in general, but with exceptions) went to school because their parents told them to do that, regardless of their will. Therefore, it is first at the tertiary level where people's own will and motivation toward education can be observed. The reason for looking after people who did not attain a tertiary level education was to find the motives that led them to dismiss that possibility, considering, as already mentioned, the gratuity of education in the country. The last criterion is related to the second one in the sense that, if the lack of economic resources was not the reason for not continuing studying, then other causes may have been present.

## 2.5.Sources

The sources used to this thesis are secondary data in a major degree and primary data in a minor degree. The secondary data will be used on the macro level of the thesis in order to build up the contextual background for this thesis as well as to support the analysis of the ES and social

mobility, whereas the primary data will be use on the micro level of this thesis to analyze the individual's decision toward tertiary education.

The primary data used in the thesis is based on 11 interviews I conducted in San Cayetano, Buenos Aires, Argentina. I interviewed 11 persons, who had finished the secondary school and afterwards, either chose to remain in town instead of continuing studying on a tertiary level, or actually chose to continue but abandoned the study after short time and returned to San Cayetano. The information provided by these 11 persons is based on their own opinion, experience concerning the ES and education, as well as the reasons that motivated their choice. The data gathered through the interviews will be provided and attached to the paper in a pen drive.

The secondary data is mainly based on books, academic articles, and reports. Most of the books I have chosen as source to this thesis have a character of academic research and therefore are consider as valid source since they are clean of subjective opinions. However, some of them have not the same character and therefore it is possible that the authors have had another agenda reducing then the neutrality of the book's content. Regarding academic journals, they are reviewed by other researches before publication and therefore are consider being reliable. This is not the case of articles from newspapers, which are intended for sale and therefore have a specific aim in the public debate. This is of particular relevance in the Argentinean context because the two major national newspapers (La Nación and Clarín) are openly in opposition to the current government; especially the second mentioned. However, the reason for why I have chosen to include them as sources of information is that they provide statistical material, which is not possible to find elsewhere, also considering the current situation regarding the national agency of statistics (INDEC). The INDEC has been intervened by the government, which means that the data provided by that organism differs very much compared to other sources. Therefore, considering the situation, I find it relevant to present a wide spectrum of sources instead of be arbitrary and choose some of them while excluding others. Moreover, material from official websites as well as online databases is also included.

## 2.6.Theoretical Choice

The theoretical framework for this thesis is founded in the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's *Theory of Social Reproduction* and its main concept of *habitus*, *field* and different *capitals* because I consider they offer an explanatory basis in order to understand and determine the reasons that an individual may have when deciding whether to study or not. The extraordinary emphasis laid on education and the role of the ES in his theory will contribute to the analytical purpose of this thesis. However, I am aware of the criticism that this theory has been subjected to due to its universalistic approach as well as its old-fashioned character. Notwithstanding, I consider that the theory provides the tools to analyze all the elements that this thesis has the purpose of inspect.

Furthermore, the combination and interaction of *habitus* and *field* tries to unify the antagonistic subjective and objective approaches, which each of them focus on the agency and the structure respectively. This is consistent with the methodology I have chosen combining positivism and interpretivism as mentioned in Methods Chapter (item 2.4) in order to be able to analyze the social structures, as it is the ES of Argentina, on one side, and individuals' behavior toward education on the other side.

While *habitus* applies to the agent's capacity to act and therefore interpretivism appears more appropriate to analyze its agency, *field* seems more suitable to analyze the social structures with which the agent and its agency interact due to its objective approach. Regarding the different concepts of capital, they are related to both *habitus* and *field* exercising a determinant impact. Given that the individual and the social structures are in constant interaction influencing each other, I find it reasonable to conduct the analysis following this methodology within the mentioned theoretical framework.

## 2.7.Limitations and Scope

The limitations that have framed this research do not follow a sequence of priority. However, the first ones I want to mention are geography and time/distance. Geography has been a relevant limitation to consider due to the vast territory over which the Argentine Republic spreads. In order to increase the level of representation (the exemplifying case, as mentioned in item 2.3) as well as the reliability, the research and the interviews should have been conducted in different places

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around the country. However, as explained above, the geography combined with the time frame and the distance to the target group, considering that I live in Denmark, did not allow me to conduct a more extensive field research as I wished.

Another limitation is the combination of the above mentioned with the chosen research design. It is difficult to make valid concluding generalizations when the case study is based on one single geographical place. It is difficult to argue that the result obtained from one single case can apply to the whole country. However, as I mentioned in the chapter about Research Design (item 2.3), the result obtained could provide an indication of the countrywide circumstances as long as the social environment, the geographic, cultural and the socioeconomic circumstances among other factors are also comparable to the chosen place.

In order to make clear where the focus of this thesis is placed on, the investigation is delimited to explore, describe, and explain the causes that determine why an individual chooses to study further or not. The delimitation concerns also the established structured under which the Argentinean ES is built on and functions. By looking at these two aspects, the investigation should provide an answer to the stated research question, clarifying whether the ES is able to inspire people, who apparently do not have predisposition to get a higher education, or an eventual reluctant predisposition toward education is maintained, affecting then the degree of social mobility. Therefore, the focus of this project is not placed on external elements as for example macroeconomic factors that might affect social mobility, despite I recognize that they may influence to some extent, but in the contrary on internal ones, as explained above. However, the fact that the aim of this thesis, is not to analyze macroeconomic factors in details, does not mean that the relevance they have on social mobility will be completely ignored.

## 2.8. Definition of Key Concepts

The purpose and the reasons for defining key concepts is to provide the reader a clearer understanding about how I comprehend and implement these concepts throughout the thesis in order to avoid misinterpretations. Some of the concepts are defined according official definitions, while others are defined by my own interpretation or application during the writing process.

**Social mobility** is, according to Encyclopædia Britannica, “the movement of individuals, families, or

groups through a system of social hierarchy or stratification” (Encyclopædia Britannica 2015). The mobility can be *horizontal* when one changes occupation but remains in the same social strata or *vertical* when the change implies a movement to other social strata. The later one can furthermore be categorized as *upward* or *downward* mobility. Moreover, social mobility can occur *intragenerational*, that means when the changes happen within a person’s lifetime, or *intergenerational*, when the changes occur from one generation to another.

For the purpose of this thesis, when I mention social mobility in this paper, I will always be referring to vertical, upward, intergenerational mobility unless otherwise is stated. This is due to the purpose of the thesis, which focuses on education as a means to achieve upward mobility, and since it normally occurs in a long-term perspective, the intergenerational side is the most relevant.

**Social inequality** is the unevenly distribution of resources in a given society. It can refer to the uneven distribution of income, wealth, and material goods, which is defined as *inequality of conditions*; or it can refer to the unequal access to education, health, etc., which is denominated as *inequality of opportunities* (About.com 2015).

Both aspects of this definition fit well within the framework of this thesis and will be implemented referring to it as one concept, and distinction between the two mentioned aspects will be made only if needed in order to emphasize in a certain context. Moreover, for the purpose of simplification, it will be referred just as *inequality*, unless a clarification of a specific inequality is necessary in a certain context.

**Poverty** is in general the scarcity or the lack of a certain amount of material possessions or money (Merriam-Webster 2015). However, the term is difficult to define precisely due to its multifaceted aspect, since it includes economic, social, and political elements. Yet the concept can be categorized or referred to in many ways like poverty, absolute poverty/extreme poverty also called indigence and relative poverty. While relative poverty is a measure of the difference in income among individuals or groups in a society without suffering any scarcity or lack, poverty and indigence are on the opposite side.

In order to keep it simple and avoid confusion using similar terms, I am only going to refer to

poverty and indigence. Moreover, these two terms have to be contextualized.

The difference between these two concepts in the Argentinean context are defined according to the methodology and definitions implemented by INDEC. The *Poverty line* is defined by the economic capability that a family group through its income can cover what is called *Canasta Básica Total (CBT)*[*Basic Total Basket*], which includes not only food but also other services or goods like clothes, transport, education, health, etc. in other words, it covers what has been determined as the human basic needs. Whereas *Canasta Básica Alimentaria (CBA)* [Basic Food Basket] defines the *indigence line* at the point where a family only can purchase food but not all non-food products (INDEC 2014a).

**Education** according to the Marriam-Webster online database, there are three definitions of the term education:

- a. The action or process of educating or being educated.
- b. The knowledge and development resulting from an educational process.
- c. The field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools.

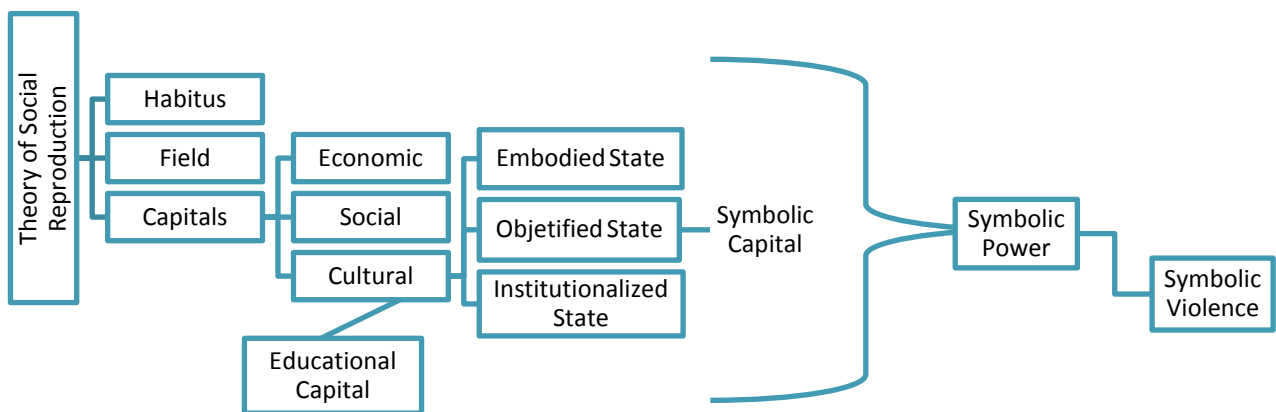
All the three definitions are going to be applied in this thesis depending on the context the term education is referred to.

**Educational system (ES)**, when referring to this term, I will not (unless it is necessary) be referring particularly to the physical structure implemented in Argentina, but at the content, the principles, and purpose of the Argentinean educational system as a whole.

### 3. Section 3 – Theoretical Frame

This section contains the chosen theory for the purpose of this thesis. Before introducing and explaining the concepts on which the theory of social reproduction is built, a conceptual synthesis of the sequence they follow is visualized (Figure 1). The order of presentation in the text is not strictly followed as it is illustrated in the synthesis. It is important to keep in mind that the emphasis of the theoretical framework lays on the three main concepts of *habitus*, *field* and *capitals*, as well as *symbolic violence*, and the inclusion and explanation of the other elements has the aim of furthering the understanding of the main concepts.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Synthesis of the Theory.**



#### 3.1.Introduction

Inequality and poverty, with their ups and downs periods during the passage of the time, have been a part of the Argentinean society for a long time. Inequality and poverty have been some harmful issues Argentina has been forced to face in spite of the country's natural and human endowments.

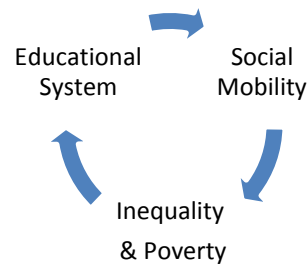
Notwithstanding, and despite the fact that a moderate portion of inequality can be argued to be



an encouraging factor in order to create a dynamic society in socioeconomic terms, inequality can turn into a counter-productive element when approaching high levels. More or less the same can be said about poverty. However, in the case of poverty, it is more delicate because it implies the deprivation of basic human needs; regardless of whether we are talking about just poverty or indigence; whereas inequality does not explicitly mean any deprivation, but just an uneven distribution of resources (economic, social or natural) between individuals or groups in a society.

Nevertheless, inequality and poverty are often related and it is difficult to distinguish which one engenders the other. Furthermore, in terms of measurement value, both inequality and poverty only offer a static picture of a particular point in time, but does not reflect whether people is moving up or down, neither if the same people is occupying the same place in the different socioeconomic strata over time. Therefore, the measurement of social mobility seems to be more appropriate because it provides a different observation of the problematic related to inequality and poverty, namely which possibilities/opportunities people have in order to improve their situation.

Since social mobility is commonly measured on the basis of economic mobility, which is reflected in changes in income and wealth; and given that such changes are often related to an increase in the accumulation of human capital, the later mentioned becomes a relevant concept in relation to inequality and poverty. Furthermore, since in a modern economy, as a consequence of the division of labor, the ES plays an enormous role as the formal way of acquiring human capital, then the ES can exercise a vast impact on social mobility, and consequently can affect the levels of inequality and poverty, which at the same time determine the quality of the input that the ES receives from society. This is consistent with Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, which emphasizes on the crucial role of the ES in relation to social mobility.

**Figure 2: The cycle of correlative influence**

**Source:** own elaboration.

Then, without ignoring that external political, economic or social factors may play an important role in this cycle (Figure 2) affecting the different elements that composes it, the ES has a determinant role in it, depending on whether its structure and functioning encourage social mobility or not. Following this reasoning, poverty and inequality can be reduced by increasing social mobility, and the increase of social mobility will depend on the outcome of the ES, which according to Bourdieu can contribute to produce a new social order or simply reproduce the existing one.

Therefore, and continuing the line of investigation established for this thesis, it is relevant to look at the internal elements of both the individuals and the ES that determine the outcome from a theoretical perspective. As earlier mentioned in the Methodological Section under the item 2.6, and taking into account that the individual and the social structures are in constant interaction influencing each other, the theoretical framework is built upon Bourdieu's *theory of social reproduction* and its concepts of *habitus*, *field*, *capitals*, and *symbolic violence*. These theories based on and developed during his extensive sociological field research provide a critical perspective to this thesis considering that one of his works based on an enquiry to the French Educational System<sup>1</sup> has served as inspiration to my project during the exploring process.

### 3.1.1. The concept of Habitus

Bourdieu defines the concept of habitus as following: “... *systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively*

<sup>1</sup> La Reproduction (1970). P. Bourdieu & JC. Passeron.

*adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them*" (Bourdieu 1990 p.53). In other words, my own words, habitus is the embodiment of a set of dispositions like habit, skills, thoughts, beliefs, actions, capacities, taste, values, etc., which shape an individual's character and its predisposition toward society/life. According to Bourdieu, habitus is created through a social process rather than individual or even being an innate feature. Therefore, he refers to preexisting organized structures with the aim of shaping future structures, which causes reproduction of social stratification according to Bourdieu. This is related to earlier concepts of socialization. In addition, it is during this process of creation and development of the habitus that the field in which the agent participates, and the capitals it possesses exercise their influence (further explanation of these concepts comes later). Furthermore, since the habitus is created and developed through a process, it can never be static. That means that the habitus can shift over time according to what the agent is exposed to and influenced by. For example, education, socioeconomic conditions, religion, etc. Another relevant aspect of the creation of habitus is that it takes place as an unconscious process for the agent. This favors the unquestionability to the structured structuring structures in a society or even more in a specific field.

### 3.1.2. The concept of Field

To Bourdieu, the concept of field means a social or institutional space with its own structured structuring structures, or in more simple words, own rules (Bourdieu 2012). In this field, the agents' agency can be expressed, produced, and reproduced and they compete for the distribution of the different capitals. The field can be based on different facets, as they can be education, religion, politics, arts, economics, culture, ethnicity, etc. According to Bourdieu, the fields can overlap each other; however, he argues that they still are relatively autonomous from each other. The position that an agent occupies within a specific field will depend on that field's rules, the agent's habitus and the capitals that the agent possesses. Since the agents compete in order to achieve a certain position, the accomplishment of that purpose will depend on their practice, which according to Bourdieu's formula can be express as following:

*practice = [(habitus)(capital)] + field.*

### 3.1.3. Different concepts of Capital

Normally, when we talk about capital, we tend to think only about economic assets. However, already in the 1960s Bourdieu started to develop other concepts of capital when he and Passeron were doing an educational research, exploring the relation between the agency and the social structures of a group of college students<sup>2</sup>.

Later, Bourdieu wrote an essay, where he explained clearly the distinction between *economic*, *cultural* and *social capital* (Bourdieu 1986).

The first, the economic capital, is, as already mentioned, all the material or abstract assets that can be converted directly into money. This form of capital has not been altered from its traditional notion in Bourdieu's distinction of capitals; therefore, I do not consider it necessary to present the concept in further details.

The second, the cultural capital is the collection of symbolic elements an agent has such as skills, manners, language, clothing, material belongings, etc. The cultural capital is partially inherited and is divided in three forms:

a. *The embodied state*. It is acquired first of all at home, later at school and otherwise throughout the whole life. It is the accumulation of knowledge, manners, language, values, etc. provided by the family, the school, and the society. It is a process of inculcation and assimilation that demands time, effort, and sacrifice in order to achieve improvement. Since it is embodied, it cannot be transferred from one to another as economic capital does; only as a competence, the agent has at its disposal. Moreover, the assimilation of this embodied capital forms the habitus.

b. *The objectified state*. In this form the capital has a more tangible character than in the previous explained where the character was more abstract. However, what it is relevant here is the attributed value to a specific object, which reflects a symbolic status, and not its economic market value. Bourdieu's example is a collection of paintings. It has a value as cultural capital in the sense that it symbolizes something, connecting the owner with that symbolic value. The legal ownership can be transferred to another agent, but that does not mean necessarily that the new owner will deposit the same symbolic value to the object acquired. Especially if the new owner comes from a different field and embodies a different habitus.

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<sup>2</sup> The results of that research founded the basis of the book "*Les Héritiers: les étudiants et la culture*" published in 1964.

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c. *The institutionalized state.* This form of cultural capital refers to the academic qualifications, the credentials provided by a formal ES objectivizing the embodiment of the capital acquired, and questioning the autodidactic acquisition of capital. By disembodiment of the capital from the agent, the educational institutions gain self-imposed recognition, as being the only organism capable of providing competences. This form of capital is also characterized by symbolism, since the possession of it, provides a state of competence and authority to the agent bearing the capital. Through its objectification, the cultural capital embodied in one agent can be compared to that of another agent, making the exchange of agents possible. In addition, it makes also possible the conversion of the cultural capital in economic capital by assessing a monetary value to the academic capital.

The third, the social capital, is the ensemble of social networks that the agent establishes across the fields and allow cooperation among the members. It can be the family, the school, a group, etc. The social capital functions as a multiplier effect on economic and cultural capital. The reproduction of social capital depends on a constant process of socialization. Even though the concept can be seen as a positive feature for the agent, Bourdieu sees it as an instrument to reproduce inequality across the generations, since the upper classes can use their influence through their networks to maintain the status quo.

To round off this chapter about the different concepts of capital, it is important to mention that all types of capital derive from economic capital through a process of transformation that demands time and presupposes the possession of economic capital in advance. This means that in order to increase one's social capital, the agent needs to invest time in nurturing its network. Or in order to increase the level of cultural capital, the agent needs to cultivate it by spending time on it. However, to be able to do that, the agent needs to have sufficient economic capital to purchase the time of another person in form of services in order to liberate its own time from other obligations.

Some conceptual derivations of these different types of capitals are e.g. *educational capital*, *symbolic capital*, *symbolic power*, and *symbolic violence*, which I briefly will explain.

Educational capital refers to the product obtained by the ES (academic certification) through the

conversion of cultural capital transferred by the family and the school to the agent. Here, the field in which the transfer of domestic cultural capital as well as the habitus have taken place, plays a relevant role, especially taking into consideration that the school tends to legitimize the cultural capital of the dominant class as the valid one, favoring its domination over the rest.

Symbolic capital refers to the recognition, prestige and power an agent enjoys thanks to its achievements. The symbolic capital has as prerequisite the attainment of the other types of capital. Symbolic capital is related to the concept of symbolic power, since the first paves the way for the second. Symbolic power is a soft, unconscious way of cultural and social domination exercised by the dominant class with the consent of the dominated class, which in exchange demand social values such as democratic participation. Finally, symbolic violence is more or less a synonym of symbolic power. However, the term is used in relation to more tangible examples, where social institutions exercise their power upon the agents; a power, which is unconsciously perceived as fair and impartial. According to Bourdieu, a clear example of symbolic violence is the ES with its structured structuring structures.

### 3.2.Theoretical Reflection

Perhaps the reader will find a little bit confusing the fact that I have chosen to implement a combination of two antagonistic analytical methods as positivism and interpretivism. However, I find it logical and in coherence with Bourdieu's idea about the interaction between habitus and field in relation to the interaction between the agent and its agency, and the social structures as they are the individual's behavior toward education and the Argentinean ES respectively.

This inseparably interaction between the habitus and the field is well illustrated in the metaphoric example Bourdieu gives about the "*feel for the game*" (feel = habitus; game = field), where a player has an embodied and unconscious practical sense for knowing when to do what it has to do. With this metaphor, Bourdieu emphasized the importance of an embedded practical logic as opposed to rational choices; an opposition, which is founded in the notion that people are born into the game and therefore they are not aware of the game, which Bourdieu refers to as *illusio* (Bourdieu 1990).

In relation to the case to be analyzed, the main concepts presented above provide a solid

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analytical foundation, where the concept of habitus can highlight the predisposition of the agent toward education depending on the capitals it possesses and the field in which it has developed the habitus and acquired the capitals. Furthermore, starting from the concepts of capital and ending in the concept of symbolic violence, the last mentioned becomes relevant in order to analyze the structure and functioning of a specific field as it is the Argentinean ES. In conclusion, the theory of social reproduction can provide an explanation in order to reveal to which extent the Argentinean ES is able to modify the habitus of individuals coming from a field devoid of the necessary resources to develop a habitus like the one of individuals from a field provided with a higher level of capitals. Alternatively, it can explain to which extent it is only reproducing the culture of the dominant class hindering then social mobility.



## 4. Section 4 – Analysis

This section is divided in three main chapters. The first is about background information regarding the country and education. The second is the analysis of the secondary data. And the third is the analysis of the data gathered through the interviews.

### 4.1.Contextual Background

This chapter consists of historical and contemporary facts about the country, and the history of education in Argentina, which are relevant in order to have a broader understanding of the circumstances of the context in which the subject of this thesis is observed.

#### 4.1.1. General Introduction to the Country

Argentina, according to its Constitution, is a federal constitutional republic with a representative democracy (Senado 2013), consisting of 23 provinces and one autonomous district housing the capital of the country, Buenos Aires.

As a following consequence of the May Revolution in 1810, Argentina declared its independence from the Spanish Empire in 1816 (Galasso 2011). However, the newborn nation did not achieve political stability until 1861, where the result of a battle put an end to confronting ideologies and political leaders striving for different purposes. The end of the conflict led to the reunification of the national territory and the consolidation of a national representative republican and federal government, as it had been established by the Constitution sanctioned in 1853 (Galasso 2011).

Argentina, based on an agro-exporter model founded on its comparative advantage that began approximately in 1850/60 and went to 1930, became very fast one of the wealthiest nation in the world reaching a 7<sup>th</sup> place in 1908 (Bolt & Van Zanden 2013). However, the country failed in managing this wealth in order to encourage the conversion process from the agro-exporter model into an industrial model, which partially can explain why Argentina is categorized as a developing country (Galasso 2011). Yet this categorization is disputable, as stated in an article from The Economist: *“Argentina is thus not a ‘developing country’. Uniquely, it achieved development and then it lost it again”* (The Economist 2004). Furthermore, one could discuss what development is, but that kind of ideological discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The consequences of the Great Depression started in 1929 stretched also to Argentina that having an economy based on an agro-exporter model, and tied mainly to the United Kingdom (UK), was forced to change to a model of industrialization based on import substitution (ISI). The ISI model stretched first from 1945 to 1955<sup>3</sup> and later from 1958 to 1972, being the last period characterized by a developmentalistic approach (Galasso 2011). Notwithstanding, Argentina maintained to some extent the agro-exporter model by signing a treaty in 1933 with the UK (the Roca-Runciman Pact) guaranteeing mutual trade benefits, such as favoring Argentinean export of beef and grain to the UK, and reducing import tariff to British products.

Besides the economic consequences generated by the Great Depression, the country experienced also political consequences, like the first *coup d'état* in 1930, marking the beginning of a long period of democratic instability until 1983. However, there are different opinions about when this political and economic decline started. Some argue that the reason was the inability of the government to industrialize and diversify the economy faster as the country became more populated already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to mass immigration. For the liberals the reason was the interventionist policies implemented during the governments of Perón (1946-1955). And for the leftist the reason was the neoliberal policies introduced during the last dictatorship (1976-1983). In addition, another aspect that influenced Argentina's decline was the fact that after the Second World War the UK shrank its economic and political domination and transferred the hegemonic power to the United States (US), losing then Argentina its strategic trading partner (The Economist 2004).

With an economy based on the ISI model and oriented to the internal market, as well as the emergence of the welfare state, Argentina faced a post-war period of economic prosperity promoting developmental industrial policies until a political and social turmoil led to the *coup d'état* of 1976. Once in power, the military government started to implement neoliberal economic policies dictated by the Washington Consensus, initiating then a deindustrialization process and the dismantling of the welfare state, giving way to the subsidiary state from 1976 to 2001. The following civil governments, especially during the 1990s, also implemented these economic policies until the socioeconomic and political meltdown of 2001 (Galasso 2011).

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<sup>3</sup> This period was also called Justicialista, since Perón's party, the Justicialista Party was in power.

A new shift turning back to the ISI model combined with a boost of neo-keynesian policies allowed the country to recover from the collapse (Galasso 2011). However, despite the fast recovery of the economic activity boosted by the high prices of international commodities, poverty and inequality are still unsolved issues. Even though the government managed to reduce the extremely high level of people living under the poverty line reached just after the crisis of 2001 (54%), a high number of people is still living in poverty in spite of the disparity between the controversial official statistics (about 5% in 2012) and the private ones (about 25% in 2012) (Valente 2013).

In demographic terms, Argentina was built up on the basis of mass immigration, which contributed to doubling its total population three times in less than 80 years; the first time during the period 1869-1895, the second during 1895-1914 and the third during 1914-1947, going from around 2 million inhabitants in 1869 to almost 16 million in 1947. The foreign-born population reached its highest proportion in relation to the total population in 1914, accounting for almost 30%; being the Italians, Spaniards (as independent groups) and the Rest of Europe the three main groups of origin accounting in equal proportions for about 75% of the total foreign-born population in Argentina (Lattes 1975). The Argentinean population has always been categorized as well educated. The Law 1420, guarantying access to education, as well as university reforms in the beginning and the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century paid to the early democratization of the education contributing then to the intellectual development of the country, placing Argentina among countries categorized as having a very high degree of human development (UNDP 2014).

### **Summary.**

The history reflects very well the changeable nature of Argentina. From the political instability just after independence to the consolidation of the national state and prosperity based on the agro-exporter model around the turn of century attracting huge masses of immigrants. Then, the decay after the Great Depression alongside the beginning of political instability again, and the turn to the ISI model followed by the establishment of a welfare state. And later, the introduction of neoliberal policies and the subsidiary state, to end with the restoration of a new edition of the ISI model after the meltdown of 2001.

#### 4.1.2. History of Education in Argentina

Despite the fact that the history of education in what today is Argentina can be tracked back to the colonial era, where the first university was founded in 1613 (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba), or even before (Puiggrós 2008), the emphasis of this chapter is placed on the building and development process of the Argentinean ES after the declaration of independence. Notwithstanding, I will start presenting a brief historical chronological review.

With the arrival of Spanish conquerors during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the education was characterized by the evangelical pedagogy in order to convert the aborigines into the Catholicism. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the emergence of the *Enlightenment*, the education turned away from the traditionalistic approach imparted by the Catholic Church, adopting then a more encyclopedic and lay character (also called *the positivist stream*). In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the lack of teachers, the Lancasterian system was implemented (Ramallo 1999).

After the declaration of independence, and under the period of construction of national unity, the education was a victim of the political disagreement about the ideal of the *Argentinean Man*. While a fraction, influenced by the ideas of Rousseau (*The Social Contract*), applied a more secular and encyclopedic approach at the beginning emphasizing on a utilitarian education thought to develop the industry, the other fraction restituted the traditional approach based on religious notions later on. However, after achieving political stability in 1861, the encyclopedic and laical approach was re-established, reflecting the liberal and mercantile conception of the *Argentinean Man* outlined by the Constitution of 1853. Furthermore, besides the re-adopted utilitarian approach, the new pedagogical streams from France and the US, which emphasized on the democratic formation of the citizen based on its rights and obligations, were introduced (Ramallo 1999).

Having laid the foundations for the liberal and mercantile model, the law 1420 about common education was passed guaranteeing then education to all the inhabitants of the country. The approval of this law meant a significant reduction of analphabetism, going from 71% in 1869 to 34.1% in 1914. At the same time, the first wave of immigrants began to arrive, which implied that the education got a character of *patriotic education* disregarding religious formation, with the purpose of avoiding fragmentation in the cosmopolitan society stimulating a coercive creation of a

national identity through the ES. The reasons behind this policy were not only the mass immigration, but also a response to counterinfluence the leftist revolutionaries and Spanish anarchists, who arrived to the country. Furthermore, the ideological confrontations between the Argentinean Catholic Church and the government as a consequence of the laicism established by the law 1420, the utilitarian approach adopted earlier, and the patriotic approach lacking religious content, ended with the interruption of the relations between Argentina and the Holy See during 1884-1900 (Ramallo 1999).

At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the debate was already concerned about reforming the ES. The discussion was mainly centered on the role and the purpose of the secondary school within the ES as well as in relation to the society. Questions about whether the secondary education was a complement to the primary or a preparation to higher education, as well as a criticism to the encyclopedic character instead of considering the local socioeconomic context, were some of the inquiries raised at that moment. Several projects of reform were outlined and presented in the Congress, however no one was approved, and the secondary school remained untouched (Ramallo 1999).

On the contrary, in 1885 the first law regarding the universities was approved (Avellaneda's Law), guaranteeing their autonomy, shared governance between professors and students, etc. At that moment, there were only two universities in Argentina, University of Córdoba (1613), and University of Buenos Aires (1821). However, this law only served as foundation for further reforms, since in practice, the law was not enforced and the universities continued with the same structure and procedure, which resulted in the political and cultural movements initiated in Córdoba in 1917 by students, provoking a crisis of the university system that paved the way for the *University Reform of 1918*. This happened in the light of a socio-political context where the *Sáenz Peña Law* had been approved 1912, establishing the universal, secret, and compulsory suffrage. At first instance only for males, later in 1947 extended to females. The law was an expression of civil and political rights of a democratic liberal society, contrary to how it was at the universities, where still remained the traditional and authoritarian style of the Church from the colonial period when, at least, the University of Córdoba was founded (Ramallo 1999).

The university reform implied autonomy, financial autarky, link between teaching and research among other principles. However, already during the first *coup d'état* in 1930 and the subsequent ones, many of these principles were suspended or altered by the military dictators, and restituted again with the return of democracy. Regarding gratuity, this principle was introduced later with the approval of a decree 1949. Paradoxically, during this period of alternation between military and civil governments (1930-1983), the ES enjoyed a process of consolidation thanks to its democratization and gratuity, allowing people from different social strata to access to education in all the levels. Nevertheless, the shifts between different ideologies continued as the regimes changed; following a liberal approach when a civil government was in power and a traditional approach during military government periods.

Furthermore, during this shifting period, different educational streams arose and characterized the socio-political context. As a result of the events happened in the previous decades during the Great Depression, and the rise of European nationalisms that had repercussion in Argentina, and as a continuation of the patriotic education imparted earlier, the 1950s were characterized by the *Justicialista Doctrine*<sup>4</sup>. This doctrine was adopted as national doctrine in 1949 and established that education should serve the nation in order to achieve its wellbeing through *social justice*, *economic independence*, and *political sovereignty*. During the 1960s, the new stream promoted by UNESCO was *permanent education* in order to maintain a participatory attitude during later life. This new stream was in high concordance with the theories about HC, which gained worldwide significance during that period. And the 1970s were characterized by a stream called *liberating education*, labeled of subversive because it broke the traditional authority and legitimacy embodied in the teacher, and another stream called *personalized education* in order to equip the citizen to a participatory and responsible exercise of its freedom (Ramallo 1999).

The several interruptions of the democratic order caused by the different *coups d'état* during this period of democratic instability had also tremendous impact in the society through the repercussions they had on the ES. Not only as a consequence of the military intervention, suspending or altering, as mentioned earlier, the principles of the ES, especially in the universities, but also because it meant the emigration of many academics and intellectuals during the 1950s,

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<sup>4</sup> In allusion to the Justicialista Party or Peronist Party.

1960s, and 1970s. The two last mentioned had a strong correlation with the liberating education stream, which began to gain momentum after a period where the developmentalism stimulated by the ISI model had strengthened the secondary education with technical orientation. This new atmosphere of renovation attracted the exiled academics and intellectuals, who had left the country during the 1950s. However, the two episodes that have marked the Argentine history in relation to the above mentioned were *La Noche de los Bastones Largos* [*The Night of the Long Truncheons*] and *La Noche de los Lápices* [*The Night of the Pencils*] during the *coups d'état* of 1966 and 1976 respectively. In the first case, the University of Buenos Aires fell down under the control of the military junta arresting many employees and destroying faculties and laboratories. In the second case, students at the secondary level, members of the Union of Secondary Students<sup>5</sup> and considered subversive by the military junta were kidnapped and assassinated. These two specific episodes contributed greatly to the Argentinean brain drain [*La Fuga de Cerebros*], where many high-educated people chose to emigrate to other American countries and Europe (Bethell 1994).

With the return of democracy in 1983, Argentina initiated a process of political and social restructuration, in which the ES experienced again a modification in its essence. This process was a consequence of a global movement encouraged by international organizations stimulating liberal democracy, market economy, and permissive religion, as well as the fast scientific and technological development since the Second World War, which has given place to denominate the contemporary era as *knowledge society*. During this period, and influenced by ideologies of the Washington Consensus, the Law of Federal Education of 1993 (LFE 1993) and the Law of Higher Education of 1995 (LHE 1995) were approved. The LFE 1993 implied a reform of the structure and a decentralization of the responsibility from the national level to the provincial level in order to improve the competitiveness of the labor force, as it had been observed in Chile after following the neoliberal policies. Furthermore, it emphasized on the importance of the family as primary agent of education, the responsibility of the State to provide an education that strengthens the national identity, sovereignty, and democracy based on federal, republican, and representative principles. The main objective of the LHE 1995 was to unify the legislation that regulated higher education regardless of whether it concerned national, provincial, or municipal universities or non-university institutes of tertiary level, public or private. Moreover, in congruence with the era of

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<sup>5</sup> A student wing of the Peronist Party.



knowledge society, the purpose established by the LHE 1995 was to form future generations within a scientific, humanistic, technical, and professional frame capable of contribute to the further development of the country in order to consolidate the democratic order and promote the wellbeing of the nation (Ramallo 1999).

True to the shifting style of the country, after the collapse of 2001, and with the arrival of a new government in 2003 that parallel to a paradigm shift in Latin America turned the back on the Washington Consensus, new reforms to the ES were implemented. Under the banner of “*social inclusion*” promoted by the new elected government, a series of sociopolitical and socioeconomic measures including reforms in the educational sector were applied establishing then a new model, which still is running. With the approval of the National Law of Education in 2006 (NLE 2006), the structure of the primary and secondary schools changed again, the last mentioned became, for the first time, obligatory and got a legal frame. Bound by the established in the Law of Educational Financing approved in 2005 (LEF 2005), the budget for education has to be at least 6% of the GDP (Educación 2010). Furthermore, the current model has made possible the creation of a range of programs with the purpose of increasing the access and the quality of education (ANSES 2015), repatriate academic professionals (Mincyt 2015), and built nine new universities (Télam 2013).

### **Summary.**

Since the school and society reflect on each other, the history of education has not been less turbulent than the political history of the country. However, the ES, once established, managed to take root in the society and became a central element of it through its very fast and early democratization. The law of common education for all the inhabitants of the country put an end to political disagreement regarding the secular, encyclopedic approach contrary the traditionalistic approach, implementing the first mentioned encouraged by the positivistic stream.

Nevertheless, with the rise of political instability the ES began to suffer consequences. Some of them were positive, as the university reforms, while others, as the suspension or altering of the ES's principles at the universities during military regimes, were less desirable. Nonetheless, perhaps the worst consequence for the Argentinean ES was the impact caused by the brain drain effect as well as the late democratization process of the secondary school.

The return of democracy in 1983 did not necessarily mean something good for the ES. The introduction of neoliberal policies already during the dictatorship implied a deterioration of the ES, which combined with the socioeconomic situation of the country at that moment turned it into an exclusionary system. Following the changes in the political sphere, the ES experienced again, after 2001, modifications in order to promote social inclusion.

## **4.2. The Educational System & Social Mobility**

This chapter contains the analysis of the secondary data. It consists of four subchapters that analyze the periods of social mobility, current socioeconomic aspects, the structure of the ES, and the pedagogical approach implemented.

### **4.2.1. The Periods of Social Mobility**

The purpose of this subchapter is to highlight the most relevant aspects of the Argentinean social structure in the course of the time and the dynamics that affected social mobility. The lack of empirical material about a distant past does not make it possible to start this historical review before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, since this thesis emphasizes on the connection between education and social mobility, and considering that, the Argentinean ES began to be built up during this period; I do not consider that the missing part has more value than for the fact of providing a complete historical review.

By exploring the aspects that determined social mobility in Argentina in the course of the time, I have identified three clear periods; each of them correlated to different economic models implemented in the country.

The first period corresponds to the agro-exporter model. Based on this model, the industry and the service sector started to grow creating job opportunities and then the possibility of social mobility for European immigrants, who left their country with the idea of *hacerse la América* [*make fortune in America*]. The political elite wanted to build a modern nation, using the US as a model, based on three pillars: encourage European immigration, develop a national industry by incorporating technology and constructing transport infrastructure, and build a universal, lay, and obligatory ES. With these policies, and especially regarding the immigration policy, the purpose was to remove the social structure inherited from the colonial era, which relied on the

traditionalistic approach. In addition, the purpose was to establish a new social structure based on the prevailing ideology at that time, where the Europeans, particularly the Anglo-Saxons, represented the civilization and progress and the others (Spaniards, Blacks, Aborigines, and the Gaucho) represented the barbarism (Dalle 2010).

Argentina became then the second country, after the US, receiving a high number of European immigrants, but the impact was greater because, as mentioned before, the population of Argentina was very small generating also a fast urbanization process stimulated by the favorable economic conditions created by the agro-exporter model. Furthermore, while the foreign-born population in Argentina reached almost 30% of the total population, in the US, never overcame 15%. This meant that the Europeans did not feel the necessity to be assimilated culturally in the new country like in the US, but instead generated the “...*virtual disappearance* of the preexisting social native type and the contemporary destruction on part of the social structure that corresponded to it”<sup>6</sup> (Germani in Dalle 2010). Therefore, the European immigrants experienced an intragenerational social mobility during this period favored by the fast economic growth and the prevailing ideology, as mentioned above, lending them a status of superiority from which they took advantage.

We can state that during this first period the great economic growth stimulated social mobility in such a degree that people were able to reach intragenerational mobility. If we think about the cycle of correlative influence (Figure 2 in page 23), we can say that it was an external factor the driver of social mobility during that period. However, we need to consider that the economic improvement affected the level of inequality and poverty. The lack of statistical figures does not allow the corroboration of these levels during that period. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine that in a period of great economic growth, poverty was an issue to concern about; at least not as it is today. Then, after some time, the influence that the economic growth exercised on the socioeconomic level of the people during that period should certainly have affected the input that the ES received. Furthermore, the encyclopedic approach as well as the utilitarian and patriotic education applied by the ES during the course of that period must have affected the acquisition of social and cultural capitals that contribute to the formation of the habitus. The implementation of

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<sup>6</sup> “...*virtual desaparición* del tipo social nativo preexistente y la contemporánea destrucción de parte de la estructura social que le correspondía” (Germani in Dalle 2010).

the mentioned approach can be consider as an example of symbolic violence exercised by the ES in order to shape the habitus of the students. The result from that process formed a new habitus that combined with the continuous democratization of education was able to maintain social mobility during the next period despite the economic growth lessened remarkably.

The second period corresponds to the period where the ISI model was implemented. In the period after the Great Depression, when Argentina changed from the agro-exporter model to the ISI model, the economic growth lessened its speed impeding for the middle and working class the realization of intragenerational social mobility. However, with the emergence of the welfare state, and the democratization of education achieved through the reforms made earlier, the channel to social mobility became the attaining of an education and not the accumulation of economic capital as during the period before. Therefore, for those who did not achieve this kind of social mobility, the alternative was intergenerational social mobility through the ES. A phenomenon that become common during this period and gave rise to a popular aspiration reflected in a famous theater piece called "*M'hijo el Dotor*" [*My son the Doctor*], illustrating that social mobility from low illiterate classes was possible through education (Dalle 2010).

The degree of social mobility did not change so much during the second period. However, the channel and the form of achieving mobility did. As a consequence of lower economic growth, the common channel to achieve social mobility became the attainment of education through the ES, and consequently the form turned into intergenerational because, according to G. Becker, the acquisition of knowledge is time demanding (Becker 1993). During the previous period, many people got the possibility to increase their economic capital, and due to the democratization of education, they also increased their cultural capital, more specific, the embodied state of cultural capital, which is the main creator of the habitus. During this second period, Argentina had a population that in general was well equipped with the different capitals. This combined with the emergence of the welfare state and educational policies that increased the access to tertiary education founded the basis for intergenerational social mobility during this period. Nonetheless, this period was also characterized by democratic instability and shifting ideologies like the traditional and the liberal approaches in school depending on the character of the government in office, as well as the shifting educational streams. The ES and the country suffered under all these

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political and social turmoil that led to a massive brain drain, losing then a huge part of the cultural capital in the institutionalized form achieved until that point, which combined with the deterioration of the economy dictated the end of the ISI model.

The third period corresponds to the neoliberal period. With the exhaustion of the ISI model and the opening of the economy to a globalized market, as well as the implementation of neoliberal policies, which implied the substitution of the welfare state by the subsidiary state, the Argentinean social structure suffered profound changes. The increasing of economic inequality and poverty, as well as the transformation of unemployment as a structural issue during the 1970s marked the beginning of a social decay that culminated with the socioeconomic and political meltdown of 2001. For the first time in the Argentinean history, the society experienced social immobility, or at least a part of the society, because the increasing of inequality and poverty polarized the society harming the lower and middle classes. Whereas the upper classes remained unaffected, and some sectors of the lower classes either remained immobile or experienced downward mobility, the middle class disappeared because some sectors moved upward while others moved downward creating then an upper-middle and a lower-middle class. Paradoxically, this happened during a period of educational expansion in all the levels. However, as already mentioned, the increasing inequality and poverty affected the possibilities to capitalize from the principle of equal opportunity, since the social origin conditions one's achievement. Furthermore, the negligence of the primary and secondary education by the state, which focused on the coverage but not on the quality, increased the inequality between students from different social classes (Dalle 2010).

During the last period, the sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions in the country turned social mobility into social immobility. The implementation of a new economic model led to increasing inequality and poverty, which, as shown in the cycle of correlative influence (Figure 2 in page 23), has an impact on the ES. Despite the level of different capitals developed and achieved during the previous periods, the detriment of economic conditions affecting the ES weighted more resulting in social stagnation. Furthermore, we have to consider that the consequences of brain drain during the previous decades also affected the ES. Thus, the outcome of the ES during the last period was not only a consequence of increasing inequality and poverty, but also a consequence

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of an ES lacking intellectual resources. Perhaps the worst consequence of this period is not the social stagnation generated, but the evil circle initiated, because even though the economy can recover very fast depending on which policies are applied, it takes time to create cultural and social capital in order to provide a qualified input to the ES.

I started this chapter mentioning that I had identified three periods of social mobility. A fourth period was initiated after the collapse of 2001. However, it is still too recent that not much research has been done yet in order to have a qualified picture of the current social structure, the situation of social mobility, and its driver. However, the government elected in 2003 encouraged a new socioeconomic model promoting social inclusion by re-introducing the ISI model in Argentina. That signified a paradigm shift that spread to the rest of Latin America dictating the end of the Washington Consensus. The turning back to the ISI model combined with the high prices of international commodities helped the Argentinean economy to recover very fast recuperating a huge part of the middle class, indicating then a reactivation of social mobility driven by economic factors (Dalle 2010). However, the reforms applied to the ES and the programs implemented in order to increase the access to education are still too recent to observe their impact on social mobility

A first glance it seems like the reactivation of the economy based on the reintroduction of the ISI model combined with the re-establishment of a welfare system facilitating more access to education are paving the way to achieve social mobility through the ES again. However, in order to see whether this is the case, we need time to see the results. Because one of the consequences of the former period, due to the increased inequality & poverty as well as the outcome of the ES, was the detriment of the input poured into the ES.

### **Summary.**

Three periods have been identified. The first, with a very high degree of social mobility under the agro-exporter model. The economic environment combined with the political agenda regarding immigration provided good opportunities for the immigrants resulting in intragenerational mobility. The second period was affected by a decline of the economic growth. However, due to the early democratization process during the previous period, and with the establishment of the

welfare state, intergenerational mobility was possible through education contributing to the increase of cultural capital and the development of a habitus prone to further education. On the contrary, the political instability of the period caused a brain drain effect that affected the third period, which combined with the introduction of neoliberal policies generated social stagnation. A fourth period has been initiated, but it is too recent to make qualified analyses.

#### 4.2.2. Current Socioeconomic Aspects

According to the World Bank, in 2014 Argentina had a nominal GDP of around 540 billion dollar placing the country among the 25 largest economies in the world (WB 2014). Since the collapse in 2001, where Argentina reached a negative GDP growth rate of 16% in 2002, the country maintained a positive GDP growth rate averaging 7/8% in the period 2003-2012. After 2012, the average growth rate has been around 2% with a decreasing tendency and the forecasts show for the coming years that the Argentinean economy will experience a period of stagnation (Trading Economics 2015)<sup>7</sup>. The GDP per capita has also been increasing constantly going from US\$ 6.428 in 2003 to US\$ 12.873 in 2014. The GDP per capita adjusted by PPP has gone from US\$ 8.596 in 2003 to US\$ 22.582 in 2014 (Trading Economics 2015).

Unemployment rate has been during the last 8 years stabilized around 7%, being a good improvement for a country that during the collapse of 2001 reached levels of unemployment over 20% (Trading Economics 2015). However, despite the good recovery of the economic activity accompanied by the reduction of unemployment, poverty and inequality still are unsolved issues even in spite of improvement in both areas. Poverty has been reduced from the 54% level registered after the collapse of 2001. Yet, there are controversies about the current figures because, as mentioned earlier, the INDEC has been under control of the government since 2007 (Sainz 2007). While the official statistics measured poverty to be around 5% in 2012, the private agencies measured it to be around 25% in the same period (Valente2013). As many other socioeconomic measures, the economic inequality reached also its highest level after the collapse of 2001, around 54 points by GINI index. By 2011, the index had been reduced to around 43 points returning to the levels of the 1980s, before it began to increase steadily (WB 2014a). The new, but old and well-known topic that affects the economy right now is the inflation. According to the

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<sup>7</sup> Trading Economics is an online database bank. The data is provided by the IMF, WB, INDEC, etc.

INDEC, the inflation rate in 2014 was about 24%, while private agencies estimated it was around 38% (Ámbito 2015). Otherwise, after having reached 40% in 2003, the inflation rate has been around 10% annually until 2013 (Trading Economics 2015). Nevertheless, the figures mentioned above are similar to that of other periods in the Argentinean history with the exceptions of 1959 (113.7%), and almost the whole neoliberal period with two remarkable years, where the inflation rate reached levels never seen before; 1976 (444.1%) and 1989 (3079.5%) (Jueguen 2012).

Despite the economic, political, and social turbulence that Argentina has experienced throughout the time, the country has maintained an increasing human development that has served it to be categorized as having a very high degree of human development and being at the top three among Latin American countries even though it is considered a middle-income country. However, some points deserve to be mentioned. First, when the HDI is adjusted for inequality, Argentina loses near 16% going from 808 to 680 (UNDP 2014); and second, the disparities within the country are mainly caused by income inequality from one province to another since the differences in the two other measure parameters of human development (life expectancy and education) are less notorious (PNUD 2013). A different way to look at the educational performance is provided by the Human Capital Index (HCI), which unlike HDI focuses more on the educational level attained and economic factors that affect education and not simply on years of schooling or income index. In the HCI, Argentina scores 71 points in a scale from 0 (worst) to 100 (best) (WEF 2015).

### **Summary.**

Considered as a middle-income country, and being among the 25 largest economies in the world, the Argentinean economy still bears the stamp of the historic up- and downturns. While the unemployment rate has been stabilized, poverty and inequality are still unsolved issues. Regarding inflation, it is not only the fact that it seems to be high according to some sources, but also the matter of uncertainty about the real measure. Perhaps, some of the figures and improvements do not seem to be very impressive; it is noteworthy that the situation of the country is not like in the golden age at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, we can rescue the ability to maintain a high degree of human development and a relatively high degree of human capital, but at the same time, there are reasons to be worry for the future, considering the level of poverty and inequality,



since as we already have seen; it has an impact on the ES.

#### 4.2.3. The Structure of the Educational System

The physical structure of the Argentinean ES has been modified during the course of the time in order to adapt to the requirements of different socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts, but also thought as a state policy in order to improve the progress and prosperity of the country. With the consolidation of the political stability favoring the building of the nation state during the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Argentina developed its first ES within a legal frame (Law 1420), initiating then an extensive process of democratization of education, which remarkably contributed to reduce analphabetism. Subsequent legal enacting contributed further to this process (University reforms of 1918 and 1949), allowing people from low social strata access to tertiary education instead of being a privilege reserved for a tiny elite. After the return of democracy in 1983 and under the influence of neoliberal ideologies, new reforms of the structure were implemented during the 1990s in favor of decentralization, accompanied of the dismantling of the welfare state. However, the structure implemented at that time has been changed once again with the approval of the NLE 2006. The current structure divides the ES in four levels: initial, primary, secondary (divided in two sub-levels: basic and oriented) and superior education stipulating 14 years of obligatory school attendance (See Appendix B) (La Nación 2015).

The NLE 2006, as well as all the other laws and reforms implemented through the time, envisages the rights about access to education guaranteed in the Constitution. In conjunction with the NLE 2006 other laws regarding the financing of education, the rights of children and teenagers, sexual education in school, teachers' rights, etc., have been passed by the Congress during 2005 and 2006 in order to create the most complete framework for the Argentinean ES ever seen before in the country (UNESCO 2010/11). As well as the *patriotic education* imparted at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the NLE 2006 has also adopted a similar character in order to create a national identity; this time relying on the closeness to and geographical belonging to Latin America. Akin to the strategy implemented at the very beginning, the purpose of the new law is to increase the coverage by increasing the educational offer with the purpose of guaranteeing the accessibility (UNESCO 2010/11). In order to achieve this goal the government launched in 2009 a three-year plan with the objective of expanding the coverage and increasing the accessibility in the initial,

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primary, and secondary level, intended to approach the poor, who due to inequality conditions could not access to the ES (Educación 2009).

The levels of enrolment of primary, secondary, and tertiary education testify the degree of accessibility, being at 99.1%, 89.1%, and 80.3% respectively for people in the age group of up to 24 years of age. However, the attainment rate in relation to the enrolment does not reach the same degree in all the levels, except for the first mentioned. While primary school attainment remains at over 94% for all the age groups over 15 years-old, the attainment rate for secondary and tertiary education decreases gradually through the different age groups. For example, secondary education attainment falls to 74.9% for the 15-24 age group; to 66.3% for the 25-54 age group; to 50.1% for the 55-64 age group; and to 36.4% for the over 65 age group. In the case of tertiary education, the attainment rate for the three last mentioned age groups, which are the groups where people are expected to have completed an education, falls to 17.5%, 13.4%, and 9.3% respectively (WEF 2015).

The reason why the attainment of primary education has remained at that high level through the different age groups can certainly be explained by the early democratization process of education initiated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as already mentioned, which despite the turbulent history of Argentina has taken root in the society establishing an extensive ES. The low attainment rate of the tertiary education is more difficult to explain, because considering that the university reforms took place at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the gratuity at the universities was implemented in 1949, all the people who had age to go to university after that year should be today about 85 years-old or less. That means that all the people under 85 have had, at least in principle, the possibility to access to tertiary education. Furthermore, if we think that during the first period of social mobility mentioned earlier, the ES got the opportunity to shape the habitus of people, develop cultural capital as well as to generate educational capital, we should expect different results. However, the reason for this low rate of attainment should be seen in relation to the outcome of the secondary school, which is directly related to its internal structure and functioning.

Before the approval of the NLE 2006, the secondary school was not obligatory and had not gotten

the same attention from the state as the two other levels. Furthermore, contrary to the primary school that was built upon the *sarmientino* model<sup>8</sup> emphasizing the civilizing common education to all the inhabitants of the country reflected in the Law 1420, the secondary school was built upon the *mitrista* model<sup>9</sup>, which emphasized on class selection through admission exams with the objective of forming the future governing classes. Therefore, the secondary school did not experience a gradually penetration in the society, as the primary school did, before the return of democracy in 1983, where admission exams were eliminated (CIPPEC 2010). Nevertheless, is still curious the levels of attainment of the 15-24 and 25-54 age groups, because even the oldest persons in the last mentioned category should have had the possibility to attend to secondary school in the 1980s after the elimination of admission exams.

Different reasons can be attached to that performance. First of all, the fact that access barriers were eliminated at that time does not mean that the enrolment will instantaneously increase to the levels reached in primary education. It takes time to build a culture, where people consider secondary education as an option, especially when the prevailing culture embodied the idea that secondary education was reserved for a tiny elite. Another aspect to consider is that during the mentioned period, the neoliberal policies started to be implemented dismantling the universal welfare state in favor of the subsidiary state based on targeted welfare, resulting in an increasing of poverty and inequality as well as structural unemployment, which led to the polarization of the society at the expense of the middle class. Keeping these two arguments in mind, Bourdieu's theories could explain some of the reasons for the low attainment rate. On one side, a population that in general has been excluded from education for a long time, secondary education in this case, has not developed the habitus of attending to and attaining that level of education. On the other side, the Argentinean ES, or more specific, a part of it as it is the secondary school, was intended to a particular and diminutive target group. In Bourdieu's words, this field was reserved for an elite, which embodied a set of capitals that allowed it to maintain the status quo exercising its symbolic power of dominance over the lower classes, which can be consider as a true example of symbolic violence exercised by this sector of the ES. Furthermore, as a consequence of not have been a part of the field of secondary education, the excluded population did not possess the

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<sup>8</sup> In allusion to Domingo Faustino Sarmiento; President of Argentina during 1868-1874.

<sup>9</sup> In allusion to Bartolomé Mitre; President of Argentina during 1862-1868.

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capitals required in that field in order to have a natural feel for the game. Moreover, once achieved these capitals and developed the feel for the game in the field of secondary school, which is a process still under development, the same process has to be carried out in relation to tertiary education.

Comparing the figures mentioned above with that of Nordic countries, which all of them are within the top ten of the HCI (#1 Finland, #2 Norway, #6 Sweden, #7 Denmark. Argentina is placed as #48), it is noteworthy that all of them have higher attainment rates in all the levels of education, and for all the age groups. An explanation to this fact could be that, while Argentina extended the compulsory education from 7 to 10 years during the 1990s, the Nordic countries did that already during the 1960s/70s (Olsen 2009). However, what is more interesting is that, with the exception of Finland, all of them have similar or even lower rate of enrolment at the tertiary level than Argentina, but, as mentioned above, they have higher rates of attainment (WEF 2015).

Thus, how can these differences be understood? I will take Denmark as comparison country. Despite the fact that Denmark was the first country in the world to introduce compulsory education already in 1814, its ES (in the form of primary school, *folkeskole*) began to be developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century like in Argentina. And I will argue that it happened under a similar principle and purpose. As it is expressed in Olsen 2009, which reflects the visions of H.C. Johannesen<sup>10</sup>, the school must connect children from different social strata and equalize class differences in society in order to create the foundation for cohesion and coherence in society; “... *fælles Dannelsesgrundlag, der skal danne Bro mellem de forskellige Samfundslag...*” [*Common formation basis, which will form the bridge between the different classes in society*] (Olsen 2009). However, it happened under different circumstances. While in Denmark, the purpose of the *folkeskole* was to create social cohesion between poor and wealthy children, in Argentina, the main purpose, besides reducing analphabetism and differences between poor and wealthy like in Denmark, turned into create social cohesion and coherence among different ethnic groups in order to build a national identity. To this point, I could argue that both countries had reached similar achievements with regard to the building of an ES. Furthermore, while Argentina suffered the consequences of the Great Depression and the beginning of political instability, Denmark

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<sup>10</sup> Danish teacher and writer. *Den offentlige Byskoles Veje og Mål*, 1906.

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suffered, besides the Great Depression, the consequences of two World Wars. Then, the reason explaining the different development of each country in relation to tertiary education attainment, may be the following. While Denmark achieved political and economic stability after the Second World War, at the same time as theories about human capital (HC) in relation to education began to gain importance on the political agenda during the 1960s (Becker 1993), Argentina continued in a period of political instability until the beginning of the 1980s. And regarding social and economic aspects, it is difficult to delimit a beginning and an end date, because there have been many up- and downturns until recent time. However, in one aspect both countries clearly differ, Argentina has suffered more or less constantly the consequences of brain drain; for political reasons during the 1950s/60s/70s and for economic reasons later (Del Bono 2003). Thus, while Denmark became stable to develop cultural capital strengthening its ES based on HC theories, Argentina started to lose the advancement achieved earlier due to brain drain hindering then the further development of its ES.

From a legal perspective, the state is fulfilling its obligation established by the Constitution, providing and guaranteeing equal access by increasing the coverage of education in order to achieve social justice and inclusion to the ES. This can be observed by the number of educational institutions spread over the whole territorial extension of the country for all the educational levels (See Appendices C, D, E, and F). Furthermore, according to the LEF 2005, the spending on education has to be at least 6% of the GDP (UNESCO 2010/11), which still is below the percentage spent by the Nordic countries. However, while the Nordic countries have been spending about 6 to 9 percent of the GDP in education since 1970s, Argentina spent less than 3% until the middle of the 1990s, where the percentage started to increase and is now approximating the expenditure levels of the Nordic countries (See Appendix G). Notwithstanding, one thing is a comparison in percentage figures, another is comparing real numbers. Because when looking at the government expenditure per student in PPP\$ for primary, secondary and tertiary education, Argentina is far behind the Nordic countries, expending only about a third of what the others do in primary and secondary level, and about one-sixth in the tertiary level (See Appendix H).

Besides the geographical coverage and the increasing of funds designated to the educational system, the current government has launched a series of scholarships in order to provide

economic assistance to people interesting in complete an educational level or study at university. These scholarships as well as other related programs have a character of conditional cash transfer program, which have become very common in Latin America in order to address poverty and other related issues (Villatoro 2005). The granting of these scholarships is subjected to socioeconomic conditions as well as academic performance and have to be renewed every year, in addition, the amount for 2015 is AR\$ 10.800 for a whole year (Educación 2015). This amount, without taking consideration for differences of PPP, is equivalent to DKK 7.990, which is a little bit more than what a Danish student receives every month as education support from the state, which without being completely free of requirements, is not subjected to socioeconomic conditions or academic performance (SVU 2015).

The historic educational expansion in Argentina is reflected in the level of accessibility placing the country as number 27 (in 2008) in a global ranking for the program *Education for All* promoted by UNESCO since 2000. However, the policies implemented by the government during the current model in order to reach the goals of the above-mentioned program have not delivered so impressive results as the government asserts. The government emphasizes often on the improvement in social inclusion, referring to the period after 2003 as the *Gained Decade [La década ganada]*, in contraposition to the *Lost Decade* of the 1980s due to the consequences of the neoliberal policies seen later (Casa Rosada 2013). Despite the fact that the geographical educational expansion cannot be denied, it is important to emphasize that the results obtained have been presented by the government in a way that distorts the reality and therefore is necessary to look at them in a different way.

It is true that the student enrollment experienced an increase of 34% from 2002 to 2012 extending the net enrollment ratio from 44,7% to 56,6%. But firstly, this inter-period increasing of student enrollment is not the largest observed in Argentina in the course of the time. In the period 1980-1991, the number of students increased by 105%, and by 100% in the period 1991-2002. Secondly, as Bourdieu remarks, it is necessary to take into account that the national population also increases and that the number of people within a specific categorization also changes, and that these changes have a late repercussion in what is being measured (Bourdieu & Passeron 2008). Therefore, considering that the number of people with the theoretical age for tertiary education

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(18-24) has also increased, the real advancement in net enrollment for the period 2002-2012 has been of 11,9%, which is not either larger than in the other periods mentioned above. Furthermore, in relation to the national population the advancement in the mentioned period has been of 1,2%, which is similar to the advancement experienced during the so-called *lost decade*. Additionally, it is necessary to consider that the growth rate for both the cohort 18-24 and for the total national population fell during the period 2002-2012. That means that the policies implemented have not delivered so extraordinary results in order to include much more students as argued. Because, supposing that the growth rates for the total national population and the cohort 18-24 had been maintained at the same levels as in the previous decades, with the achieved student enrollment in 2012, both the net enrollment and the proportion of student enrollment in relation to the total national population will have been lower. In conclusion, the expansion of net enrollment ratio during the last decade to 56,6% is not a result of inclusive policies alone, but a combination of both policies and a lower population growth rate (See all the figures related to this paragraph in Appendix I).

Furthermore, the figures indicating a larger net enrollment ratio does not reveal anything about who is being included. By looking at net enrollment ratio by income, at first glance it seems like students belonging to the lowest quintile of income have gotten more access to tertiary education, increasing from 5,1% in 1980 to 19,9% in 2012. However, we need to consider two things; first that both the total national population, the number of people in the cohort 18-24 and the number of enrolled students have increased (UN 2015 and UIS.UNESCO 2015); and second that the poverty levels have also increased (Arakaki 2011). By looking at the data available, one can identify that the proportional relation of the net enrollment rate in tertiary education between the lowest quintile and the highest quintile in 1980 was similar to that of 1991 and 2012; showing a difference of about 33 percentage points between the quintiles. The only exception was 2002 with a difference of 54.6. Furthermore, the similar proportional relation between the lowest and the highest quintiles can also be observed in the increasing from 1980 to 2012 of about 15 percentage points in both quintiles. Therefore, the fact that the net enrollment ratio in tertiary education for the lowest quintile has increased to 19,9% in 2012 does not mean that more poor students have gotten access to education compared to wealthy students. It means instead that

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the numbers have been inflated because in general there are more students enrolled in tertiary education (See all the figures related to this paragraph in Appendix J).

Another aspect to contemplate is that more money to guarantee more accessibility is not equal to higher quality. According to the results from PISA 2006, Argentina performed very badly, even within a Latin American context, being below the regional average. A study elaborated by CIPPEC demonstrated the correlation between the results from PISA and the GDP per capita, explaining then the good performance obtained by the Nordic countries compared to Latin American countries, including Argentina. Moreover, the study revealed that the level of equality influenced too in the results obtained in PISA, concluding that countries with high economic development and high equality performed better (CIPPEC 2010).

The geographical coverage, the public expenditure increase, and the scholarship programs are all a part of an economic oriented approach intended to improve the performance and outcome of the Argentinean ES. However, in spite of the huge efforts made, the simple fact of pouring more money into the ES has not been enough to obtain better results. That invites to revise the internal functioning structure of the Argentinean ES as well as the input poured into it. The constructive aspect to rescue here despite the bad performance is that the inclusion of more people to the ES can have a positive return in the future. We need to consider the one generation instructs the next one. The school of yesterday has shaped the present we have today, and in the same way, the school of today is shaping the future generation. Then, considering, as we already have seen, that the ES has the capacity to shape the habitus and develop cultural capital, Argentina can maybe look forward to recover the territory lost during the past.

### **Summary.**

The approval of the Law 1420 in accordance with the established by the Constitution, as well as later reforms, paved the way to consolidate the ES and democratize education especially in the primary and the tertiary level. On the contrary, secondary education maintained its selective character until the return of democracy in 1983. However, only the primary level has achieved a real high level of penetration in the society. Despite admission exams to secondary school were eliminated after 1983, the increasing inequality and the polarization of the society at that time



weighted higher. The geographical coverage as well as the expansion of public expenditure on education has encouraged the accessibility. However, it has not improved the quality.

#### **4.2.4. Different Ideal of Man, Same Pedagogical Model**

Émile Durkheim argued that each society defines its own ideal of man, and that the focus of education was that ideal (Durkheim 1956).

As I mentioned earlier, during the colonial time the evangelical approach was implemented with the purpose of Christianize the aborigines. Later, the French influenced encyclopedic and utilitarian approach introduced in Spain, also called positivism, was brought to Argentina substituting the traditional approach influenced by the Church. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the patriotic education, with an authoritarian character, was the applied approach in the ES as an official policy of the government. With the return of democracy in 1983 and immersed in a globalized world, a liberal and democratic approach was introduced again, yet the patriotic and authoritarian character became less predominant, it did not disappear completely.

Despite which approach was implemented in the course of the time, all of them had an *ideal of man*, and consequently a purpose. During most of the colonial era, the ideal was the Christian man based on the transcendent fate of man with the objective of Christianize the aborigines, introduced them to the European culture, and use them as labor force for production in the new world (Solari 1991). With the emergence of Enlightenment, new ideologies arrived. The positivist stream had a different ideal of man, which based on an encyclopedic approach, had the purpose of create a liberal and democratic man capable of serving to the progress of the nation. The law 1420 of common education was framed within this ideology giving access to education to the whole population. However, this policy engendered problematic issues for the political elite later on. As I mentioned earlier, the foreign-born population in Argentina reached 30% at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The huge proportion of foreigners, who enjoyed the advantage of being considered superior, as I have mentioned earlier, combined with the yield of the positivistic stream, began to challenge the autochthonous political elite. Suddenly, the ideal man, they had created turned against themselves, which led to the introduction of the patriotic education of authoritarian character in order to form an Argentinian identity. The purpose with this approach was to homogenize the population in order to achieve a social consensus with the hidden

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objective, from the political elite, of maintaining the status quo (Solari 1991). After 1983, with the aftermath of a bloody period still in mind, the ideal of man became again the liberal and democratic man, however, maintaining a patriotic appeal. The aim was to reestablish and strengthen the confidence in a democratic and liberal system creating at the same time a sense of national unity, which has been broken after the military dictatorship and the loss in the Falkland/Malvinas war (Ramallo 1999). Finally, after the episodes of 2001 and especially with the formulation of the NLE 2006, the ideal of man has remained as a democratic man, but with a moderate patriotic appeal and a more regional oriented view (Educación 2010). The purpose this time seems to be a strategy in order to take distance from neoliberal ideologies, emphasizing in regional unity.

Applying the theory of social reproduction, and having in mind the argument of Durkheim, we can state that all the different educational approaches had an ideal of man on which they focused. The society defined its ideal of man, and the political elite, through the ES implemented policies that focused on that ideal and developed it. Through its pedagogical work, the ES was able to increase the cultural capital of the students with the contents stipulated according to the implemented educational approach. In that way, the ES exercised its symbolic violence upon the society reflecting the symbolic power of the dominant class and serving it for its purpose. Furthermore, since the entrance to the ES implies the acceptance of its legitimacy, the dominated class that got the “privilege” of accessing to education did not perceive the action of domination. This did not happen because they were ignorant, but because we unconsciously tend to overlook the arbitrariness of the ES due to its non-profitable character. Since the state finances the ES, the student has not to pay for the education it receives, as a client in a shop has to pay for the products or services it buys. In that way, the ES has developed a false objectivity (Bourdieu & Passeron 2008).

Besides the false objectivity, the ES utilizes other mechanisms in order to reaffirm its legitimacy. Language and exams are some examples. The language utilized in the ES is often incomprehensible for people from a lower socioeconomic stratum, whose linguistic capital is poor compared to that of people, whose habitus and cultural capital have been developed in a high socioeconomic stratum, or the professor himself, who has developed a high linguistic capital. This symbolic power

embodied in the professor through the power of the word makes the disadvantaged students to feel that they are less worthy because the content of his discourse should be obvious to understand for everybody, and since they not always understand, they think that the problem is embodied in them. On the other side, if the professor tried to even the level of emission and reception and talked in such a way that the disadvantages students also could follow, he probably will feel that he loses the authority embodied in him (Bourdieu & Passeron 2008). Thus, it is a matter of maintaining power and respect drawing a line between *me* and *you* or *us* and *them*.

Regarding the exams, they are a technical system of selecting people that demonstrate whether people have assimilated the legitimate culture determined by the dominant class. Here, the field in which the habitus has been formed and the cultural capital has been acquired plays a determinant role because on these elements depend the formation of a linguistic capital capable of guaranteeing the success in the ES. The examiner is also a relevant element of the selection process, because its objectivity is subjected to the unconscious influence of the values embodied in its habitus and cultural capital throughout its life and the fields in which has been. Then, in a situation of an oral dissertation for example, this unconscious prejudice, can affect the social perception that the professor gets of a student through its gesticulation, accent, cloth, etc. (Bourdieu & Passeron 2008). In such a situation, students coming from advantaged classes will have a better *feel for the game* than students coming from disadvantages classes, affecting the perception of them, independent of the quality of their performance.

These mechanisms of selection not only legitimize the ES, they also contribute to the social reproduction reaffirming that the social origin determines the social destination hindering social mobility. Moreover, in connection with the idea of meritocracy, the ES establishes the idea that upward social mobility without formal education is not possible. Therefore, using these mechanisms of selection the ES limits the degree of social mobility guaranteeing the social stability demanded by the dominant class (Bourdieu & Passeron 2008).

Therefore, the approach to realize the ideal of man defined by the society as well as the pedagogy implemented in the ES system has a great relevance in relation to social mobility. The mechanisms used by the ES in order to achieve legitimacy and to select students mentioned above based on

Bourdieu's analysis of the French ES are similar to them of the Argentinean ES. This is not a merely coincidence, because the ES established in Argentina in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was inspired on the French one (Rivas 2012). The problem with this system is not only the mechanisms it implements to legitimize itself, but also the pedagogical model on which it is founded. With educational pedagogies inherited from France, Argentina built its ES based on a model of *uniform integration*, which implies a method of *simultaneous teaching*; with the purpose of homogenize the students in a classroom. That means that the same curriculum is imparted to all the students at the same time. Furthermore, this method emphasizes on the memorization of the contents and not on the development of a thinking capacity in order to solve problems. The fallacy of this method is that it does not take into account the differences existing between the students before entering to the ES. This is of high relevance if we consider that the habitus and capitals of the students are different depending on the field they come from, and the fact that the Argentinean ES was, especially in the past, composed of vast demographic heterogeneity. This type of pedagogy tries to equalize the differences between the students by giving them the same education. However, the result obtained is exactly the opposite, because, as I have explained above, the ES with its mechanisms of selection and self-legitimization reproduces the same social structure with the same inequalities evidencing then that the ES is at the mercy of the dominant class responding to their economic interests.

When the ES selects students, as we have seen it does, it affects the development of an individual's habitus, because the students that have been eliminated reduce their chances of acquiring capitals and then achieve social mobility. This mechanism of selection is connected with a pedagogical laissez-faire that legitimates the social order. Since the ES as a liberal institution that is against any kind of specific indoctrination, the responsibility of learning lies on the individual, who is limited by its habitus and capitals. Thus, what an individual is not capable of achieve, it is because of its own limitation and not because of structural barriers of the ES. In that way the ES can always maintain its image of facilitator of social mobility (Bourdieu & Passeron 2008).

Contrary to the model of *uniform integration* is the model of *personalized integration* implemented in the Nordic countries. This model emphasizes on each individual's precondition. We could also say that it takes into account the habitus and the capitals the student has as well as

the field in which they have been acquired in order to plan the teaching. The purpose is not to homogenize, but to avoid losing students on the way (Undervisningsministeriet 2015).

Furthermore, a study comparing four different models of grouping students has demonstrated that the Nordic model of personalized integration, which favors heterogeneity in the classroom, obtained equal or even better results than other models. For example, the German model of separation, separates the students with the idea that a homogeneous classroom will increase the effectivity; the Anglo-Saxon model of flexible separation based on a common curriculum, but a partially separation of students in some courses; or the French model of uniform integration already mentioned. In fact, the German model has a high degree of efficiency, but also a very high degree of inequality, similar but on a less degree is the case of the Anglo-Saxon model, and the French model, besides a high degree of inequality, has a high degree of inefficiency.

Contrary to the homogenization promoted in the three above-mentioned models, the benefit of heterogeneous classes of the Nordic model is that the students with stronger resources help the others with weaker resources promoting then equity and quality (CIPPEC 2011). However, this is nothing new. Lars Olsen, in his book *Den sociale smeltedigel*, demonstrated that one of the pillars behind the success of the Danish *folkeskole* since its beginning was namely the heterogeneity in the classrooms. Nonetheless, he expressed his concern regarding a recent tendency to homogenization and standardization in the Danish classrooms as a consequence of increasing inequality, a failed housing policy, and an ineffective immigration policy. More specific, he referred to a kind of polarization, where the wealthier part of the population has chosen to send their children to private schools, while in the other end, the poorer part of the population (in a Danish context), especially characterized by a high presence of immigrants, has remained in the public school. In addition, he argues that heterogeneity in the classroom is vital for a society – “*Den blandede folkeskole er afgørende for vort samfund – den er med til at skabe sammenhængskraft og social mobilitet*” [The mixed school is crucial for our society – it helps to create cohesion and social mobility] (Olsen 2009). Perhaps, his argument for heterogeneity in the classroom sounds confusing, considering that the purpose of the *folkeskole* was, we could say; homogenize the population in economic terms. However, the aim was not to homogenize the classroom but to

create social cohesion.

Regarding the Argentinean case, it is peculiar to see the differences in relation to the Nordic model, since both models are based on heterogeneity in the classroom. As I already mentioned earlier, the Argentinean ES was built with the purpose of creating social cohesion and coherence in a population composed of a vast demographic heterogeneity, while the purpose of Danish ES was to create social cohesion between poor and wealthy children. Notwithstanding, the clear difference between both models has been the pedagogy implemented. I will not defend the Nordic model, because it probably responds to the demands from the market and the interests of the dominant class too as well as the French model does. However, it seems to be less selective or at least it insinuates a larger interest in reducing the sociocultural differences by focusing on each individual instead of homogenize the teaching.

Following this line, the pedagogy implemented in the Argentinean ES reproduces the inequalities already existing in the society. The characteristics of ideal of man have changed in the course of the time, and we could categorize them as following: the *Christian man*, the *liberal democratic man*, the *patriotic man*, the *liberal democratic patriotic man*, and the *democratic patriotic man*. The approaches have changed too, alternating between the traditional and encyclopedic. However, the pedagogy has remained the same, namely, uniform integration, which contrary to the Nordic model, has worked out from a homogenizing approach in the classroom, which has led to more socioeconomic inequality out in the society. Perhaps, the error of the Argentinean ES was to try to create social cohesion and coherence in a cosmopolitan society by homogenizing the classroom, especially with the patriotic authoritarian educational approach, while Denmark achieved social cohesion and equality by maintaining the heterogeneity in the classroom.

### **Summary.**

Parting from the definition of an ideal of man, which have changed in the course of the time, the Argentinean ES has been an instrument of the political system in order to form that ideal of man exercising its symbolic violence. Moreover, the mechanisms of the ES to legitimize itself, as well as the homogenizing character of the uniform integration model based on simultaneous teaching have contributed to the social reproduction of inequalities. In addition, the mechanisms of self-

legitimization have established a common notion in the society, where it seems like social mobility is only possible through the ES. This is reflected in value attributed to meritocracy and credentialism by both the ES and the society.

### **4.3.From the Individual's Perspective**

This chapter contains the analysis of the primary data. It consists of two subchapters that present the stories of the interviewees and analyze the data gathered from them in relation to the chosen theory and the analysis done so far.

#### **4.3.1. Individual Stories**

I will start mentioning that five of the 11 interviewees had actually started at university. However, for different reasons, they drop out after some time and return to San Cayetano. The seven left behind, which did not continue studying, remained in town because of lack of interest in studying or family business.

I will start presenting their cases and explain the reasons for their decision applying the chosen theory. The cases highlight how the elements of the theory of social reproduction have been determinant in their decision.

The case of Joel (31) for example reveals how the social capital has been the most relevant in determining his decision. After finishing the secondary school, he decided to remain in town, but after two years, he changed his mind and started to study international trade. However, after four month he dropped out and return to San Cayetano. After some years, he tried again, this time economic sciences, but again after some time he abandoned again. It is important to mention that in the meanwhile he became father, which also influenced in his decision, since the study lost priority. According to his testimony, he had a good experience in the secondary school in spite of he attended just because his father tell him to do. The historical socioeconomic characteristics of his family testify the intergenerational mobility of the 1960/70s through the ES, since his grandparents were unskilled workers who only had attained primary school, while his father, as the only one out of four siblings, became a doctor. This indicates that to some extent the habitus has been modified through the increasing of cultural capital, as well as economic, from Joel's grandparents to his father that could have had some influence on his decision. However, as I

started to mention, the social capital has been the determinant factor, because despite of having the economic possibility to continue studying and a good cultural capital, the social relations weighted more. Not only because he became father, but also as he mentioned during the interview, had he missed his family, his hometown, and his friends. He did not want to live in another place.

Today, being a young adult man and father to three girls, Joel reflects over his decision at that time when he had the opportunity to study. He regrets not having finished something since he consider that he will feel safer if he had an education/a title in the case he lost his job. This could be seen as a case of credentialism related to meritocracy, where the ES in order to legitimize itself has established in the society the idea that social mobility is not possible without education, as I have mentioned earlier. Notwithstanding, we have to recognize that once this idea is installed and practiced in the society, the fact of having a title contribute to avoid ending in a precarious job. Normally in Argentina, as he also mentioned, when you do not have a certain level of completed education, you are need to compromise on many aspects in order to be employed. This often leads to lower salaries, no contract, no insurance, no pension, no paid vacancies, etc. Summarizing, you are very disadvantaged.

Moreover, he safeguarded the socializing character of the school despite he did not agree with its purpose. Having the secondary school in mind, he missed a more general educative character in order to form responsible individual to the society and life instead of being so oriented to specific educational or labor directions, because, as he argued, an adolescent of 17/18 years does not really know yet what he/she wants to do in the future. For them, secondary school is just an intermediate step.

A similar case is that of Eric (25), who also went to university to study political sciences, but he became father and had to abandon the studies and return to San Cayetano. Akin to the case of Joel, where an external factor forced him to abandon, the social capital he had helped him to overcome the feeling of frustration for not having finished his studies. In his case too, the cultural and economic capital was not an impediment to continue studying. Despite his father only has achieved primary education as well as his grandparents; his mother has a tertiary education and



works as professor in the local secondary schools and the only tertiary institute in town, which has a special focus on forming teachers.

In his opinion, school makes sense most of the time, the problem is that the students not always are aware of that because as adolescent, they are in a parallel universe to the reality. Nonetheless, Eric also emphasized on the socializing character of the school generating social inclusion. In that way he stressed on the role of education in order to contribute to the development of social capital.

Even though he argued that a person could develop without having a formal education, he remarked the importance of having a title in order to avoid labor precariousness, making then evident the penetration of credentialism in the society. However, he stated that educational formation alone is not enough, job possibilities within the given area of one's education are necessary, otherwise you end doing another thing. In addition, being aware of the meritocracy related to credentialism, he meant that the people who study only thinking about attaining a tittle would probably be less professional than those who study in order to practice a profession with passion and a clear idea about their personal development and what they can contribute with to the society.

A third case where external factors affected the decision of abandoning the study was Mariela (39). She was studying psychology and graphical design when she got sick and later pregnant. She recognized that school was not so easy for her, but she went because their parents wanted her to finish at least the secondary school. In her case, the grandparents attained only primary education, her mother secondary, and her father become an electronic engineer as an adult man. Perhaps, despite the external factors that affected her, the cultural capital did not encourage her motivation to return to the studies later. Moreover, we have to consider that the economic situation may also have played an important role after becoming mother. She has now children that soon will finish the secondary school, therefore she emphasized on how economic resources influence when the distance from home to university or another tertiary institution is an issue to consider.

Contrary to them who were forced to abandon their studies because of external circumstances as

we have seen, are those who either remained in San Cayetano after finishing the secondary school because they did not have the motivation to continue studying or went to university but returned because other reasons than the mentioned in the cases presented above.

The case of Sabrina (25) is one of the cases, where the economic capital determined her decision of abandoning the studies. After finishing the secondary school, she worked during two years to save money. She got a scholarship and went to university to study Law, but as I have mentioned earlier, these scholarships are subjected to the socioeconomic conditions of the family, and since the scholarship has to be renewed every year, after one year she lost her scholarship due to changes in the economic situation of her parents. Her case is an example that highlights the influence of economic capital because her cultural capital motivated her to continue studying. Despite the fact that her grandparents only had primary education, her parents achieved secondary and tertiary education and worked within the ES. As well as the other interviewees, she highlighted the relevance of the socializing role of the school, while the quality did not get many credits, since the knowledge obtained in the secondary school is far away from the minimum required to enter at university, according to her. This explains why the majority of the universities in Argentina have an introductory course during the first year in order to increase the educational level of the students, as well as to equalize the differences of students coming from different schools, or even admission exams before entering (Universia 2015). However, this could also be seen as an act of symbolic violence and legitimation by selecting the students, but then we need to be careful with this specific situation because the knowledge level of the students vary very much as a consequence of having an ES based on the uniform integration model. As Axel Rivas explains, many teachers every year let pass some students despite the fact they have not achieved the required knowledge because the alternative is letting them repeat the school year even though repetition has been proved only to have negative consequences (Rivas 2012). Furthermore, she was proud of have had the honor of carrying the flag during school ceremonies as a recognition for her high grades. This is not only an example of meritocracy, but also a legacy from the patriotic approach implemented in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Myrna (28) is the last case, among my interviewees, where the person abandoned the university study. Furthermore, she is the only one that went to a private secondary school. After finishing the

secondary, she started at university to study public accountant, and for economic reasons she worked at the same time. However, as time went by, the job got a higher relevance than the study affecting her performance. Notwithstanding, the reason for abandoning the study was the emergence of a family business opportunity. We could say that a cost-benefit balance between the cost of investing in an education that will give a return later and the benefit of investing in an economic asset that will give a sooner outcome determined her decision. However, we could speculate over to which extent the cultural capital of his family weighted higher, because neither her grandparents (who were immigrants) nor her parents reached a higher level of education than primary school. They have been farmers through generations. Furthermore, we could also speculate over the influence of social capital, since she left both study and job in order to start a family business within the agrarian sector.

What it is interesting about her case is that she went to a private secondary school with an agrarian orientation, not because of the fact that it was private, but because the school separated the students according to their level and performance. She remarked that she liked it because it was very demanding stimulating competence among students. We could say that the positive aspect of separating the students while being very demanding must have been that no students had felt that it was left behind, since the degree of demand was individual and the result led to the different grouping. We could call it as a kind of personalized integration but separating the students, while the uniform integration model does not separate the students, but through its demands, regardless of whether they are high or low leaves the disadvantaged students behind. However, as we have seen before, it has been demonstrated that the separation of students increase inequality.

Moreover, she emphasized on the importance of education in order to access to a good job and avoid labor precariousness. She meant that in many cases unskilled workers ended in that situation because they have not had the motivation to study, which can be explained by the habitus and the capitals a person has as well as the field in which it has grown up.

In the case of Francisco (24), according to his testimony, the economic capital of the family was the factor that made him stay in San Cayetano. After ending the secondary school, he began to

work in the business of the family selling construction materials. He did not want to study. For him spending 5 years of his life in order to attain an education was equal to losing money. Therefore, he chose a faster and shorter way to get to the money. This could be characterized as another case of cost-benefit evaluation. When he went to school, he only studied in order to pass and his parents did not insist very much. For him school was a social sphere. However, it is difficult to determine to which extent the economic capital was the only, or the most determinant factor for his decision, if we consider that both his parents and grandparents only reached primary education. We could imagine that the cultural capital as well as the habitus has not been stimulated in order to continue studying. Furthermore, he told me that his major brother has spent 10 years to finish a university study that should have been finished after 5/6 years. Without being prejudiced, and knowing that the economic aspect has not been an issue to worry about, we could imagine that the habitus and the level of cultural capital could perhaps explain that performance. In addition, social relations played a significant role in remaining in town.

The case of Fernando (24) is very similar to that of Francisco. He was not interested in studying further and he attended to the secondary just because he was told to do, and the only thing he liked was the social aspect of the school. Then as soon as he finished he started to work in the business of the family selling and repairing tires. In his case, as well as the case above, neither his parents nor his grandparents had a higher education than primary level, indicating perhaps a low level of predisposition toward higher education. One of the things he remarked was that when he went to the school he had to follow the pace of the teaching regardless how much he had understood, which is very characteristic of the uniform integration model, as we have seen earlier. However, he thought that education was important in order to avoid labor precariousness, as many other interviewees also have mentioned.

Salvador (39) began to work as baker with his father as soon as he finished the secondary school. He was never interested in studying neither in continuing studying and the only thing that made sense to him about going to school was its socializing character. According to his testimony, his family did not insist really much in order to encourage him to study further; perhaps, because their habitus and cultural capital was not developed in that direction. His grandparents were immigrants, who worked in a harbor and bakers. No one in his family had achieved a higher level

of education than primary school. Another indication of lack of cultural capital and habitus prone to study, is the fact that he showed interest in studying short educational careers at the local tertiary institution, but as he mentioned he always lacked initiative to begin.

For Emanuel (23), the social relations were the most important factor to remain in San Cayetano, according to him. After the secondary school, he started to work in the construction branch, he became father, and he plays professional football in a local team. All these social motives had been enough to stay in town. He even refused an offer to play football in another city, because he did not want to leave his social relation. However, behind his testimony are hidden reasons to believe that the social capital has not been the only one determining factor. Despite he recognized the importance of the school; his experience reveals the cruelty of the uniform integration model as Axel Rivas from CIPPEC explains about repetition (Rivas 2012). He repeated two times during his school time having a huge impact in his social relations because he had to adapt to a new class and new schoolmates. In his case the social capital had a greater influence than the cultural capital, because even though his mother had a tertiary level education, she reared him alone, implying that he grew up without having contact to a father or grandparents. His mother encouragement to study and to make an effort to be one of the best in order to get the honor of carrying the flag, as she did, did not give the expected result. The only thing we can observe here is the meritocratic ideal of the mother. Despite his unfortunate experience with the ES, he emphasized anyway in the socializing role of the school stressing on the importance it should have to create social cohesion.

In the case of Miguel (24), the cultural and social capitals determined his decision. He did not want to continue studying, since attending to school was simply an obligation, therefore he decided to work. On one side, he did not want to leave the family, the friends, and the town. On the other side, the cultural capital of the family was probably not prone to encourage higher education, since his grandparents were farmers who only had primary education, and one of his parents attained secondary. As well as the other interviewees, he remarked the socializing character of the school and the credentialism installed in the society, since in order to get a job, even in a small town like San Cayetano, it is necessary to have completed the secondary school, which is the reason for why he completed it. In addition, he mentioned that once you start earning money,

your motivation for study diminishes. The last mentioned is related to the cost-benefit balance I mentioned earlier.

Finally, the case of Federico (22) is very similar to that of Miguel. He did not want to study; therefore, he remained in town. He did not like the idea of leaving his family, his friends, and the town. He took advantage of his social relation and started to work in the local postal office. He had some dreams of continue studying, but his bad performance during the secondary school made him to desist from that idea; an example of the selective character of the uniform integration model and its symbolic violence. In his case the cultural capital of the parents and their encouragement did not influence very much, despite his father attained secondary level, and his mother attained tertiary level and works as teacher. He did not continue the ascending educational mobility of the family considering that his grandparents only attained primary school. As it already has turned to a commonality, he remarked the relevance of the school as a socializing entity. In his opinion, the school was good, but he did not benefit from it. In that sense, he meant that what the school offers maybe is not bad, but it depends on each individual. We could interpret his statement in relation to the symbolic violence that the ES exercises on the individual in order to achieve legitimacy as its most perfect stage. Namely, where the individual thinks that what he/she is not able to achieve, it is his/her own responsibility, and not the consequence of a system that reproduces the same inequalities that the society already has.

### **Summary.**

The empirical data gathered from a small group of people has shown the role that the different capitals, the field, and the habitus have played in their decision. It is also observable the impact of the ES and the socioeconomic conditions of different times, subjected to its generational delay, on the society. This impact is not only observed in what each generation has achieved in educational terms, but also in the penetration of credentialism in people's mind.

#### **4.3.2. Habitus & Accumulation of Capitals**

In order to summarize and in general, based on the testimonies presented above, as well as on the analyses done so far, the economic capital affects in two different ways. For those, who do not have enough economic resources and depend of whether they can get access to a scholarship or not, the economic capital turns into a conditioning factor as long as the geographical distance also

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is a determining factor. Furthermore, in many cases, the students need to work alongside their study in order to maintain themselves. However, this does not happen without consequences. In many cases, the study takes longer time, and the risk of abandoning increases as the motivation decreases. On the other side, for those whose family has a good economic position, and an established business, the economic capital leads them to remain in town in order to take over the family business in the future. They do not see further education as a necessity to improve their lives, because they already have an economic guarantee. As many of the interviewees mentioned, this is very common among farmers.

The social capital observed in these persons was related to family and friends' relation as well as a sense of belonging to the hometown. Especially among the persons who did not choose to continue studying, the social capital was an important explanatory reason to their decision. And among those who return after have tried, they mentioned social relations as a supportive element, and the belonging to the town in relation to safety and trust among people compared to what they experienced in bigger cities.

The cultural capital varies very much specially depending on the embodied and the institutionalized states that the family has accomplished reflected in their educational capital. It is observable that the cases, where the person decided to continue studying, the degree of cultural capital of the parents, observed in their educational capital, was higher than in the other cases, where they remained in town from the beginning. However, as we have seen for different reasons they did not complete the education anyway. Another observable characteristic is, in the majority of the cases, the tendency to increase the level of educational attainment from grandparents to parents, which is correlated with the second period of social mobility, explained earlier. While the former only attained primary education, the later attained secondary or tertiary education. Making some deductions, and assuming that one generation is equal to about 25 years, we can figure out that the parents of my interviewees were born around 1965, and their grandparents were born around 1940. That means that the grandparents went to school during the 1940s/50s, and the parents during the 1970s/80s. Thinking about the socioeconomic and sociopolitical context of the country in relation to access to education and social mobility during these two periods, we could state that the grandparents attended to school in a period characterized by

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economic growth, welfare state, and further expansion and democratization of education that promoted social mobility through the ES. On the contrary, their parents attended to school in a turbulent sociopolitical context, where neoliberal policies and the subsidiary state were introduced leading to increasing inequality and stagnation of social mobility.

In order to understand why the grandparents did not attain a higher level of education as they actually did, considering the context of their time, and compared to what their own children (the parents of my interviewees) attained in a total different context, we need to consider the following. First, that the influence of education can be observed first after some years, and second, that one generation educates the next one. Using the terminology implemented in the theory of social reproduction, we can say that the shaping of a habitus and the acquisition of capitals prone to further education developed in one generation can be observed first in the next generation. Furthermore, if we think about the cycle of correlative influence (Figure 2 in page 23), the grandparents experienced a more equal society than the parents did. That affected then the input poured into the ES, which despite of functioning on a selective principle, as it is the uniform integration model, allowed a certain degree of social mobility in the first mentioned period, and social stagnation during the second period, affecting the generation to which my interviewees belong. The later mentioned, is then in accordance with the third period of social mobility, as I also have explained earlier.

The general conception of the school, especially the secondary school, is that its relevance lies on the socializing character it has, and not so much on the purpose or the educational level provided. The criticism is that when it has a preparation purpose to further study, or it is oriented to a specific labor direction, as it became during the implementation of the ISI model in middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Guerra n.d.), instead of having an educative character by itself regardless of whether people continue studying or not afterwards, it turns into a simply intermediate stage without own value. Moreover, the applied pedagogical practice of the uniform integration model, where many teachers let pass some students regardless of their achievement in order to avoid repetition does not contribute to its reputation, neither to the students that want to continue studying. All this combined with the poor educational level provided, since as I mentioned earlier, most universities have an introductory course to equalize the differences of students in relation to the requirements

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of the university, or even admission exams, contribute to create an image that the secondary school is just a chore.

Notwithstanding, there is installed in the society a clear sense of meritocracy and credentialism. All of them see education and the attainment of a tittle as a means to avoid labor precariousness, as well as to gain social recognition, which combined with the other forms of capital leads to what Bourdieu has called symbolic capital. The problem with credentialism is not only that it does not recognize the knowledge acquired via informal channels, but also that it only recognizes the knowledge once the study is completed. Therefore, many young people complete the secondary school only with the purpose of attaining the diploma that certifies their acquisition of knowledge.

Perhaps, we should try to understand the perception that people have about the secondary school, as well as its functioning, and purpose by looking at its history. As I mentioned earlier, the secondary school did not get the same attention by the state as primary and tertiary level did before the reform of 2006. With the approval of the new NLE 2006, the secondary school became obligatory. The fact that all the interviewees said that attending to secondary education was a kind of obligation has to be understood in a context of family relation culture, as well as the patriarchal character of the national culture. However, these topics and their corresponding analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis. Moreover, the new law has stipulated that the purpose of the secondary school is to not only prepare students for further studying, and/or labor orientation, but also to exercise a responsible citizenship encouraging democratic values (Educación 2010). Despite the introduction of a more general character, the secondary school still maintains the orienting character adopted under the period of the ISI model.

Furthermore, as I already have mentioned, we need to understand that the admission exams to secondary school established by the *mitrista* model were eliminated first after the return of democracy in 1983. However, that does not mean that the practice culture within the institution changed immediately. As I argued earlier, the fact that access barriers were eliminated at that time does not mean that the enrolment will instantaneously increase. Additionally, despite the above-mentioned changes took place more than 30 years ago, we need to remember the socioeconomic and sociopolitical context of the 1980s. During that period, the neoliberal policies

and the subsidiary state were introduced leading to increasing inequality and stagnation of social mobility, which led to the polarization of the society at the expense of the middle class, generating social stagnation. Since, the past shaped the present, and the present shapes the future, perhaps, the immediate consequences did not affect so much that generation, since as we saw, many of the parents actually attained a higher education than their own parent. However, the late repercussion of any policy that affects education can explain the current situation. As one of the interviewees said, *"We are in the situation we are because of our education"*.

At first instance, by observing the behavior of this group of people, it seems clear that the environment in which they grew up has influenced the practices embodied in the habitus in order to determine their decision. In general, those interviewees, whose parents had a higher education showed higher propensity to continue studying despite different circumstances led them to abandon later, while the interviewees whose parents did not achieve higher education were more prone to remain in town just after end secondary school. However, the habitus inherited at home has not been the only determining factor. The ES, as a different field with its own structured structuring structures, has also played a relevant role in shaping people's habitus. Especially on the more disadvantaged students, resulting in bad experiences due to the symbolic violence exercised by an ES based on the uniform integration model.

The criticism to the uniform integration model is that imparting simultaneous teaching does not take into account the different stages in which the intellectual capacity of the students is. When their intellectual capacity is on different stages, it is because their habitus, subjected to the field, has been stimulated in different degrees. Therefore, we need to trust in the innate nature of the intellectual potential that everyone has, and provide the necessary opportunities to develop it (Durkheim 1956). The uniform integration model does not provide that opportunity; it just reproduces the same inequalities generating more exclusion.

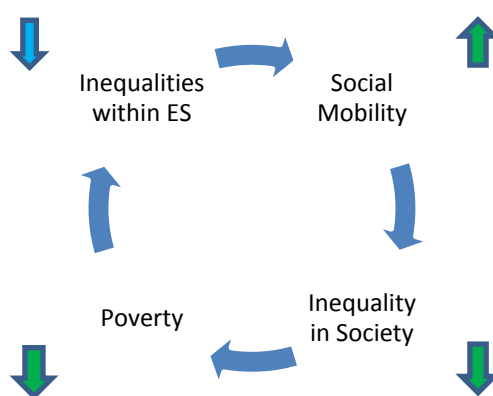
Therefore, we end in a situation where the Argentinean ES is the reflex of an unequal society, but at the same time, the society reflects the ES, and the later gives place to hope, because changes in the ES will mean after some time changes in the society. We need again to remember Figure 2 in page 23. Then in order to encourage social mobility, it is necessary a school that promotes social

mobility to avoid the reproduction of inequalities that at the end leads to the reproduction of intergenerational poverty (Guadagni 2013).

I started this thesis presenting the close interrelation between social mobility, education, and inequality & poverty. I argued also about the difficulty to distinguish whether poverty engenders inequality or inequality engenders poverty. At this point, I will separate these two terms, not to determine which one engenders the other, but to argue that the reduction of inequalities can contribute to reduce poverty. The issue is that it is unthinkable to believe that inequality can be eradicated in order to have a completely equal society. It will be neither beneficial since it will create a static society. Thus, the focus must be centered on reducing the inequalities, or avoiding that they become so large that they begin to generate poverty.

Then, since the ES is a central element of the society, the reduction of inequalities within the ES should lead to an increase of social mobility, which consequently should lead to the reduction of inequalities in the society, contributing to the reduction of poverty. In conjunction, the result of this process should contribute to improve the input that the ES receives, generating a positive cycle, as shown in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: The positive cycle of correlative influence**



**Source: own elaboration.**

According to Rivas, in order to eliminate the educational inequalities, Argentina needs to change

the pedagogies applied in the ES. As we have seen, the uniform integration model reproduces the same inequalities impeding social mobility. Furthermore, he argues that a tax reform is necessary in order to redistribute the wealth with the aim of reducing inequality in society in order to increase social mobility (Rivas 2012). A change of pedagogies will directly affect the ES's functioning, and since the ES, as we have seen, is a central element of society, the intervention should generate a direct impact in the society following the cycle of Figure 3, though after some time. A tax reform will also have an impact on the inequalities in society, and later in the ES, as shown in Figure 3. However, a tax reform, despite of its relevance, works more like a reinforcement factor that can accelerate the process. Because without a change of the pedagogies implemented, it does not solve really much, or at least not in the immediate future, since the ES system will continue reproducing the same inequalities even though they have been reduced before entering to it.

## 5. Section 5 – Conclusions

This last section summarizes the empirical findings through the analyzes of the primary and secondary data, presents the final conclusion, makes proposals to further research and ends with a brief final consideration.

### 5.1. Empirical Findings

By exploring the secondary data available on the consulted sources, I have identified three different models of social mobility in Argentina. Each model corresponds to a different period with a different economic model. The first model of social mobility corresponds the period where Argentina's economy was based exclusively on an agro-exporter model from approximately 1850/60 to 1930. During this period, social mobility was on a very high degree, to such an extent that many people experienced intragenerational mobility. The economic conditions that the country provided attracted many immigrants, especially from Europe, who not only enjoyed from the economic possibilities for a fast progress, but also from a political agenda that encouraged European immigration based on the prevailing ideology that provided them a special status.

The second model of social mobility corresponds to the period where the Argentinean economy was based on the ISI model from 1930 to the middle of the 1970s. The consequences occasioned by the Great Depression forced Argentina to change its economic model. The lessening of the economic growth impeded people to achieve intragenerational mobility. However, due to an early process of democratization of primary education initiated during the 1880s, and university reforms at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people could achieve social mobility through the ES, though intergenerational mobility. The schooling of all the children regardless of their socioeconomic conditions during the previous period had developed a habitus and a cultural capital more prone to continue studying on higher levels. This was also combined with the creation of a welfare state that generated a more equal society that contributed further to the accessibility to education. However, the political instability of the entire period generated by several *coup d'états* led to a brain drain effect that would have repercussion later.

The third model of social mobility corresponds to the neoliberal period from the middle of the 1970s to 2001. The implementation of neoliberal policies promoted by the Washington Consensus

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eliminated the welfare state in favor of a subsidiary state that led to increasing inequality and polarization in the society. Despite the educational expansion experienced during this period, the socioeconomic factors weighted more affecting the principle of equal opportunity, and for the first time in history, Argentina experienced social immobility.

The period after 2001 is still too recent in order to provide a qualified picture about what is the status and the model of social mobility currently. However, according to the tendency observed, it seems like social mobility again can be achieved through the ES.

Regarding the structure of the Argentinean ES, it has been through a long building process and has experienced several modifications. However, it has maintained the same main structure through the time, and currently is constituted by initially, primary, secondary, and tertiary level.

The early process of democratization of primary education mentioned above founded the basis for the Argentinean ES contributing to the massive reduction of analphabetism at that time. Moreover, this early process of democratization contributed to a prompt penetration and consolidation of the ES in the society as a central element of it. In a similar manner, the university reforms during the beginning, and the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed to further the accessibility to tertiary education. On the contrary, the secondary school maintained its shackler character until the 1980s, when admission exams were eliminated. However, it maintained its elitist character for a while, and did not become obligatory until 2006. The fact that the secondary school did not experienced a process of democratization in order to take root in the society as the primary school did, affected the tertiary level despite the later was democratized much earlier.

These historic events explain why the completion of primary education is so high, while the secondary school has achieved a moderate rate of attainment, and the tertiary level has a very low attainment rate. Furthermore, the consequences of the results are not exclusively the historic events alone. The restrictions to access to secondary education during so long time compared to the other levels, have affected the development of a habitus and cultural capital prone to further education and capable of complete it. This explain the high rate of enrolment in both secondary and tertiary level, but followed by a moderate high and very low attainment rate respectively.

The structure is not the only responsible of the results delivered by the Argentinean ES. Its functioning has also had a great influence in them in the course of the time. Based on a pedagogical model of uniform integration that practices a method of simultaneous teaching, the ES has not been able to take into consideration the differences in the students' intellectual stages within the classroom, harming the more disadvantaged students. The implementation of this model and the practice of this method lead to a exclusionary system that favors the more advantaged students, which are those coming from wealthy socioeconomic conditions. Then, in that sense, the ES is reproducing the inequalities already existing in the society.

The collected primary data confirms the relevance that the habitus, the different capitals, and the field in which they have been acquired and shaped, as well as the symbolic violence exercised by the ES have on the fate of an individual. The cultural capital, as the main forming of habitus and the symbolic violence seem to be the most influential in relation to continue studying or not.

Through the analysis of the gathered data, it has been observed how these elements of the theory of social reproduction have influenced on people's decision. Furthermore, it has also been observable the impact they have had during the different models of social mobility in conjunction with the different socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts during different periods.

In the cases, where the cultural capital and the habitus had continuously been developed through the generations, the interviewees showed a higher propensity to continue studying at the tertiary level. On the contrary, in the cases, where the cultural capital and the habitus were less developed, the exclusionary mechanisms of the ES, through its symbolic violence, removed any desire of continue studying after end the secondary school. Moreover, the economic capital has been relevant in two different ways. For those lacking economic resources, it has implied the need to resort to scholarships that are granted from year to year making the situation of the applicants very vulnerable, while for those being in a good economic position and in possession of an economic asset, it meant that they have chosen to continue within the family business. Finally, the social capital has been relevant in all the situations, either as a reason to remain in town or as a support when returning. In addition, it is relevant to mention that in all the cases, a combination of different elements was observed, rather than being a single element of the theory of social

reproduction, the determinant factor.

Furthermore, through the information gathered in San Cayetano, it has also been observed the relevance attributed to the concepts of meritocracy and credentialism, under the argument that having a title is necessary in order to avoid labor precariousness. This is one of the implications of a modern economy structured by the division of labor, where the educational institutions have gotten the status of formal provider of knowledge and developer of human capital discrediting the informal ways of acquisition and development of human capital.

## **5.2. Answering the Problem Formulation**

Based on the empirical findings obtained from the primary data, as well as the analysis of the structure and the pedagogy of the ES, and the socioeconomic current situation of the country, it becomes clear that the Argentinean ES is based on a selective exclusionary pedagogical model that only benefits the in advance advantaged students. Despite its free and equitable character guaranteed by the Constitution, the implemented teaching method does not favor students coming from homes endowed with a poor habitus and cultural capital in order to come through the selective mechanisms to which the ES submits them, due to its symbolic violence that has the aim of legitimize the ES. The structure of the Argentinean ES, mainly the former structure of the secondary school, has neither been favorable for disadvantaged students. In fact, despite it cannot be completely denied any kind of influence on it, in general, the Argentinean ES does not really encourage social mobility; it only reproduces the same social structure already existing in the society. The fact that the extensive geographical coverage facilitates the accessibility, combined with the high enrolment rates in all the levels, creates the illusion that the ES encourage social mobility. However, the evidence that the ES does not encourage social mobility is the history, which demonstrates that social mobility has followed the economic cycles as shown above. Even when considering the generational delay of the ES's influence on the degree of social mobility, it is observable that the socioeconomic conditions have been more determinant in all the three periods identified. Otherwise, the ES should have been able to counterbalance the impact of the increasing levels of poverty and inequality during the neoliberal period. Furthermore, taking the tertiary level as an example, despite both the total number of students enrolled and the net enrollment has increased remarkably in the course of the time, the proportional relation between



students belonging to the poorest quintile and the wealthiest quintile has not changed at all.

It cannot be completely denied that the ES exercises an influence in developing a habitus and in increasing cultural and social capitals. However, its functioning based on a selective pedagogical model puts limits to the degree of social mobility.

### **5.3.Future Research**

As I mentioned in the Research Design Chapter of this thesis (item 2.3), this investigation had character of exemplifying case. However, that character was subjected to similarities between the place, where the field research was conducted, and other places in the country. Therefore, a more detailed and geographical extensive research could provide a more complete picture of the situation, considering the socioeconomic differences between the Argentine provinces (INDEC 2014b).

Furthermore, considering the current socioeconomic conditions of the country, it could be interesting to investigate the future impact of inequality and poverty. Not only because, as we have observed, it has a close connection to social mobility and education, affecting the input poured into the ES, and the outcome on the other side, but also because due to these socioeconomic condition, it has been detected cases of malnutrition in some poor areas of Argentina. It is not only a humanitarian matter to consider, which at the same time is paradoxical, since Argentina produces food to 400 million people every year, but seen from an economic perspective; it can lead to even more economic troubles, since malnutrition causes irreparable damages in the intellectual capacity of human beings (Manes 2015). This is an interesting topic to investigate further, considering not only the matter mentioned above, but also the kind of ES Argentina has. Thinking one more time about Figure 2 in page 23, if the intellectual capacity of a part of the population is affected by malnutrition, the ES will not do anything else than eliminate those part of the population, generating more inequality and polarization in the society.

### **5.4.Final Consideration**

Overall, the present thesis wants to emphasize the relevance that an ES system has in a society, as well as the close interrelation between them. However, is not only a matter of having a well-established ES; the structure and its functioning are equally relevant in order to accomplish its

purpose. However, at this point, it becomes complicate, because it is the civil society, whom has to hold the ES accountable for its role, but at the same time, it is the ES, whom forms the civil society. Therefore, it is necessary an enormous visionary political will and integrity to create an ES system that serves the interests of the entire society and not to the aims of the dominant class.

The ES has a stronger influence on society than perhaps normally believed. However, it is not only a matter of pointing out the fallacies, on the contrary, it is also a matter of seeing the potential it has in order to revert certain situations. When we talked about inequality, poverty, education, even criminality, just to give some examples that concerns unequal societies, the tendency is to measure the problematics in numbers and the solutions, very often, are adding more numbers. More social programs, more jails, more police officers, a larger budget to education, in fact more money. However, without disregarding the relevance of financial resources, not very often, the root of the problematics is investigated in order to develop a targeted policy to solve the matter in question.

Seen in the light of the findings obtained through this investigation, the author of this thesis shares the proposition made by Rivas (2012) that the Argentinean ES needs to change its pedagogies in order to avoid the exclusion of disadvantaged people, perpetuating them in the same social stratum and hindering them to develop further... just at their own pace.

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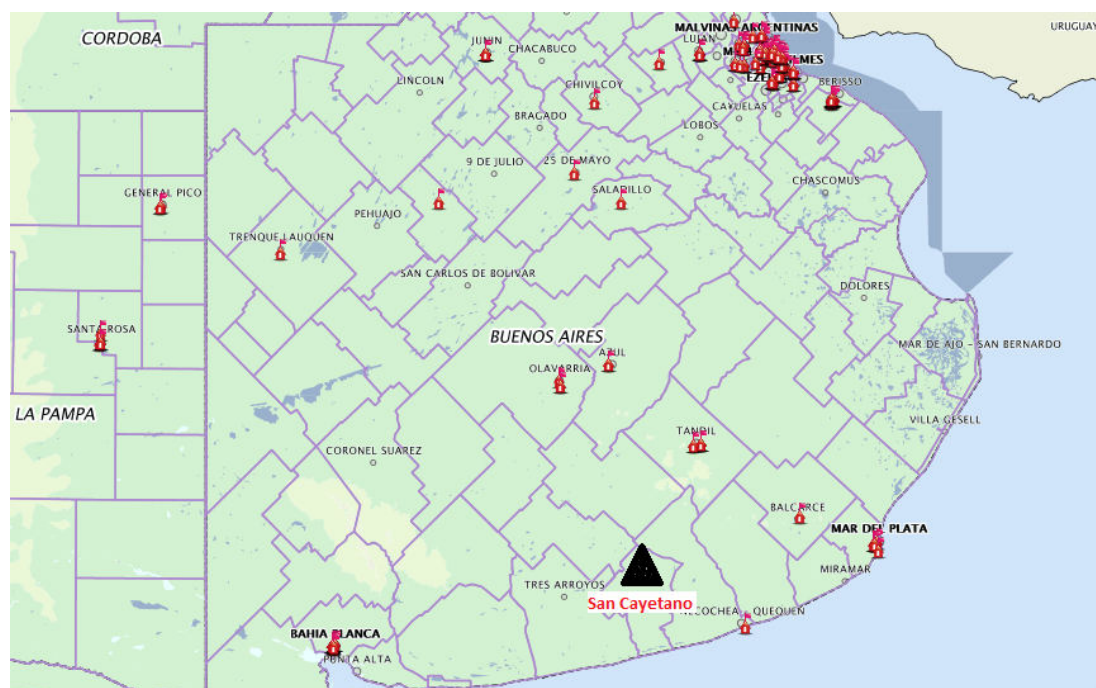
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## 7. Appendices

### 7.1. Appendix A: The Location of San Cayetano in Relation to the Universities of the Region

**Note:** On the map, it can be observed the location of San Cayetano, shown with a black triangle, in relation to the near universities, shown as a red little school icon.

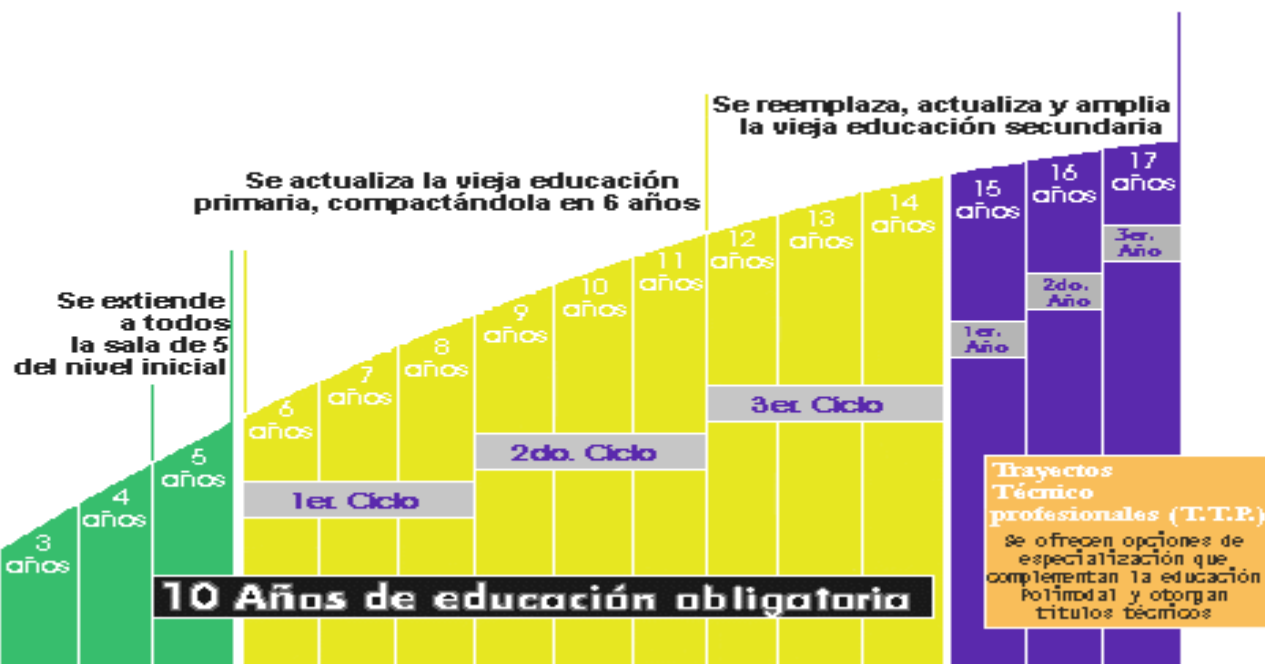


Source: Ministry of Education of the Nation.



## 7.2. Appendix B: Structure of the Argentinean Educational System

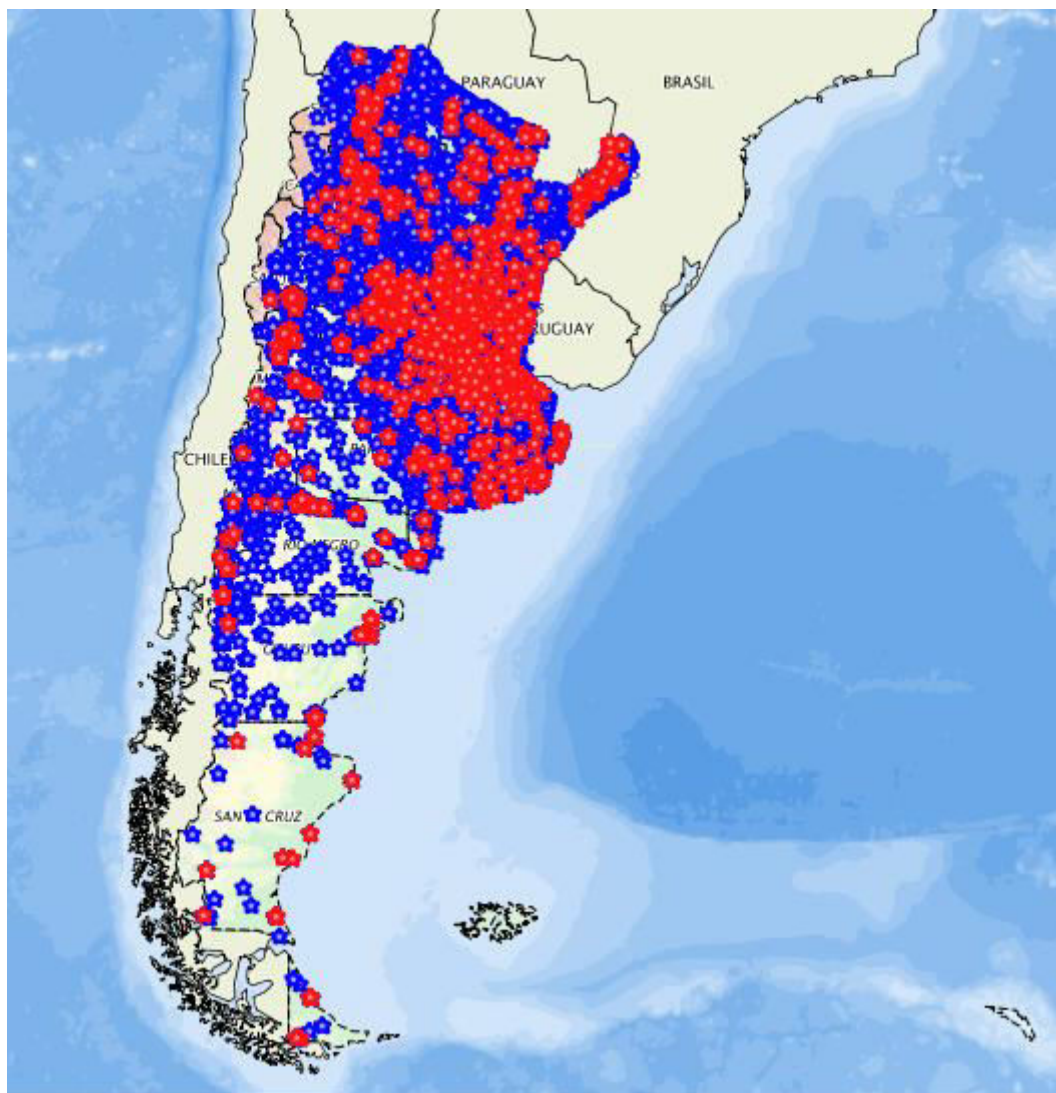
**NOTE:** this graph has not been updated. The obligatory attendance goes from 4 years in the initial level to 17 years in the secondary level. Furthermore, where it says “3er. Ciclo” is now a part of the secondary school and no longer a part of the old 9-year primary school.



Source: Ministry of Education of the Nation.

### 7.3. Appendix C: Geographical Coverage of Initial Education

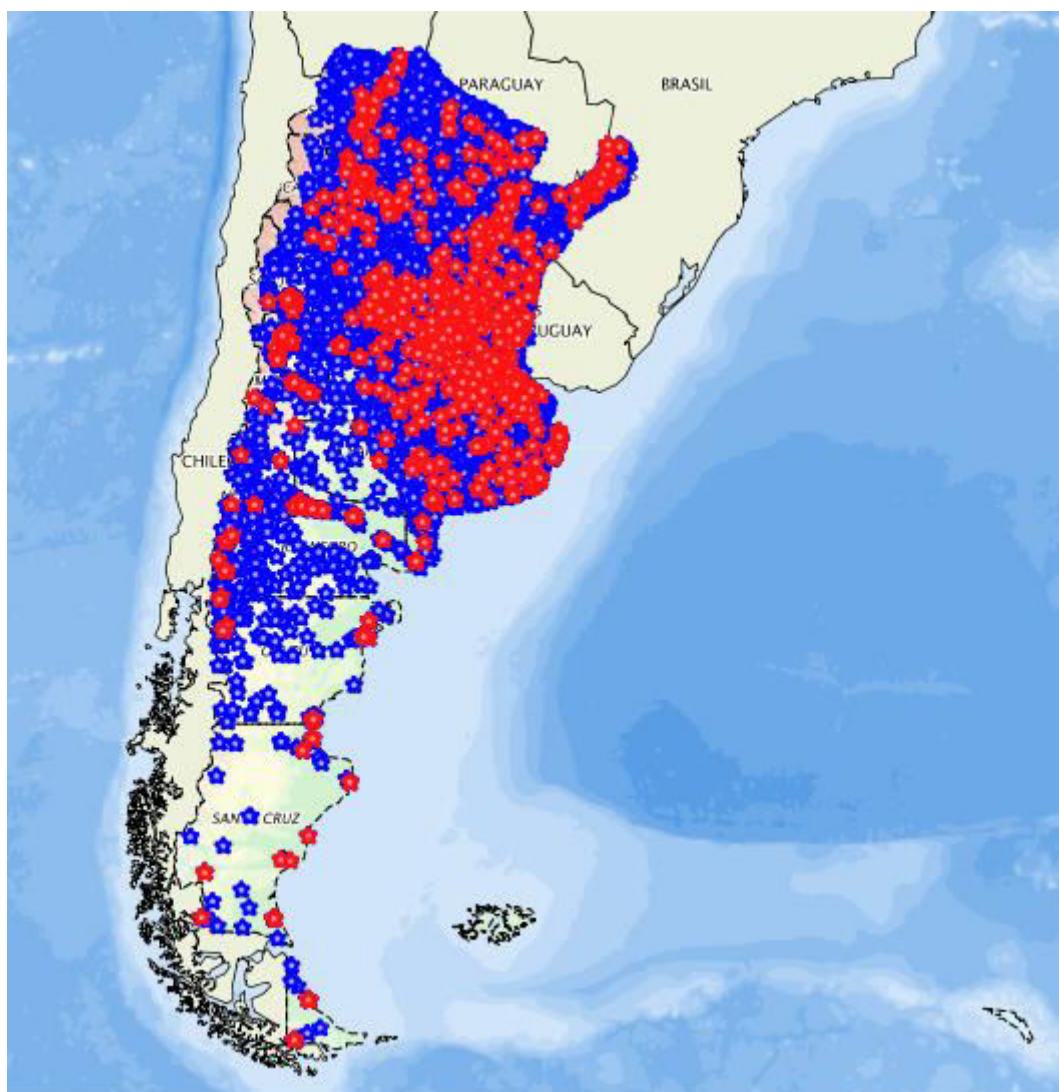
**Note:** The red dots, which are private institutions, overlap the blue ones, which are public institutions. It does not mean that either are red or blue dots.



Source: Ministry of Education of the Nation.

#### 7.4. Appendix D: Geographical Coverage of Primary Education

**Note:** The red dots, which are private institutions, overlap the blue ones, which are public institutions. It does not mean that either are red or blue dots.



Source: Ministry of Education of the Nation.

## 7.5. Appendix E: Geographical Coverage of Secondary Education

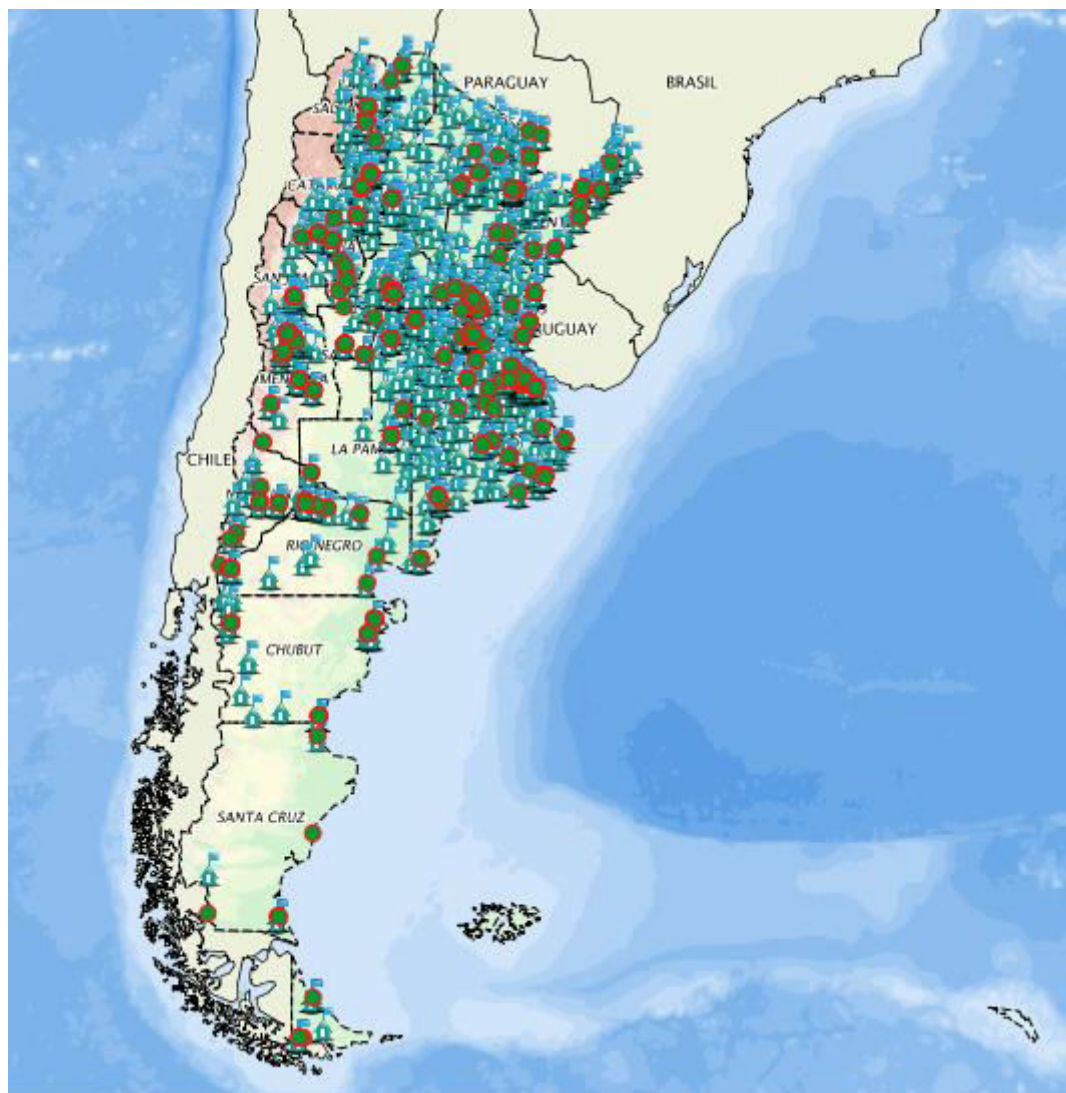


Source: Ministry of Education of the Nation.



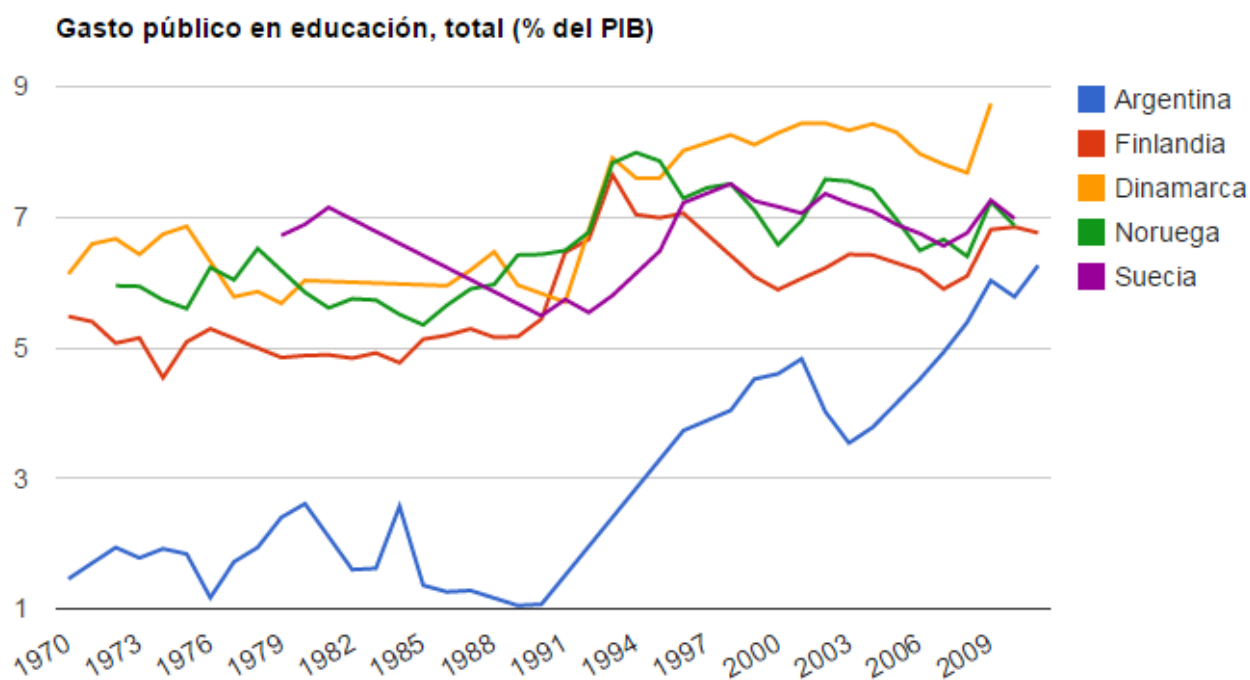
## 7.6. Appendix F: Geographical Coverage of Tertiary Education

**Note:** The green/red dots indicate Universities, while the small blue school icons indicate other Tertiary Institutions.



Source: Ministry of Education of the Nation.

## 7.7. Appendix G: Public Expenditure on Education, % of GDP



Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, UNESCO.

## 7.8.Appendix H: Government Expenditure per Student in PPP\$ for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education

### H1: Primary Education.

Education <sup>1</sup> : Government expenditure per student in PPP \$

Customise

Export

Draw chart

Indicator	Government expenditure per primary student (PPP\$)														
Time	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Country															
Argentina	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 982.4	..
Denmark	7 011.5	6 624.5	6 982.9	7 501.6	7 576.8	..	8 029.8	8 385.2	8 903.4	9 211.3	9 864.9	11 127.1	11 736.4	9 461.6	..
Finland	..	4 120.2	4 320.4	4 606.7	4 890.9	5 101.3	5 528.6	5 521.1	5 982.3	6 298.3	7 033.6	7 328.6	7 705.8	8 139.9	8 295.7
Norway	(+)	5 978.7	..	..	7 557.1	8 129.8	8 458.9	8 943.7	9 718.5	10 157.7	10 987.5	11 760.1	12 197.3	12 300.5	..
Sweden	5 723.2	5 799.6	6 392.6	6 164.7	6 853.0	7 002.8	8 070.6	8 102.9	8 693.8	9 609.8	10 385.6	10 620.6	10 924.1	11 242.8	..

### H2: Secondary Education.

Education <sup>1</sup> : Government expenditure per student in PPP \$

Customise Export Draw chart

Indicator	Government expenditure per secondary student (PPP\$)														
Time	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Country															
Argentina	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4 674.7	..
Denmark	9 894.5	10 264.2	11 003.5	10 246.5	11 010.8	10 601.5	11 424.7	11 670.3	12 466.3	12 119.8	12 460.9	12 690.6	13 684.1	12 753.2	..
Finland	..	6 109.8	6 148.9	6 693.4	7 198.6	7 491.1	9 659.4	9 888.3	10 530.9	11 099.4	12 248.9	12 904.4	13 364.1	13 968.1	..
Norway	(*)	8 316.6	..	..	11 316.4	12 365.3	12 702.4	13 590.5	13 882.6	14 582.4	15 386.8	15 912.9	15 750.6	16 177.0	..
Sweden	6 913.8	6 771.1	7 186.2	7 206.5	7 503.3	7 814.0	10 844.6	10 565.6	11 255.4	11 782.3	12 227.5	12 376.6	12 610.7	13 586.4	..

### H3: Tertiary Education.

Education <sup>1</sup> : Government expenditure per student in PPP \$

Customise Export Draw chart

Indicator	Government expenditure per tertiary student (PPP\$)														
Time	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Country															
Argentina	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 159.9	
Denmark	16 318.7	17 740.3	20 242.1	22 251.3	22 739.5	20 352.2	20 210.2	18 433.0	19 376.4	20 221.7	20 621.6	21 889.0	22 709.5	22 224.7	
Finland	..	9 560.1	9 866.8	9 841.7	10 189.7	10 185.9	10 767.2	10 555.4	11 060.0	11 442.5	12 358.2	13 911.0	14 094.7	14 601.0	14 477.8
Norway	12 989.3	13 664.0	14 212.7	16 195.2	17 783.5	18 897.0	21 737.7	23 229.1	23 928.4	25 974.6	28 159.6	26 731.7	25 572.6	26 102.4	
Sweden	15 100.4	13 433.1	13 931.0	13 882.7	14 231.8	13 712.2	13 726.2	13 108.3	13 878.8	14 728.4	16 378.8	16 817.0	16 527.8	16 817.0	

Source: Institute for Statistics, UNESCO.

## 7.9. Appendix I: The Evolution of Tertiary Education Enrollment in Argentina

The evolution of tertiary education enrollment in Argentina												
Year	Student enrollment in tertiary education in numbers of students	Increasing of Student enrollement between the periods in %	Net enrollment for tertiary education in %	Change of Net enrollment between the periods in percentage points	Number of people with theoretical age for tertiary education (18-24)	Increasing of people with theoretical age for tertiary education between the periods in %	Proportion of people with theoretical age for tertiary education in relation to Total National Population in %	Change in the Proportion of people with theoretical age for tertiary education in relation to Total National Population between the periods in percentage points	Total National Population	Increasing of TNP between the periods in %	Proportion of student enrollment in relation to TNP in %	Change in the Proportion of student enrollment in relation to TNP between the periods in percentage points
1970	274,634		9.9		2,783,700		11.6		23,979,000		1.15	
		79		5.7		12.9		-0.4		17.3		0.60
1980	491,473		15.6		3,142,971		11.2		28,120,000		1.75	
		105		12.9		12.5		-0.5		17.6		1.25
1991	1,008,231		28.5		3,537,458		10.7		33,075,000		3	
		100		16.2		27.8		1.3		13.8		2.4
2002	2,020,662		44.7		* 4,523,952		12		37,628,000		5.4	
		34		11.9		5.5		-0.4		9.2		1.2
2012	2,703,770		56.6		4,773,940		11.6		41,087,000		6.6	
* The figure is an average of the data from years 2001 and 2003, since the data for 2002 was not available.												

Source: own elaboration based on data from UN and UIS.UNESCO.



### 7.10. Appendix J: Net Enrollment Rate by Quintile

Net enrollment rate in tertiary education for quintile of income					
	Quintiles				
Year	1	2	3	4	5
1980	5,1	6,1	12,3	17,8	37,3
1991	7,7	13,6	5,5	21,5	41,1
2002	7,2	15,1	25,6	39,8	61,8
2012	19,9	24	33,3	44,5	53,1
1 = lowest income					
5 = highest income					

Source: own elaboration based on data from SEDLAC, CEDLAS and the World Bank.