

The Curriculum in Tension: a Discussion of Universalism and Particularism

Myriam Southwell¹

CONICET / Universidad Nacional de La Plata / FLACSO, Argentina

When the configuration of the school, its internal dynamics and social integration, is analyzed, it is necessary to review the history, as it provides some structural elements of school organization and its founding myths that are still current (Dussel, 1997 and 2008; Tenti, 2003). The central argument that I would like to take, moreover, is that some central components of the modern school device are being dislocated. Thus, some modes of operation, institutional dynamics and functions of the school have begun to settle in, which disagree with some of the central premises of that school format.

In this analysis will be the conceptualization developed by Vincent, Lahire and Thin (1994) about the school format, where they refer to a socio-historical setting which results in a school socialization mode that prevailed over other modes. To speak about school format is therefore to investigate what gives unity to a particular historical configuration, which emerged in certain social formations and which is constituted and tends to prevail, taking up and modifying certain elements of previous forms.² Like any social relationship it takes place in space and time, the autonomy of the pedagogical relationship establishes a specific space, different from other places where social activities take place: the school.

One aspect that has become evident in recent studies³ is that some central components of the modern school *dispositif* are clearly called into question. Thus, new forms of operation, institutional dynamics and functions of the school are developing, which differ from some central premises of the traditional school device. In order to explore this issue, we will take some school experiences that have emerged and grown under the influence of diverse social demands; we will concentrate in two new formats: *Agricultural Family Schools and Reentry Schools*. The curtailment of these two formats does not exclude the existence of other formats related to jobless movements, popular high schools, etc.⁴

The common practice as a metaphor

From this confirmation, two issues arise which we would like to discuss here. The first is more inherent to the pedagogical discourse and it refers to which extent we can speak about the school as a moderately homogeneous set of features, when in fact the diversification of experiences has become much broader than in traditional formats.

We seem to be facing certain "disordering" of that pattern of operation which turned out to be very effective for a long time and we are also facing certain new organizations or expressions that agree and at the same time differ from that model. We should not forget that the denomination of school reduced the plurality of experiences of



TO CITE THIS ARTICLE PLEASE INCLUDE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Southwell, Myriam (2016) The curriculum in tension. A discussion of universalism and particularism. *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* 13 (1) <http://nitinat.library.ubc.ca/ojs/index.php/tci> <access date>

the school from its very origin. At a certain point, the school denomination- in modern logic- involved a metaphorizing capacity which made it possible to construct a canon or model. That metaphorizing capacity seems to be shattered and the reasons for the school tend to be relocated in new formats, which defy the best known ones.⁵

The modern school is, then, this historical practice that was crystallized in a particular, contingent and arbitrary institutional framework, and has served multiple purposes that exceed those that were proclaimed in origin. There, equality was established in a discursive articulation that would last for centuries and in our region it meant a valuable process of inclusion and social mobility. But as we also know, equality became equivalent to indiscriminate and indistinct inclusion in a common identity, establishing discursive equivalence between inclusion and homogenization.

A long time ago, sociology and educational politics researchers stated that it was the middle class which benefited the most from the school that modernity strengthened, since it has adopted ways of life, interests and productive orientations- among other aspects- of the middle class (Power et al, 2003). The new school formats that we are going to present make clear, once again, the failure of the traditional school to address the needs of the traditionally abused sectors and the own phenomena of fragmentation and growing social differentiation.

Disordering the canon: two new types of secondary school

*Agricultural Family Schools (AFS)*⁶. The alternation as a pedagogical proposal has a history of several decades in the region, although very little coverage. In recent years, the creation of these schools has expanded, while there appeared a movement that brings together seventy-five of them in associations that promote the creation of new ones. Thus, there has been a strong development of these experiences around 2000 by the creation of some of them and the consolidation of organizations that made them stronger.⁷ His work is characterized by proposing as a modality a system of alternation which consists in students staying a week or two at school and one or two weeks at home, encouraging young farmers to pursue secondary education while stimulating strategies of rural life, strengthening the roots and the appraisal and improvement of that rural environment.⁸

An essential aspect of the proposal is the concern for consolidating the roots of the youths to their land and their communities. A combination is made of classroom activities with the work of agricultural production and food processing to transform local raw materials. The school also serves as a center of cultural activities, "non-formal" training for the peasant sector and hosts meetings of the Farmers Fair, a venture of sustainable marketing of peasant products. The political sources of these experiences are diverse. The older ones contained proposals for popular education promoted by social movements, extensionism and grassroots social activism. More recent ones have been linked with focalizing policies and public organisms of rural development and there are also links with the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church. School action is aimed at rural aboriginal youth and families and Creole peasants who are farmers, ranchers, laborers and public employees who live in rural areas and are related to rural life. This includes Aboriginal people of different ethnicities (Wichi and Guarani, among others) and some old colonies that were the result of immigration processes. In order to be able to attend these schools it is exclusive to belong to indigenous or Creole communities and they must live and work in rural areas. Families gather at the AFS to reflect on specific issues of school life, with power to decide on the curriculum, and pedagogical issues. To this end, they organized a Council of Parents who have legal and



economic responsibilities, related to ensuring building and equipment conditions. Their responsibilities also extend to political articulations –in order to integrate the school into the community and to link it with other institutions in the area and the region- and teaching articulations, by participating in the decision-making about the curriculum definition together with the teaching team. This single aspect would call for a profound discussion on the role of communities and the state in defining curriculum and school property. The school organization intends to appraise the varied cultural wealth left by indigenous peoples and small farmers. It also seeks to give educational value to that cultural heritage traditionally undervalued by the most widespread educational model. Likewise, it proposes the commitment of teachers and students to analyze the reality in which we live, thus collaborate with community enrichment; here we taken up here some early Freire pedagogy in relation to the importance of overcoming the antinomy learner-educator, lore-scientific knowledge, and so on.

Re-entry Schools⁹. This modality comprises eight schools created in the City of Buenos Aires from 2004, aimed at a population that meets the characteristic of having spent at least a period of a year or more out of the system, i.e. without schooling. Also, the age should be minimum sixteen and maximum eighteen to enroll in the first level of the subjects in the curriculum. The starting point of the proposal was an extended diagnosis about one of the reasons why young people leave school is associated with the rigidity of the academic system, with little time flexibility, and grade repetition due to pending subjects which does not recognize the knowledge that has been accredited. Of course, one cannot ignore the impact of economic and social difficulties and the lack of protection and assistance which characterize the living conditions of these young people.

supports the construction of several training paths, and allows students to progress according to their capabilities, even if they are unable to attend simultaneously all the subjects that traditionally come into a school year (Resolution 814 / SED / 04).

According to this structure, the student has the freedom to decide whether to take up optional activities, which they will be and when to do it along his/her training path. In order to achieve the construction of several training paths, the plan has a system of promotion by subjects and an entry system that recognizes past achievements, so that during the same school year a student can take and approve courses of different classes or levels of the curriculum. Thus, promotion by year is void and so is the situation of grade repetition of full year for those students who do not approve more than two subjects in a course. In this way, students must not repeat any subject already approved. The plan is accompanied by a system of attendance by subjects, defining the regularity of students based on the percentage of attendance in each of the subjects. It includes a combination of annual and quarterly subjects, and optional curricular units. The latter are optional for students: Arts, Physical Activity and Practical Workshop. The law adds that

the plan is focused on the core subjects of the curriculum. Its full development encompasses four (4) years of study, which vary according to individual rhythms and accreditation of prior knowledge (Resolution 814 / SED / 04 and 4539 / SED / 06).

An organizational aspect which is different is that some of these schools have



open enrollment and activities from August to August, which modifies the traditional pose of the school year running from March to December- with registration only at the beginning or at the end of that cycle- and being interrupted in the months of January and February on the assumption that it is a summer holiday cycle with the family. With the features we have described, the student has more options to advance their career and get an appraisal for their achievements and not just for their failures. Along with that, there is an organization linked to strengthening the autonomy of students who are often informal or formal workers or try to be, parents and / or breadwinner. This combination of factors has allowed schooling to be a part of life for a group of teenagers who had previously ruled out this option. There is a discontinuity of students that can also be interpreted in line with the need to work. Generally, students often get temporary jobs which lead them to leave school for a few months but have the possibility to return to the institution, by rearranging their path, or by reenrolling in subjects in which he/she lost credit for excessive absences. As we know, following an established and inalterable sequence was the factor that consolidated modern school discipline; this and non-interchangeability of essential student places (*alumni*: subject of not knowing) and teacher (subject who knows) were pillars of the constitution of the *dispositif*. In this new scheme, the timing and sequence are disordered. This is a central aspect when it comes to analyzing the proposal, since it is one of the structural elements that involved the need to think of certain changes of the school format. In the legal instruments through which this policy is driven, the following tension arises: inclusion-universalization/adaptation-differentiation¹⁰.

This same tension can be seen when analyzing the rationale of the curriculum, as it tries at the same time, to differentiate for a particular population but still delivering a common certification, in order not to create accreditation differences with the rest of the system. You could say that it contemplates the differences as a starting point, trying to reach a similar result to the rest of the educational system. So far we have looked for ways to synthesize aspects that are challenged or revised regarding the hegemonic school *dispositif*; these are: school age groupings and the very idea of gradualism, sequencing, concurrency, cycling, calendar year, and families taking part in curriculum decisions, among others. A common argument is that it's about particular experiences; that will be the motive of the following sections.

The particularism-universalism tension as a matrix of interpretation

How do the particular and the universal dialogue in these situations? In what way does the relationship they establish with individual and / or universal claims make it possible to democratize the educational experience they produce? How are they linked to the construction of a common imaginary? To what extent do they hinder or promote the construction of the collective? Is the latter necessary for the school of today?

We have learned with Ernesto Laclau that universalism and particularism are two ineradicable dimensions in the construction of political identities, but the shape of the articulation between the two is far from obvious. Laclau suggests that:

It is the "globality" of these projects (Illuminist) that is in crisis. Whatever the sign of the new vision of politics which is emerging is going to be, it is clear that one of its basic dimensions is going to be the redefinition of the existing relation between universality and particularity (Laclau, 1996, p. 8).



Shaping the educational system included -albeit much later in high school than in primary-, a homogenization of subjects and educational policies as well as a transformation of cultural borders and a path of upward mobility and inclusion in the public space for sectors that were previously excluded. Among the historical ways in which the relationship between universality and particularity is thought, are those in which either the particular realizes in itself the universal -that is, it eliminated itself as the particular and transformed itself in a transparent medium through which universality operated (the idea of teaching civilization and of school culture has enough of this); or it negates the universal by asserting its own particularism (Laclau, 1996, p. 47). Thus, the resistances of other cultures were viewed not as struggles between particular identities and cultures but as part of a totalizing struggle between universality and particularisms - the notion of "people without history" expressed the inability of the latter to access the universal - (Laclau, 1996, pp. 50-51).

The distance between the universal and the particular is unbridgeable, which is the same as saying that the universal is nothing other than a particular that at some moment has become dominant. Therefore, our starting point has been to place the modern school format as the mode in which a contingent and arbitrary number of reasons and instrumentations became hegemonic. However, the tendency to "disorder" allows putting in evidence that those elements -particular and contingent- can be displaced by others- equally particular and contingent-also arriving to occupy a hegemonic position. This leads us to place our analysis in a look that leaves out the pure particularism.

One reason why pure particularism is not possible is because if each identity is in a differential relationship with all other identities, it presupposes not only the presence of all other identities but also the global space that constitutes the differences as such. If the particularity asserts itself as mere particularity in a purely differential relation with other particularities, it is sanctioning the status quo in power relations among groups. You cannot assert a differential identity without distinguishing it from a context, and in the process of establishing the distinction you are at the same time asserting the context (Laclau, 1996).

This conceptual distinction allows us to interpret the tension that occurs in the development of school experiences. They fully express this paradoxical movement: to differentiate themselves - disorder the format to serve a particular population, yet this differentiation is made in an attempt to ensure a universal right. There is another way to articulate with the equality, disordering the traditional format to enable possessing the same certifications-and through them the right-of what people have understood in generic terms. We might think that an operation occurs that puts equality (of right and capacity) as a starting point, which differs in the paths to go, but still provides a common point of arrival. In that search the distinction is not being placed on the subject that meets certain specific conditions, but in the educational institution that must develop different strategies to achieve a common right.

We wonder if these new formats democratize school experience. We will take Ernesto Laclau's distinction made in *La razón populista* about the appeal to democracy. He takes away from the idea of democracy simply as regime and uses the notion seated on two aspects: the demands are made *to* the system *by* someone who has been excluded from it, i.e. there is an egalitarian dimension implicit, and its own emergency presupposes some kind of exclusion or deprivation (2005b, p.158). The schools described are based on unmet demands and forms of exclusion and they develop strategies aimed at particular groups to ensure a universal purpose of compliance with



the right to education. This does not mean losing sight of the fact that the responses tested open other tensions and construct other exclusions. It does so, for example, when posing the exclusionary nature of being a peasant producer in order to be able to attend an Agricultural Family School, criterion by which there have been cases reported by the directors of institutions who have not admitted other youngsters for not meeting that condition.

So, then, democratization is located around constructing the community.

How to think of community unity -as relative as you may want it- when any approach to it must be based on social and cultural particularities that are not only more pronounced than in the past but are also the element that defines the central imaginary of a group? Does not this imaginary exclude all identification with more universal human values? And, seen from another angle, does not the very proliferation of antagonisms, the very fact that there is no exact juxtaposition between the cultural group and the global community, require a language of "rights" that should include the universal reference that is being questioned (Laclau, 1996, p. 8).

The AFS have as a main concern to avoid uprooting and the training and experimentation in other types of knowledge and ways of life that enable students to distance themselves from their community of belonging. In this logic, the possibility that the school may expand the perspective of transiting, learning from and exploring other cultural communities and dynamics is seen as a negative trait or even as a failure of its own operation. There is a narrowing of the concept of community where the local, the surrounding, becomes the world of belonging thus disabling the transit through other cultural experiences and contacts. A community is defined as such by forging unity among a group of people that define and share a "we", the principle on which they sustain their identity. The "we" implies a "they" from which to differentiate beyond the similarities manifested by the existence of shared features. The question raised by communitarian dynamics calls into question the processes by which differences- mainly motivations associated with the process and the consequences of being part of a group "of equals"- are built. In some cases, the community may involve the absence of confrontation among its members, excluding the negotiation and assuming the existence of the same motivations and values. In others, the weight placed on the differences end in confrontation and expulsion of those who look more like "other" from "them" in an operation that defines poles of security and in the opposite direction, of insecurity which must be combated. Thus, the boundary around the local poses a paradox because while strengthening the subjects in their daily localizations it also ties horizons to the limits of proximity. If the local appears to be limited to the resources available in the territory, the contextual realities and unequal educational circuits -in terms of the production of social and cultural skills, are validated. When analyzing the dynamics of formation of political identities, Gitlin says

Anatomy becomes destiny (...) what began as an effort to affirm the dignity, to overcome exclusion and denigration and obtain representation has also developed a hardening of its borders (Gitlin, 2000, p.172).

In the process of "localization", institutions "adapt" to and receive demands from, the surrounding reality, but they also *configure* -they contribute to form- that



community of reference. So, they build a "map" of proximity, on what is possible and desirable, on the demands and expectations. Let us also introduce some nuance in the argument that we have been presenting; we should not forget that the local scene has potential to break identities and unfair and totalizing practices in the constitution of social life. However, participation enclosed in the walls of the territory, and based solely on nearby solidarities runs the risk of limiting the problems, issues and interests of the subject to the field of micro.

Either way, we should emphasize another aspect. The universal is the symbol of an absent fullness, and the particular exists only in the contradictory movement of asserting a differential identity and at the same time, canceling it through inclusion in a non-differential medium. The construction of differential identities on the basis of closing up completely is not a "*progressive political alternative*" per se (Laclau, 1996, p. 57). The right to difference has to be affirmed inside a global community, i.e. within an area in which the group in question has to live with other groups. For example, those who are engaged in a struggle for internal reform of the institutional framework, if -at the same time- they refuse to recognize the rootedness in political and cultural values of the traditional or dominant sectors, they cannot articulate their demands in any broader hegemonic operation. This condemns them to a peripheral and ambiguous relationship with existing institutions which can only have paralyzing political effects (Laclau, 1996).

Following Rosanvallon and Fitoussi (2003), we could say that the weakening of collective solidarities leads to the strengthening of solidarities from the immediate environment with the risk of further deepening the logic of social fragmentation. In this context, the local space -area or neighborhood- becomes the stage on which social differentiation and therefore the form assumed by exclusion in urban space are settled. This hinders the possibility of being part of the same social group constructing borders, now, around the immediate surroundings (Fitoussi and Rosanvallon, 2003).

At this point, there are a number of aspects that make us think that new formats not only are the affirmation of a particularity but they put in evidence some gaps and exclusions of the traditional school model, and knock on its door with a few different tests that, of course, are not exempt from power relations and exclusions. Therefore, there stand out some of the places the traditional school could not reach or the subordination and injustices it established in some cultures and lifestyles. Thus, the exclusion is positioned on the characteristics adopted by the model and not in those subjects who have been removed from it. The existence of these schools may serve to question the system as it reveals the mechanisms by which schools systematically exclude some students and ways to solve them, but it can also legitimize the existence of a parallel circuit that is responsible for those the other schools ejected. Many of the differences in the proposal are related to changes and flexibilizations of the traditional plans that could be designed for the whole population and which would try to address some problems of the middle school level in general (Arroyo et al, 2007).

If democracy is possible, it is because the universal has neither a necessary body nor content; on the contrary, various groups compete among themselves in order to give their particularities, temporarily, a function of universal representation. The society generates an entire vocabulary of empty signifiers¹¹ whose temporary senses are the result of political competition. It is the ultimate failure of society when constituting itself as a society, which makes the distance between the universal and the particular unbridgeable and, as a result, it puts the "*concrete social agents in charge of this impossible task, which is what makes democratic interaction possible*" (Laclau, 1996,



p. 68).

Democratization, then, is linked here with new practices that had restricted the universalism of our political ideals in our society to limited sectors of the population. It is possible to retain the universal dimension while extending its areas of application, which in turn redefines the concrete content of that universality. The universalism, as a horizon, expands while its necessary bond with all particular content breaks.

The end of the school form?

As we have hinted, there is a risk of deepening fragmentation, cultural impoverishment and stigmatization of individuals. The democratic challenge, as we defined above- is to build a common space for dialogue that may contain a variety of experiences, knowledge, histories and cultural wealth, where diversification may be contained as an obligation of the system and not as a disqualification of "misfit" subjects.

We are thus diminishing the borders between the particular and the universal and, therefore, the tensions these experiences have in shaping them. We must also say that the modern school format had the same tensions surrounding the particular and the universal but it built a hegemony on the basis of certain particularities that became the surface of inscription for all that was meant as school and, even more, as education. We have said that these new formats can be challenging that discursive construction, struggling for other signifiers to absorb a plurality of meanings around the plurality of the learning experience and therefore, relocating other particularities in a new hegemonic conformation. There is a struggle for the school not to remain being equivalent to urban middle class, with Western European values, organized around nuclear families but to be able to accommodate young workers, both rural and urban, breadwinners. In addition, another issue that becomes evident is that the school form can be modified so that it is the school itself and not the target population the one that needs to transform its internal logic; its own efficacy and not the individuals' should be placed under the spotlight.

An issue that should be raised is the role of politics in relation to what it means to educate the entire population; the common refers to an articulation that is political, which interprets what the needs and priorities are and it must cover what is common to all. But besides expressing "interests" where they already exist, it should help to constitute them. It is thus created -as Laclau says- a certain area of indeterminacy between civil society and public space in which social and political variables are constantly intertwined. Thus, there appears a new type of transversality which no longer operates only in terms of the political parties but also of the social forces, because there is no democratic politics without the incorporation of new actors to the public sphere (Laclau, 2005a). Let us take one aspect that we have touched tangentially: to recover cultural experiences that deal with indigenous traditions and knowledge in rural areas and to incorporate them in a hierarchical form to the cultural canon is not a movement that must be thought for private groups who are so close to those experiences; on the contrary, politics should convert those experiences into heritage of the society as a whole. Giving rise to new forms of inclusion may help resolve some injustices and think of mechanisms and institutions to avoid crystallizing them and converting them into an absolute otherness.

Thinking of politics involves thinking of postures that litigate for the space of the universal, that propose themselves as the best representatives of the common good (even if these postures must be assumed to be open and subject to constant revision),



and in processing differences and antagonisms. The common education designates not only what is basic for all, but it also highlights the comprehensive nature of what is put as common for all, over the individual desires and needs. Currently, school is still a public institution that responds to commands and interests that include but also transcend those who make it daily. The public, clearly, does not belong only to the State or to the teachers as representatives of the public, or to families or communities. Thinking of the public involves a complex space which includes the doing of each of us, but that doing of each one must become broader, more inclusive and less subject to the individual. That is precisely the mediation that politics must make, as social needs do not tend spontaneously to converge into a coherent and unified whole but depend on changing and contingent articulations, that is, essentially political ones. Let us take the concerns of the beginning: to what extent can we talk about the school and refer to a fairly homogeneous set of features? To what extent can be ensured that the school forms part of the construction of the common?¹⁰ The plurality of experiences of the transmission of culture, and the need for the educational discourse to be able to accommodate heterogeneity as a way to approach a more democratic distribution have already been highlighted. The school situations that we have reviewed here should not be undervalued as particularistic, nor overvalued as a replacement for an educational discourse. Both positions offer us few or no ways out, in the first place because, as we have sought to show, particularism and universalism are inseparable and -going a step further- what we call universal arises from particularisms that get to consolidate as hegemonic and thus become an absent completeness horizon. We still have pending how to include these different formative experiences in a common horizon. The universal, as we have seen, does not have its own specific content (which would enclose it in itself) but it is the horizon -always more distant- resulting from the expansion of an endless chain of equivalent claims. The conclusion seems to be that universality is uncontainable with any particularity, but at the same time it cannot be separated from the particular. That is why, an exercise like this should give us the chance to re-display invisibilizations, injustices and exclusions that the most widespread school form included, and encourage them to interrogate and mark the inadequacies of that school as a way to question, tense and, why not renew the school. Also opening this dialogue should also give attention to the risk of circumscribing interests, practices and reasons to a restricted community.

It would be a mistake to assume that the interaction between the hegemonic school format and the new emerging experiences has no effect in them. In these conditions, the school institution has certainly fallen into an awkward position. Yet, we do not intend to re-establish new totalizing formats, but to show that the capacity of openness reached so as to name the exclusions and deficiencies of the school format may also be an opening to start a dialogue with other communities, and what it gets to connect may reach the forms of the plural and the collective. By focusing attention on these new school formats we are not trying to say that the school is mortally wounded by any means. In its long history the school has been absorbing changes and reorganizations which have also infringed force to it. We are far from suggesting, diagnosing and, much less, wanting the death of the school; what is certain is that new problems and answers hit its door and it can get good benefits if it opens to dialogue. It will be an occasion to question the story of inclusion we knew, the narrative that said that that school system was (and is) the only way to democratize society.



Notes

¹ islaesmeralda@gmail.com

² According to Vincent, Lahire and Thin (1994) the path through the modifications of the Institute of the Brothers schooling system to the Mutual Institutions and the School of the Republic many things have changed, but what we have defined as the school form has certainly not changed.

³ This is the project "Intersections between inequality and secondary education: an analysis of the dynamics of production and reproduction of educational and social inequality in four jurisdictions (Buenos Aires, Province of Neuquén, Salta and Buenos Aires Province)" and "Impact of the restructuring of the past 20 years in educational inequality". Both projects are developed in FLACSO, Argentine academic headquarters.

⁴ Although not explored in this paper, schools developed by *picketeers* or similar organizations, schools in recovered factories, etc. could be included in this list.

⁵ The conceptual use of the rhetoric notion of metaphor that we give here comes from different sources, from the application given by Freud to characterize the processes of over-determination and its relationship with analogy to the sociological update of that interpretation to characterize the forms of symbolic redirection and plurality of meanings. The concept of over-determination is established in the field of the symbolic, and lacks any meaning outside it. In that sense, Althusser's assertion that "There is nothing in the social that is not over determined" confirms that the social is established as symbolic order. The perspective we use also takes the intervention of Paul De Man about expanding the frontiers of theoretical disciplines with the intervention of literary ones. The symbolic nature of social relations put into play linguistic processes of condensation and dislocation, symbolization, and secondary revision. It is these considerations which justify the understanding of the metaphorizing capacity of social discourse.

⁶ This section refers to reports made by the team belonging to the project "Intersections between inequality and secondary education: an analysis of the dynamics of production and reproduction of educational and social inequality in four jurisdictions." Salta node.

⁷ For example, the first school of this kind was established in the province of Salta in 2001. Also between 2000 and 2001, such schools in Misiones, Corrientes and Santa Fe were created.

⁸ The AFS form a national movement, with the majority located in northeastern Argentina; they organize provincially and nationally in an association called APAFS (Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Family Schools).

⁹ More detailed information on such schools can be found in the report by Tiramonti, (dir.), Arroyo, Nóbile, Montes, Poliak, Sendón, and Ziegler cited in the Bibliography. This description is made on the basis of that report.



¹⁰ The preamble of the Resolutions that regulate the curriculum declares "That one of the purposes of the education policy of the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires is the adaptation of the educational offer to the demands of the community, something that is contemplated in the curriculum that is approved by this Resolution, since it opens to students a broad base of knowledge and skills needed for insertion into academic, labor and social spheres."

¹¹ With the use of the category "signifier", we refer to certain terms that are subject to a strong ideological struggle in society; therefore, these terms will tend to be tendentiously empty signifiers -never completely empty- in view of the fact that given the plurality of conflicts occurring around them, they cannot be fixed to a single discursive articulation, as Ernesto Laclau expressed in his text: *Emancipation and difference*.

References

- Arroyo, M.; Nobile, M.; Poliak, N. y Sendón, M. A., (2007). "Escuelas de Reingreso: análisis de una política de inclusión en un contexto fragmentado", trabajo presentado en las *Cuartas Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores*, Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, UBA, Buenos Aires.
- Carr, W. and Hartnett, A., (1997). *Education and the struggle for democracy. The politics of educational ideas*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- De Man, P., "Reading (Proust)", en De Man, P., (1979). *Allegories of Reading. Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, pp.57-58.
- Dussel, I., (2004). "Inclusión y Exclusión en la Escuela Moderna Argentina: Una Perspectiva Postestructuralista", *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, Vol. 34, N° 122, maio/ago.
- Dussel, I., (2008) "¿Qué lugar tiene la escuela media en la producción y reproducción de la desigualdad?" *Elementos para el debate*", en *Revista de Política Educativa*, Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires.
- Fitoussi, J.P. y Rosanvallon, P., (1997). *La nueva era de las desigualdades*, Buenos Aires, Manantial.
- Gitlin, T., (2000). "El auge de la política de la identidad. Un examen y una crítica", en Arditi, Benjamín (Ed.) *El reverso de la diferencia. Identidad y política*, Caracas, Nueva Sociedad.
- Laclau, E., (2005 a, 2005 b). *Emancipación y diferencia*, Buenos Aires, Ariel, 1996., "Populismo y Transformación del Imaginario Político", en *Revista Todavía*, N° 12, Buenos Aires, diciembre. *La razón populista*, Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Power, S.; Edwards, T.; Whitty, G. and Wigfall, V., (2003). *Education and the Middle Class*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Sennet, R., (2000). *La corrosión del carácter. Las consecuencias personales del trabajo en el nuevo capitalismo*, Barcelona, Anagrama.
- Southwell, M., (2003). "El emperador está desnudo. Figuras de Modernización y Educación", en VV.AA, *Lo que queda de la escuela*, Edit. Laborde - Centro de Pedagogía Crítica de Rosario.
- Southwell, M.; Stagno, L.; Lichtmann, V. y Legarralde, M., (2007). "Producción y



-
- reproducción de la desigualdad educativa en la escuela media: exploraciones en La Plata y zona de influencia", ponencia presentada en la *I Reunión Nacional de Investigadores en Juventudes*, Ciudad de La Plata.
- Tenti F., E. (2003). *Educación media para todos. Los desafíos de la democratización del acceso*. Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE-IIPE-Unesco-Editorial Altamira.
- Tyack D. y Cuban L. (2000). *En busca de la Utopía. Un siglo de reformas en las escuelas públicas*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Tiramonti, G. (dir.), Arroyo, M., Nóbile, M., Montes, N.P., Nadina, S., Alejandra, M. y Ziegler, S., (2007). *Nuevos formatos escolares para promover la inclusión educativa*, FLACSO, disponible en: http://www.flacso.org.ar/educacion/investigacion_formatosesc.php.
- Vincent, G., Lahire, B. e Thin, D. (1994) "Sur l'histoire e la théorie de la forme scolaire". In Vincent, Guy (dir.). *L'éducation prisonnière de la forme scolaire? Scolarisation et socialisation dans les sociétés indutrielles*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.

Submitted: December, 19th, 2015

Approved: June, 27th, 2017

