Peripheral globalization, political regulation of the educational system and the creation of inequalities in Argentina: a review of the current situation

Dr. Estela M. Miranda, Lecturer in Educational Policy and Legislation. Faculty of Philosophy and the Humanities. National University of Córdoba, Argentina

“It is time to think differently about education policy before it is too late. We need to move beyond the tyrannies of improvement, efficiency and standards, to recover a language of and for education articulated in term of ethics, moral obligations and values”

(Stephen Ball, 2004).

1. Introduction

Since the 1970s Western societies have witnessed a series of structural changes of an economic, political and cultural nature. These transformations, identified by a variety of labels, can be considered from a general perspective to constitute the phenomenon of globalization, or the co-existence of a number of different “globalizations”, according to the definition given by Sousa Santos (Dale and Robertson, 2007; Bonal, 2007).

During the last period of military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983), reforms were initiated in the structure of the nation state. These changes were intensified during the 1990s, again on the basis of a neo-liberal approach, as a pre-condition for the country to be admitted into the system of globalization. The dismantling of the Keynesian component of the Welfare State caused “the separation of the state, the nation and its citizens.” The state thus broke “the traditional pacts with the organized working class, the middle class and domestic business groupings that gave it its essential legitimacy, allying itself with more narrowly-focused business interests and companies transcending national barriers.” The weakening of the state’s role in coordinating and implementing the integration of its citizens into the established social order affected the country’s economic and social structure, leading to a deep social divide that had a dramatic impact on the educational system. The state ceased to be a factor favouring social integration and cohesion,

 · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

forsaking its interventionist role and its direct responsibility for the provision of basic social services such as education (Calderón, 2004; Bresser Pereira, 1998).

Within a context of “second-generation reforms” financed by the World Bank, decentralization [1] became a central plank of the restructuring of the educational system, justified by a desire to introduce an improvement in quality, greater independence for schools and municipal councils so as to bring decision-making closer to the population, and a system of educational assessment as a mechanism for exercising “remote control” and for pressurizing teaching staff (Bonal, 2002; Zufiaurre, 2010).

The promulgation of new regulatory structures (the 1993 Federal Education Law and the 1995 Higher Education Law), which were to form the basis of the Menem government’s so-called “educational transformation” programme, encouraged the application of other means of regulating the educational system deriving from an ever-increasing number of different sources: international organisms, national government, provincial governments, local authorities and the influence of parents through the mechanism of free-market options. This multi-regulation, as João Barroso termed it, substantially modified the style and methods of managing and administering education, engendering a variegated institutional framework that accentuated divisions and educational inequalities. A significant number of studies and research projects demonstrate the relationship between Argentina’s national neo-liberal reform policies and the intensification of already existing social and educational inequalities. They also point to the emergence of new processes [2] affecting different social sectors and show the “diversity of sensibilities” that lead to complex and multiple demands being made on schools (Dubet, 2006, 2004; Barroso, 2005; Tiramonti, 2004; CTERA, 2005).

As in the case of other Latin American countries, the political panorama in Argentina is changing. We are now witnessing a recovery on the part of the nation state through a form of “political steering” of the inspiration, design and implementation of those educational and social policies designed to give priority to social inclusion.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the new processes of political regulation of educational policy and their effects on the intensification of educational inequalities. The question to be investigated is how the evolution of these forms of regulation affects educational processes, re-designing the status of the school and of those participating in it and transforming it into a highly divided zone of public interaction. An analysis is also conducted of attempts made through current educational policies

to limit the above processes and to face the challenge of maintaining the "egalitarian promise" of a public educational system that still exerts a hold on the collective consciousness (or at least on the vast majority of citizens) in terms of the expectation of attaining a better standard of living and of contributing to the welfare of the nation.

For the purposes of this presentation, use is made of the partial results of our own research taking certain provinces of Argentina as its empirical point of reference, and the results of other studies and documents are also applied in order to develop the analysis further.

2. Peripheral globalization and its effects on national policies

Since numerous studies have generated wide-ranging debates on the subject of globalization, I shall confine myself to identifying briefly certain features affecting education. Globalization is a phenomenon that is "complex, multi-dimensional and polycentric" and not without its contradictions. It "has economic, political and cultural ramifications" (Dale, 2007; Torres, 2008), and engenders consequences of different kinds, in both material and symbolic terms. Hardt and Negri (2002) maintain that "In the post-modernization of the global economy, the creation of wealth tends ever more toward what we will call biopolitical production, the production of social life itself, in which the economic, the political, and the cultural increasingly overlap and invest one another."

In both political and economic terms, globalization redefines the power relationships involved in "governance without governments" (Rosenau, as quoted by Dale, 2007), operating through a grouping of supranational organizations (the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, OECD and G7) which to a great extent determine and shape the conditions set for individual nation states through their guidelines (the Washington Consensus). Among these guidelines the pressure to "improve their competitiveness" has led countries to prioritize "the economic dimensions of their activities above all others" (Dale, 2007; Ramonet, 2007; Bonal, 2002). The loss of the "Keynesian" component of the Welfare State weakened their ability to organize and regulate social and economic life and to engender distributive and re-activating policies to attend to countries' internal requirements and needs (De Sousa Santos, 2007).

In its cultural aspect, the main problems revolve around the question of the loss of relevance of local and national cultures when faced with the standardizing effects of

“Americanization” / “Hollywoodization” / “Macdonaldization” in terms of engendering a “generic consumer” (Ball, 2001). At the risk of simplifying such a complex subject, it could be pointed out that we are faced here with the emergence of a system on a worldwide scale that transforms the “very texture of everyday life” (Ball, 2001) into a “liquid life” that “assigns to the world, to people and to all its other animate and inanimate fragments the role of *objects of consumption*”, moving in a continuum that has “consumers” at its opposite pole…. (and) “along which all members of society move and are distributed on a daily basis” (Bauman, 2006).

The increasing and across-the-board use of computer and communication technology and the language and formats of the digital world constitute the “corpus of cultural practices” and the new public arenas in which children and young people socialize today. This cultural experience dominated by the acquisition of a “mosaic of knowledge”, by simultaneous stimuli, hypertext, “disorder, dispersion and random chaos”, the super-imposition of aesthetic genres, the mingling of information and fiction, defines diverse cultural universes and brings into question both school and family life (Quevedo, 2003; Bauman, 2007).

The poor (or emerging) countries of the planet, and particularly in Latin America, were admitted into a “peripheral globalization” with devastating effects not only on their economies: “If in too many instances the benefits of globalization have been less than its advocates claim, the price paid has been greater, as the environment has been destroyed, as political processes have been corrupted and as the rapid pace of change has not allowed countries time for cultural adaptation”(Stiglitz, 2002).

In Argentina, the “centralized state” socio-political pattern, characterized by significant intervention in the economic domain by the Welfare State and the redistribution of incomes through social policies, went into crisis in the mid-1970s. In the 1990s neo-liberal policies to reform the state favoured “making public spending more efficient, privatizing nationalized companies, maintaining the exchange rate, reducing the fiscal deficit, making the regulatory structure of the labour market more flexible and continuing with the transfer of universal social policy responsibilities (such as education) to the provinces.” These measures, among others, were justified by the need to generate conditions in which to be able to ensure the opening up of the economy to the world market, to introduce trans-national capital and to improve the country’s competitiveness in the face of the challenges set by economic globalization. This constituted a “liberal shock” in which, paradoxically, the state played a preponderant role in adapting the

relationship between economic and political activity to the dictates of international organisms and international capital with a view to introducing a market-orientated society (García Delgado, 1998). Unlike the “modernization strategy” applied through the emphasis on economic development in the 1960s, which made the state the driving force behind the process, the “strategy of neo-liberal modernization (….) considers the market as the founding principle for reorganizing society. The result was not only a vigorous expansion of the capitalist market economy, but also and above all the installation of a market-orientated society, in which the typical criteria of rationalism (competitiveness, productivity, profitability, flexibility, efficiency) permeated all spheres of society. The market thus becomes the great integrating force, but with its obvious limitations” (Lechner, 1999; 1991 Ramonet, 2008; Sverdlick, 2010).

The processes of “neo-liberal modernization” resulted in high rates of unemployment, precarious employment, an increase in poverty, social inequalities and the emergence of new forms of social exclusion that Argentina had never experienced before. This situation became dramatically visible with the “total crisis” [3] that was unclenched in late 2001.

In the scenario which led to the development of this crisis it can clearly be seen that the reforming of the state in its administrative and legal aspects, which was the objective of the recommendations made by the international organizations, had a major impact on its symbolic role, that of ensuring “the order that provides generalized social stability, and guarantees equality to all the nation’s citizens through the exercising of their political rights and the effectiveness of individual guarantees (O’Donnell, 2004). Furthermore, the process of de-institutionalization affecting the nation state (together with other institutions such as the family and schools) affected what Dubet and Martuccelli(2000) interpret as “changes in the nature of individuals’ forms of production”, since “de-institutionalization leads to the separation of two processes: socialization and subjectivization” ….(and) “none of these institutions function as tools capable of transforming values into standards, or standards into individual personalities” (Dubet and Martuccelli, 2000). The nation state, and in particular the institution of the state school which had encapsulated the universal values of the nation, now appeared weakened in its capacity to rally subjective opinions to the political ideal of full citizenship.

3. Regulation, multi-regulation and divisiveness in the

educational system

Recent studies of the governability of educational systems maintain that, as a result of the weakening of the Nation State in its material and symbolic aspects, a redefinition took place of the methods of coordinating and controlling educational activity in the system and in schools that goes further than the regulations currently in force (Tenti Fanfani, 2004; Tiramonti, 2008). At this point we shall attempt to focus on the content of this redefinition, the new sources of regulation, the rationale of the approaches that have been adopted and their effects on the educational system, on its institutions and on its stakeholders.

The use of the term “regulation” in the educational field is relatively recent and its diffusion is associated with the explanation of the new operational methods employed by the State for the application of public policy (Barroso, 2005). Maroy and Dupriez define *regulation* as the “totality of the actions put in place by an administration (e.g. a government, or the hierarchy of any organization) in order to orientate the actions and interactions of stakeholders over whom it has a certain degree of authority.” This definition emphasizes the aspects of coordination, control and influence exerted by those who exercise legal authority. Other authors include other aspects of regulation that make it possible to recognize in complex systems such as the educational system “a plurality of sources, objectives and methods of regulation in accordance with the diversity of the stakeholders involved, and their status, interests and strategies” (Barroso, 2000).

In the case of Argentina, it is possible to identify the use of the term *regulation* from the period of the introduction of decentralization onwards, and associated with the new role assigned to the State in the legal framework established to design a “new public administration that replaces direct control over processes on an *a priori* basis by control exerted in terms of results on an *a posteriori* basis.” This is what Guy Neave termed “the Evaluative State” (Neave, 1988; Barroso, 2005).

The concept of regulation and deregulation is moreover also closely linked to the participation of private enterprise in the provision of education, through the creation of educational quasi-markets. By its use of mechanisms of “reallocation of resources”, the State puts schools in competition with one another (through institutional schemes) so as to “earn” funding from the State itself or from private companies that apply the same approach. The concept of quasi-market is employed to define educational systems in which, on the basis of public funding, families may choose an educational establishment for their children. It is founded on the principle

of free choice of schools by families, and has significant effects on the system and on the establishments themselves (in terms of competition between schools, etc.) (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1999).

To make a small digression at this point, it is relevant to recall that such policies – particularly as far as the trend towards privatization is concerned – do not question the existence of the educational system. As Antonio Viñao points out, neo-liberal policies in fact need the State and also need national educational systems: “They need them to such an extent that they take control of them and make them their own domain, using them in a way that favours the short-term interests of the social classes or groupings that benefit from the policies referred to.”

It could be said, then, that the transformation of educational culture to make it attentive to the requirements of the market turns the educational system viewed as a coherent ensemble of institutions into a collection of schools without any coherence or relationship between them, and the individual fragments of which have no form of mutual recognition. With regard to the concept of **fragmentation,** we have taken as our point of reference the contributions made by Guillermina Tiramonti (2004), who defines the phenomenon as “a break with the idea of a common reference to a central core or organizing institution. Each fragment is self-referenced, some of them pay reference to the State, but only some of them; (…) this reference is weak and (…) characterized by a process of de-institutionalization of the State.” “The fragment is organized on the basis of a differentiated axis which does not refer to other axes, so that there is no gradation, but rather extremely pronounced qualitative differences that of course involve very substantial inequalities.” Fragmentation, as the above author also notes, “comports a new emphasis on reverting to what is specific and different, (…) the loss of the universal element thus represents the primacy of specific over universal characteristics.” At the root of this fragmentation is the weakening of the State in its symbolic aspect “as the organ capable of coordinating and including the totality of institutions within a single sensibility.” By fostering the decentralization and autonomy of individual establishments that are characteristic features of the processes of market self-regulation, neo-liberal policies led to the weakening of the State’s capacity to maintain the minimum unity and coherence required by a national educational system.

Basing ourselves on the empirical references of our own research and of other studies both from our own country and from overseas, it is possible to identify three questions that enable us to define certain features of the fragmentation of the

educational system (Barroso; Afonso, 2002).

A. *"The contamination effect"* or *dissemination* of analyses, texts and ideological theories for the drawing up of educational reforms.

B. *"The hybridization effect"*

C. *"The mosaic effect"*

A. ***"The dissemination/contamination effect"***: In the texts, analyses and ideological theories proposing educational reform policies in the 1990s we can identify a group of elements that are common to the countries in the Latin American region and also to countries in the developed world (Miranda, 2003). To use the

terms employed by Barroso (2002), globalization becomes a form of “trans-national regulation”, and national regulatory systems “a kind of low-intensity globalization.” The international “contamination” of reform policies, relying on “magic solutions”, a “new orthodoxy” or a “new consensus”, is transmitted through a series of connections and corresponding links [4] that are constituted into a “reform package” characterized by the following features (S. Ball, 1998, 2002; Barroso, 2002)):

a. A wide variety of control mechanisms co-existing at different levels (national, provincial, individual schools, etc.).
b. An increase in free-market regulation and the

establishment of educational quasi-markets to compensate for the reduction/decrease in financial resources contributed by the State.

c. Curriculum and assessment of pupils' performance linked to stronger links with vocational training in skills for the new economy.

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

d. The fostering of social and community participation in the management of schools as mechanisms of external assessment and social control.

Even when we can identify, in the case of Argentinian educational reform (implemented through the Federal Education Law), elements of a “unified concept” or “standardization” of educational standards at a macro level, in accordance with the guidelines of the international credit organizations that financed it, it must be pointed out, as indicated in research conducted by S. Ball, that the texts and analyses linked to the policies are the result of a process of “recontextualization” marked by a combination of history, culture, ideology and existing structures that were already present in national educational systems, as we shall see below. In the same way, Barroso and Afonso (2002) maintain that if concepts taken from the field of comparative education such as “contamination”, “policy loans” and “dissemination” can be used to explain similarities at a macro level of rhetoric and

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

of political reforms, they conceal and falsify the diversity of the policies actually put into practice, and also their origins and their effects."

B. "The hybridization/recontextualization effect" [5]: This refers to the super-imposition and mingling of different logical approaches, analyses and practices in both the definition and the implementation of policy. It is the result of the forces at play and the local restrictions that contextualize and transform the effects of the "contamination", and to some extent emphasizes its ambiguous nature (Barroso, 2002).

Stephen Ball maintains that the drawing up of policy is a process of patching together, involving opportunism, chaos, negotiation, revamping of old ideas, disputes, compromises and unplanned actions ("ad hoc-ery"), all loosely held together, and between which there is no single direction or current of information. Typically, they are cannibalized products of multiple (but limited) influences and agendas. Policies are redefined through complex processes of influence, recreation of texts, dissemination and recreation/recontextualization in a practical context" (Ball, 1994; 2001).

Multiple processes of recontextualization also take place at a meso level (provinces/areas of jurisdiction) and at a micro level (individual schools). For example, studies of the implementation in Argentina of the third cycle of Basic General Education (EGB/12-14), established under the Federal Education Law in each of the 24 provincial jurisdictions, have identified 56 different situations. In the same way, recontextualization of the curriculum is another aspect of the organizational reform of the educational system. These two questions, among others, have acted as causes of inequalities in the educational system the significance and individual and social consequences of which have not to date been sufficiently studied.

In Argentina, the organizational reform that has been marked out within the regulatory structures of the Federal Education Law and the Higher Education Law has increasingly been drawn from different models, particularly with regard to the divergence between State regulation and free-market regulation. This reflects, on the one hand, the management techniques and practices typical of a centralized administrative system of regulation and, on the other hand, the fostering of decentralization towards the provinces and of autonomy for individual establishments that is typical of the processes of market self-regulation (Barroso *et al.*, 2002).

A marked tension is registered between the notion of “remote control” by the “Evaluative State” and the traditional administrative mechanisms for administering the educational system in the provinces. The concept of “steering from afar” is established in theoretical analyses as a new model for public administration as an alternative to coercive statutory controls through a centralized administrative system of regulation, the latter’s standards and restrictions being replaced by incentives and responsibility “after the event” based on quality criteria and the results achieved (a post-administrative regulatory system).

Within the context of this juxtaposition of different systems of logic the prospect of a re-centralized national structure is considered for key aspects of the educational system such as the designing of a national curriculum (referred to as “Common Basic Contents”) and of standardized tests, the publication of each school’s results, the definition of parameters for initial and continuous teacher training, and the financing of remedial welfare programmes and aid for “persons in need” [6] (Dussel, Tiramonti, Birgin, 1998).

In individual schools, the theme of autonomy becomes exceptionally relevant. Traditional administrative methods are found side by side with the theory of the new management model based on an apparent autonomy of individual establishments. The “new” management model combined with market forces establishes subtler forms of self-regulation of teaching staff; the coercion of the State is thus replaced by an appearance of autonomy that involves self-regulation and weakens the capacity to react or resist. The “new” management model is characterized by specialization, an impersonal approach and the monopolization of technical managerial skills by staff with a new type of professional profile: “Schools are sanitized and modernized” (Ball, 1994).

C. “The mosaic effect”: This category enables us to identify the progressive transformation of a national educational system functioning in accordance with the traditional concept as “a network or body of educational institutions dedicated to formal education: (a) differentiated by levels or cycles with an established relationship between them; (b) managed, supervised and controlled by public organisms and administrators; (c) paid for, at least in part, by one or more of the tiers of the public administration; (d) staffed by teachers trained, recruited or supervised by the same public administrators, and paid totally or in part from a budget that is also public; and (e) distributing certificates or results that are regulated by the public authorities in terms of their formal value and issuing conditions” (Viñao, 2002).

In Argentina, the disparities that emerge from the process of implementing "educational transformation" are reflected in a "mosaic" of differing situations. By way of illustration, a number of situations are examined below in relation to the organizational reform of the system and of individual schools.

- **School-centred administration**. Within the context of the new model of school administration, greater powers of decision-taking and responsibility for the management of financial resources are transferred to the schools. The principle of autonomy for individual establishments led to a generalization of the notion of management through the medium of allocations that schools are required to "win" by competing with other schools for financial resources. To cite a few examples [7] of this management model, we refer to the Creative School Programme in Mendoza, the Project for the Promotion of School Autonomy in the province of Córdoba, and the Educational Fund established in the city of San Luis. The Creative School Programme initiated in Mendoza in 1992 was inspired by "a proposal that transfers decision-taking capacities to schools, conceiving them as centres of educational transformation and granting them the capacity to design, implement and evaluate activities that can promote more and better learning among the pupils" (Feldfeber, Andrade Oliveira; 2008). The Project for the Promotion of School Autonomy formed part of the Programme to Foster the Modernization of the State in the province of Córdoba. "The overall objective is to strengthen schools' capacities for educational and administrative management and to improve their educational processes and results, with special attention to the needs and challenges facing schools that cater for sectors of the population that are vulnerable from a socio-educational perspective." This project forms part of the remedial policies which, inspired by the principle of fairness (as conceived in neo-liberal policy), took as their criterion the "focusing" of assistance on socially disadvantaged sectors and the "prioritization" of financial resources towards specific educational problems (Córdoba Provincial Government, 2003).

  Through the School Operational Fund, the government of the province of San Luis grants State-run educational establishments funding to pay substitute teachers, operational and running costs (electricity, water, telephone, etc.), small repairs and maintenance for school buildings, and teacher training facilities. These Operational Funds are managed by an Internal School Council (CEI), consisting of the head teacher, a teacher from the school and a parents' representative. To receive payments from the School Operational Fund schools

present a “Fund Implementation Project” in which they justify the expenses and investments to be paid for. The granting of these funds to a school depends on the results of an assessment carried out by Ministry officials.

There is an increasing and diversified trend towards privatization or outsourcing of education-related services historically provided by the State. This involves the hiring of private-sector manpower both for the so-called “hard services” [8] (school maintenance, refurbishment, cleaning, security, etc.) and for the “soft services” (outsourcing of educational services through contracts with private schools specializing in foreign languages, etc.). In the province of Córdoba, despite specific provisions prohibiting contracts for teaching posts in the Teacher’s Statute and other subsidiary regulations, recruitment through short-term contracts for temporary teaching posts is starting to become a generalized practice, and has been denounced by the province’s teachers’ union (La Tiza, 2006; Miranda *et al.*, 2004).

- **The privatization of school management**: In the classic pattern of privately-run schools in Argentina, local jurisdictions authorize the operation of schools when the organizations or associations concerned apply to do so (on a profit-making basis or otherwise) and, on certain conditions, allocate a subsidy (in terms of public funds) to cover totally or partially teachers’ salaries. The infrastructure (i.e. the school buildings, installations, etc.) are the responsibility of the service provider (i.e. the association), as are the maintenance costs. These organizations have wide powers to recruit staff freely and to administer all aspects of their schools (e.g. in terms of finances, curriculum, etc.). The corps of State supervisors has responsibility for the administrative and educational control of the schools.

  A different form of privatization of school management is found in the case of “self-managed” schools (in the province of San Luis). Based on the model of “charter” schools in the U.S., the provincial government has established a contractual relationship with associations to which it grants wide powers in terms of educational administration (including over their curriculum) and autonomy to establish their own system of hiring and dismissal of teaching staff, as well as for initial and continuous teacher training. The teaching staff of these schools has no employment relationship of any kind with the State. The associations concerned decide salary levels, on the sole condition that these may not be lower, or more than 50% higher, than those applied in other,

publicly-managed schools. The provincial government provides the associations with the school building and its installations, and also grants funding in accordance with pupil numbers, which is differentiated on a rising scale according to the level of education proposed. For the educational and financial monitoring of these self-managed schools, the provincial government hired the services of a private consultant.

In addition to these two models indicated above, we can also find in the different jurisdictions and provinces other decentralized models for the administration of the educational system. Within the framework of its provincial Education Law No. 8113/91, for example, the province of Córdoba established a system of decentralized local operations by delegating functions to regional and local bodies with responsibility for educational administration.

4. To the rescue of state schools?

In Argentina, while still in the midst of the economic and political chaos with which we initiated the first decade of the 21st century, the government of President Néstor Kirchner (2003) defined a series of policies designed to recuperate the central role of the State and to “reintroduce politics” into the context of the actions to be undertaken by the State. Unlike what had occurred in the 1990s, during which the economy had been given priority over other aspects, we witnessed at this time a “re-politicization of public policy”, turning the problems caused by social inequalities into questions of national significance. As with regard to other themes, this was confirmed in public discussions of education policy, which regained a prominence that they had lost during the previous decade. It can be considered that thoughts started to turn to the significance of the educational system, not from a technical perspective but rather in terms of a recognition of the political nature of the question. This resulted in the displacement of the technical approach (presented as a desire for effectiveness) and the de-politicization of the subject (seen as a guarantee of efficiency) that had influenced the policies adopted during the previous period (Senén González, 2007).

In terms of the new analyses and texts concerning national educational policy two key moments can be identified: Firstly, the ratification of the Educational Funding Law (2005) and the Technical and Professional Training Law (2005) was marked by a recovery of the political significance of the theoretical discourse and the related educational practices with regard to two socially very sensitive and controversial

aspects of the previous educational policy: funding and technical education. Secondly, the ratification of the National Education Law (2006) signified a decisive turning-point in the ideological and political shift, since it repealed the controversial law that had been passed in accordance with neo-liberal parameters.

During the administration of the current President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, these educational policies have been extended, giving pride of place in the educational agenda to social and educational inequalities. In her inaugural speech as President she declared: “With the divisions caused by today’s social inequalities, the vulnerable sectors of society are those who attend state schools. Those who have the money send their children to private schools and universities. So those of us who are products of state schools need to fight for our rights with dignity (…) and mount an intelligent defence of such schools” (*Clarín*, 2007; *Presidencia de la Nación,*16/12/08).

The country today finds itself in a different context in several respects. Unlike the 1990s, the new agenda for educational policy is built on a wide social consensus that is once again placing in education its hopes for a material and symbolic mending of social inequalities. The reassertion of a strong State involves the challenge of defining a new relationship with society, as a basis for putting back together some of the fragments of the educational system. Nevertheless, a major paradox can be observed, in that, despite a growing economy, an “internal debt” is still recorded, with large sectors of society excluded. On the basis of the apparent acceptance of the above diagnosis in the official discourse, educational and social policies have been created that encourage important advances designed to re-install the educational structure of the learning process in schools and to re-establish the unified nature of the educational system while respecting provincial and local diversity.

In this sense, the National Education Law has given rise to other analyses that are different from those of the previous period, creating new experiences that are recovering some of the principles of the original State-orientated culture of the Argentinian educational system and include other elements, while respecting provincial diversity and the demands of the international context. “Education and knowledge as a public good and a personal and social right, guaranteed by the State” (Art. 2); “Education is a national priority and has become a policy of the State to enable us to build a fairer society…” (Art. 3). It specifically establishes that “The State shall not sign bilateral or multilateral free trade agreements that involve conceiving education as a profit-making service or that encourage any form of

commercialization of the state educational system” (Art. 10). It thus recovers an approach based on “educational equality” and recognizes the State’s role in the promotion and allocation of budget resources with a view to guaranteeing equality of opportunities and educational results in the most underprivileged sectors of society.

Of the Law’s 145 articles I shall indicate some of the themes that enable us to identify a break with the preceding legislation:

1. To deal with the problems of an educational, organizational and financial nature that were caused by the implementation of the academic structure established in the Federal Law, it

establishes a similar academic structure for the whole country that consists of four levels (initial, primary, secondary and higher) and eight models: Technical and Professional Education; Artistic Education; Special Education; Continuous Education for Young

People and for Adults; Rural Education; Bilingual Inter-Cultural Education; Education in the Context of Deprivation of Liberty; and Home and Hospital Education.

2. It reaffirms obligatory attendance at school from the age of five years

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

onwards, and it establishes the universal nature of the Initial Level for girls and boys of four years of age. One of the objectives of the Educational Funding Law was “to include in the Initial Level 100% of children of five years of age, and to ensure the increasing inclusion of girls and boys of

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

three and four years of age, giving priority to the most disadvantaged sectors of the population" (Art. 2). The Initial Level registered in 2009 a rate of 92.43% of the population of 5-year-old girls and boys attending school. Meanwhile, the rate of school attendance in 2009 for the 4-year-old

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

age group was 77.1%. Although these statistical data are encouraging, comparisons between provinces show an important divide. If the figures are compared between urban and rural environments, the rates of school attendance for 3 and 4-year-olds show very marked

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

differences (National Directorate for Information and Evaluation of Educational Quality – DINIECE, 2010).

3. It extends the age of obligatory school attendance to the end of the Secondary Education phase. With this in mind, the national federal government

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

implemented, through the cooperation of the provincial governments, a series of programmes such as PROMSE (Programme for the Improvement of the Educational System/2004), with the aim of generating the institutional and infrastructure

conditions to cater for the sector of the school population at greatest social and educational risk. One of the sub-programmes is the National Programme of Student Scholarships (PNBE), the results of which showed a positive impact in terms of improvements in

attendance and fostering of the beneficiaries of the scholarships, in relation to those who did not benefit but were eligible to obtain one. Based on the model of implementation of the PROMSE and intended to provide continuity and to extend its measures, PROMEDU

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya ·
https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

(Programme for the Improvement of Educational Fairness/2008), which also receives international funding, aims to ensure fairness in initial, primary and secondary education and to contribute to closing the existing gap in educational opportunities for girls and boys, and

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya · https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

for young people belonging to different income levels.” In the same way as the former case, it also provides for a National Programme of Student Scholarships (PNBE) to deal with the problems of **retaining and promoting in the secondary level,**

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya ·
https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

stimulating the continued presence, promotion and graduation of pupils of between 13 and 19 years of age who attend state secondary schools, run the risk of abandoning the educational system and belong to families living in a context of need

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya ·
https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

and/or poverty. Furthermore, school textbooks will be distributed both for pupils and for school libraries, together with educational resources and consultation material for secondary school teachers. In a second sub-programme, financing for the

Institut Paulo Freire de Espanya ·
https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/peripheral-globalization-political-regulation-of-the-educational-system-and-the-creation-of-inequalities-in-argentina-a-review-of-the-current-situation/ · Licencia Creative Commons Reconocimiento-No comercial-Compartir igual

adaptation, repairing and enlarging of school infrastructures will be directed towards those schools with extended school days at primary level, catering for pupils in conditions of poverty (DGFI, 2011).

These educational policies are accompanied by social policies such as the national programme of “Universal allocation of social protection on a child-by-child basis” (“AUH”) (Decree No. 1602/09), designed for families with children under 18 years of age living in conditions of social vulnerability (the unemployed, those in unregistered employment receiving low salaries, etc.). A pre-condition for receiving this allocation is that their children must attend school, and that the children/young people concerned should be given in addition the basic aspects of medical

treatment (such as, for example, vaccination programmes). This programme is intended to re-integrate into the social model pupils who have stopped going to school or to include those who have never yet started school through a lack of basic social conditions.

From 2009 onwards, the National Plan for Compulsory Education, approved by the Federal Education Council, has opted for a “joint structure to incorporate into national, provincial and local policies strategies designed to take on the challenges of compulsory education, in its various different forms, levels and models, together with their coordination with the inter-sectoral operations of other ministries and social organizations” [9]. Three strategies are proposed in this respect:(1) to increase the protection for the level concerned and to improve the academic trajectories of the pupils, in accordance with policies of social equality and fairness; (2) to improve the quality of the educational programme proposed; and (3) to strengthen the management of the establishment concerned.

In the same way, and in order to harmonize the accumulation of the period of compulsory education, the Federal Education Council [10] approved in 2010 the “Federal guidelines for pupil mobility in compulsory education”, which establish “conditions for transfers between schools belonging to different models, orientations and jurisdictions, exempting the pupil from the requirement to provide validation of equivalent results when making the transfer.” The application of this measure in the context of educational policy “aims to consolidate pupils’ rights and the cohesion of the national educational system”, through mechanisms that can facilitate pupils’ freedom of movement throughout the country, fostering social inclusion and the completion of full secondary education.

The Educational Funding Law ratified in 2005 proposed as a target for 2010 that 6% of GDP should be dedicated to the sector. The available data indicate that this percentage has been surpassed for the target year of 2010, and in some provinces, as in the case of Córdoba, the government has dedicated 40% of the provincial budget to education over the last year.

There are still numerous questions to be resolved, such as how to increase teachers’ salaries, for which there continue to be major disparities between provinces, even if overall levels have improved significantly in recent years; or how to intensify measures to achieve effective integration, permanence and completion of compulsory education on the part of the most vulnerable sectors of society, supplemented by other measures designed to improve pupils’ performance in

relation to the learning process, the need for which has been shown by the poor results obtained in national and international rankings, among other problems that persist in the educational system.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, unlike the 1990s, a decade that was marked by a context of serious conflicts between the national government and local jurisdictions [11], an atmosphere of cooperation between the macro and meso levels of political authority now seems to be emerging, together with some degree of participation in the educational sphere by local government bodies such as the municipal councils. This provides us with the opportunity to confirm that it is also possible for provincial administrations to build a fairer society by tackling educational inequalities, and for the Nation State to turn its much-proclaimed federalism into an effective reality.

References

Ball, Stephen (2007): *Education plc: Understanding private sector participation in public sector education*. Routledge. London.

Ball, Stephen(2004): *Performatividade, privatizaçao e o Póst-Estado Do Bem-Estar.* Educaçao & Sociedade. Revista de Ciencia da Educaçao, Vol 25, nº 89, Set./Dez.CEDES/UNICAMP.

Ball, Stephen (2002): *Textos, discursos y trayectorias de la política. La teoría estratégica.* Páginas. Revista de la Escuela de Ciencias de la Educación, Año 2, nº 2/3. Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (Traducción Estela M. Miranda)

Ball, Stephen (2001): *Global policies and vernacular politics in education*. *Curriculo sem Fronteiras,* v.1, nº 2, pp.xxvii.xliii, jul/dez.

Ball, Stephen(1998) *Big policies/small World: an introduction to internacional perspectives in education policy.* Comparative Education, vol. 34, nº 2, Oxford.

Ball, Stephen (1993): *La gestión como tecnología moral.* En Ball, Stephen (1993): *Foucault y la educación. Disciplinas y saber*. Ediciones Morata, Madrid.

Barroso, João (2005): *O Estado, a Educação e a Regulação das Políticas Públicas*. Educação & Sociedade, Vol 26, nº 92, Especial-Out. 2005. CEDES/Unicamp.

Barroso, João (2004): *La autonomía de las escuelas en el contexto de cambio de los modos de regulación de las políticas y de la acción educativa: el caso portugués.* Revista Educación nº 333, Madrid.

Barroso, João, Afonso, Natércio (2002) *Sistèmes éducatifs, modes de régulation et d'évaluation scolaire et politiques de lutte contre les inégalités en Anglaterre, Belgique, France, Hongrie et au Portugal.* Reguleducnetwork (Deriverable 3).

Bauman, Zygmunt (2007): *Los retos de la educación en la modernidad líquida*. Gedisa, Barcelona.

Bauman, Zygmunt(2006): *Vida líquida*. Paidós, Buenos Aires.

Bonal, Xavier; Tarabini Catellani, Aina y Verger, Antoni (comp.)(2007): *Globalización y Educación. Textos fundamentales.* Buenos Aires. Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires.

Bresser Pereira, Luis(1998): *La reforma del Estado de los años noventa. Lógicas y mecanismos de control.* En Revista Desarrollo Económico, v. 38, nº 150, julio-septiembre, Buenos Aires.

CTERA, CNTE, Colegio de Profesores; AFUTI-FENAPES-LPP (2005): *Las reformas educativas en los países del cono sur.* Un Balance crítico. Clacso, Buenos Aires.

Dale, Roger (2007): *Los efectos de la globalización en la política nacional. Un análisis de los mecanismos.* En Bonal, Xavier; Tarabini Catellani, Aina y Verger, Antoni (comp.)(2007): *Globalización y Educación. Textos fundamentales.* Buenos Aires. Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires.

Dale, Roger y Robertson, Susan (2007): *Entrevista a Boaventura de Sousa Santos*. En Bonal, Xavier; Tarabini Catellani, Aina y Verger, Antoni (comp.)(2007): *Globalización y Educación. Textos fundamentales.* Buenos Aires. Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires.

Diario La Voz del Interior 03/03/2008

Dubet, François (2006): *Declive de la institución. Profesiones, sujetos e individuos ante la reforma del Estado.* Gedisa Editorial, Barcelona.

Dubet, François(2004):*¿Mutaciones institucionales y/o neoliberalismo*. En Tenti Fanfani, Emilio (Org.) (2004). Gobernabilidad de los sistemas educativos en América Latina. Instituto Internacional de Planeamiento de la Educación/Unesco, Buenos Aires.

Dussell, Inés; Tiramonti, Guillermina, Birgin, Alejandra (1998): *Hacia una nueva cartografía de la reforma curricular. Reflexiones a partir de la descentralización educativa argentina.* Revista de Estudios del Curriculum, nº 2, Vol. 1. Ediciones Pomares-Corredor, Barcelona.

García Canclini, Néstor (1989): *Culturas híbridas.* Grijalbo, México.

García Delgado, Daniel (1998): *Estado-nación y globalización. Fortalezas y debilidades en el umbral del tercer milenio.* Ariel, Buenos Aires.

Feldfeber, Myriam y Andrade Oliveira, Dalila (Comps.) (2008): *Política Educativa y trabajo docente. Nuevas regulaciones ¿Nuevos sujetos?*. Ediciones Novedades Educativas, Buenos Aires.

Hardt, Michael.y Negri, Antoni (2000): *Imperio*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge.

La Tiza. Revista de la Unión de Educadores de la Provincia de Córdoba (UEPC), Año XV/Nº 89, Marzo-Abril 2006.

Lechner, Norbert (1999): *Los condicionantes de la gobernabilidad democrática en la América Latina de fin de siglo*. Flacso, Buenos Aires.

Lechner, Norbert (1991): *A la búsqueda de la comunidad perdida. Los retos de la democracia en América Latina.* Revista Internacional de Ciencias Sociales, nº 129, septiembre, Unesco.

Maroy, Ch. et Dupriez, V. (2000): *La régulation dans les systèmes scolaires. Propositions théoriques et analyse du cadre structurel en Belgique francophone.* Revue Française de Pédagogie, Nº 130.

Dirección General Unidad de Financiamiento Internacional (2011). Ministerio de Educación. Buenos Aires. http://www.me.gov.ar/ufi/

Direccional Nacional de Información y Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa (DINIECE)

(2010): *Las cifras de la Educación Inicial y sus modelos de organización*. Boletin nº 8. Ministerio de Educación de la Nación. Buenos Aires.

http://diniece.me.gov.ar/images/stories/diniece/publicaciones/boletin/8-Boletin-2010.pdf

Miranda, Estela (2010) *Cuestión de Estado. Políticas neoliberales, mutaciones institucionales y su impacto en el oficio de enseñar. Hoy La Universidad,* nº 2, Noviembre 2009. Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. pp.29-31

Miranda; Estela; Lamfri; Nora(2008): *Los efectos de la multirregulación política en educación en la configuración de nuevas condiciones de trabajo e identidad del oficio docente.* Cuadernos de Educación, nº 6, vol. 6. Centro de Investigaciones de la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

Miranda, Estela. (2005)*Decentralization, new form of governance of the educational system and teachers´ work in Argentina: From the State to the market?* Paper presented at 7th ESRC Seminar 'Privatisation, new forms of governance and work', Institute of Education, University of London.

Miranda, Estela; Senén González, Silvia; Lamfri, Nora. & Nicolini, Mariana (2004). *Políticas de Reforma del Sistema Educativo en los noventa. Nuevas configuraciones emergentes a partir de la Ley Federal de Educación y su implementación en Córdoba.* Editorial Brujas, Córdoba.

Miranda, Estela y Senén González, Silvia (2003). *Inclusión social, comunidades y educación.* Seminario de Cooperación Canadá Córdoba. Centro Cultural Canadá Córdoba, Agencia Córdoba Ciencia SE y Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Córdoba, 10 al 12 de Abril.

Neave, Guy (1988): *On the cultivation of quality, efficiency and enterprise: an overview of recent trends in higher education in Western Europe, 1968-1988*. European Journal of Education, 23(1/2).

O´Donnell, Guillermo (2004) *La Democracia en América Latina. Hacia una democracia de ciudadanos y ciudadanas. Contribuciones para el debate.* Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD). Alfaguara S.A..,Buenos Aires.

Popkewitz, Thomas (1994): *Sociología política de las reformas educativas.* Morata Editores, Madrid.

Pereyra, Miguel. y Otros (Comp) (1996). *Globalización y descentralización de los sistemas educativos. Fundamentos para un nuevo programa de la educación comparada*. Ediciones Pomares-Corredor, Barcelona.

Quevedo, Luis (2003): *La escuela frente a los jóvenes, los medios de comunicación y los consumos culturales en el siglo XXI.* En Tenti Fanfani, Emilio (comp.): Educación media para todos. IIPE/Altamira/Fundación OSDE, Buenos Aires.

Ramonet, Ignacio (2007): *El mercado contra el Estado. Informe sobre la globalización.* Le Monde Diplomatique, nº 4, Agosto. Ultima consulta 10/1/2011 http://firgoa.usc.es/drupal/node/40637

Senén González, S. (2008) *Política, leyes y educación. Entre la regulación y los desafíos de la macro y la micropolítica.* En: Pedraza, Roxana. (Comp.): Política pública y Educación: Mitos y realidades. Editorial Aique, Buenos Aires.

Stiglitz, Joseph (2002): *El malestar en la globalización.* Taurus, Buenos Aires.

Sverdlick, Ingrid (2010). *Experiencias educativas que nos interpelan. El sentido del derecho a la educación, el formato escolar y las políticas públicas.* Rizoma Freiriano nº 8. Instituto Paulo Freire de España.

https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/category/historico-de-revistas/2010-vol-8/

Tenti Fanfani, E. (Org.) (2004): *Gobernabilidad de los sistemas educativos en América Latina*. IIPE-UNESCO, Buenos Aires.

Tiramonti, G. (Comp.) (2004): *La trama de la desigualdad educativa*. *Mutaciones recientes en la escuela media*. Manantial, Buenos Aires

Torres, Carlos Alberto(2008) *Educación y Globalizaciones: Dilemas y desafíos para la educación superior en América Latina.* Conferencia dictada en la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades. Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. (mimeo).

Torres, Carlos Alberto.(2008): *Globalización y Educación Superior en las Américas*http://www.revista-theomai.unq.edu.ar/numero15/ArtTorres.pdf

Viñao Frago, Antonio (2002): *Sistemas educativos, culturas escolares y reformas. Continuidades y cambios.* Morata, Madrid.

Whitty, Geoff.; Power, Sally & Halpin, David (1999) *La escuela, el estado y el mercado. Delegación de poderes y elección en educación.* Ediciones Morata, Madrid.

Zufiaurre, Benjamin (2010): *Reformas y debates en educación. Hacia un discurso reculturalizador en el Siglo XXI*. En: Rizoma Freiriano nº 8. Instituto Paulo Freire de España. https://www.rizoma-freireano.org/category/historico-de-revistas/2010-vol-8/

Notes

[1] Although there had been attempts to decentralize the educational system as early as in the late 1950s, it was only in 1978, during the military dictatorship, that the transfer (or "devolution") of the national pre-primary and primary level educational systems took place. The medium (i.e. secondary) level and non-university higher level systems were transferred in 1991 (Law No. 24049/91).

[2] The French sociologist François Dubet questions the singling out of the neo-liberal offensive as the sole cause of the transformation of the institutional status of the school, pointing out that "The modern world is undoubtedly subjected to a liberal offensive, but this cannot be considered as the only cause of the school's current problems. The first reason is that this offensive is not identical throughout the world, particularly since schools face mutations and challenges of an extremely varied nature and only some of these are due to neo-liberal policies, while others can be attributed to a much longer-term and more fundamental mutation of the school as an institution." The mutations that the school has undergone are defined by the bankruptcy of the educational model based on the concept of modernity or an "Institutional Programme" the basic tenets of which have lost their force: "the decline of sacrosanct values, the increasing professionalism of teachers, the opening up of society's inner sanctums, the recognition of the uniqueness and the rights of the individual…" (Dubet, 2004; 2006).

[3] The Argentinian crisis of 2001-2002 was presented as one of the fastest-developing cases of social impoverishment that the world had seen. It was defined as a "total crisis" because its ramifications were social, political and cultural (in terms of values and identity), and it reached all spheres of society, with a marked effect on citizens' daily lives (Miranda; Senén González, 2003).

[4] The international dissemination of this body of ideas, “influences” or “reform packages” was aided by: (1) “the transmission of a current of ideas through social and political networks” (Popkewitz, 1994); (2) the guidelines of international organizations (World Bank, IDB, OECD) and the readiness of certain local stakeholders to adopt these “recommendations” “in an uncritical spirit”; and (3) the “symbolic analysts”, the “political entrepreneurs”, the domestic and international “think tank” advisers, etc., who orientated and legitimized the “international circulation of these ideas throughout the world” as the only possible solution (Ball, 1998, 2002).

[5] The term “hybridization” is of biological origin, and its use became generalized in social theory in the 1990s in order to denote “socio-cultural processes in which distinct structures or practices that had previously taken a separate form combine to engender new structures, objects and practices” (García Canclini, 1989).

[6] Referring to the decentralization policies of the 1990s, the authors maintain that behind the concept of “educational autonomy” there appears a “new theme in the official discourse, that of ‘persons in need’.” The term ‘persons in need’ is used in the context of a hierarchical form of assistance intended to integrate individuals into society, and which is alien to our political tradition but is for these purposes reinvented in the interests of technocratic efficiency (…). Experts develop and perfect sophisticated techniques for their identification and subsequent inclusion in programmes of assistance (…). They are placed in a relationship with the State that, rather than defining them in terms of their rights as individuals, registers them within a system of benefits and obligations (Dussell, Tiramonti and Birgin, 1998).

[7] The management from the central level (i.e. the National Ministry) of the financing of programmes and projects was a strategy to “control” the implementation of the Federal Education Law by the provinces and jurisdictions, and to facilitate direct influence over educational establishments.

[8] The Córdoba provincial government that took office in July 1999 introduced “devolution of administrative responsibility for the management of financial resources” to schools, granting them a monthly amount of money for school maintenance. This caused endless difficulties caused, on the one hand, by the fact that there was no specific legal instrument to regulate the question, and, on the other hand, to the increase in the administrative workload and responsibilities for head teachers who were unused to dealing with the logic of managing financial resources. Schools’ cleaning services were decentralized to the municipalities and

communes, with a transfer of funds from the provincial budget (Miranda *et al.*, 2004).

[9] The National Education Law recognizes social organizations as providers of education by incorporating the status of “cooperative management and social management” of educational services for all levels and models, distinguishing this category from private management, as it had been considered until the ratification of this law. (Sverdlick, 2010).

[10] The Federal Education Council is a permanent organ favouring the “harmonization, authorization and coordination of national educational policy” so as to ensure the unity and coordination of the educational system. Presided over by the Ministry of National Education, it is made up of those responsible for the administration of each jurisdiction, and also includes three representatives of the Council of Universities.

[11] Shortly after taking up office (in December 2008), and adopting the following principle: “Quality cannot be achieved where there are levels of inequality”, the administration currently in office at the Ministry of Education for the province of Córdoba defined the first outlines of its educational policy, as follows: (1) Strategies to deal with educational failure (at primary school level) by extending existing programmes directed towards vulnerable sectors of society and that have been shown to be successful. (The “108 Marginalized Urban Schools” Programme will be extended to 234 schools, covering 70 per cent of the vulnerable urban schools in the city of Córdoba. The extended programme thus covers 70% of schools, with an extension of the number of classes for schools in marginal areas, among other measures); (2) In order to deal with problems of educational failure at the medium (i.e. secondary) level (characterized by a need to repeat school years and poor performance in the learning process), preparations are being made to introduce a system of teachers acting as special tutors during the first years of this level. The creation of a specific organism in the structure of the provincial educational administration with responsibility for Technical and Professional Education is another policy of the new administration; (3) In order to reinforce the educational process, priority is to be given to: “More Languages, Mathematics and Science” (From an interview with the Minister of Education and his management team. See the newspaper: *La Voz del Interior*, 03/03/2008).

Translation: Unitat de Suport Lingüístic. Universitat de Girona