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Pro-market educational governance: is Argentina a black swan?

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Abstract

In this article we explore ways in which pro-market discourses have been interpreted in policy initiatives in Argentina since the 1970s. Our argument is that even though pro-market discourses have guided reforms in many aspects of public policies in Argentina, the arena of education has overall been resistant to taking them up. The first part of the article analyses the origins of a strong discursive and symbolic link between notions of 'public education' and 'National State-centred education' in Argentina and then examines the development of private education in that country. The second section analyses economic change in Argentina and describes the influence that pro-market ideologies had on policies of the military dictatorship of the 1970s. Third, we present reforms implemented during the 1990s, arguing that some principles associated with pro-market discourses were visible only at the level of official rhetoric. Fourth, we analyse briefly recent developments in the Kirchner administrations, which position

themselves as being discursively ‘anti-neoliberal’. Lastly, we offer some reflections about the exception of Argentine education as regards pro-market forms of governance and the implications of this for thinking about the global diffusion of this ideology and its effects in practice.

keywords:

Argentina | comparative and international education | educational governance | educational policy | neoconservatism/neoliberalism

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